Call for abstracts for the conference

AESTHETIC RELATIONS

Copenhagen 20-22 January 2021

The global pandemic has made us develop new ways of regulating the choreography of our everyday life: how we relate to our neighbors, to the material objects we interact with, and to the air we breathe. Some citizens have experienced a suspension of the right to assemble, to protest and cross borders – rights of which others have been deprived for long.

Simultaneously, anti-racist movements have overthrown statues of colonial and imperial history and thereby challenged the aesthetic relations of identity and belonging set up by such monuments; these protests remind us of art’s implication in larger infrastructures that connect people and institutions across time and space, as well as the unequal distribution of material and symbolic wealth in the arts.

In our current moment, it is increasingly clear that a meaningful approach to the concept of ‘aesthetic relations’ - how our social relations are shaped through the senses - will specifically require renewed attention to the political implications of sense-relations, both in- and outside of the arts.

Aesthetic Relations encourages scholars across disciplines to analyze and historicize such present changes’ influence on a broad understanding of aesthetic relations. The invitation departs from the assumption that in order to understand the challenges of our historical present, we need to both look back and learn from the past as well as lean into reparative practices already (in)accessible.

We urge contributors to critically historicize the conceptual and material heritage of (Western) aesthetic relations by consulting theoretical terms, cultural artefacts and infrastructures from other times, possibly even before and outside modernity, and beyond the global North. This might include:

Analytical questions working with

- Case studies on the regulation of aesthetic relations
- Cultural analyses of historical forums, situations, events, objects, infrastructures and practices
- A historization of excluded contributors, interests and modes of production in the arts
- Analyses of artistic engagements in conceptions and negotiations of public space
- Rethinking the role of institutions’ mediation of social and aesthetic relations

Methodological questions

- Rethinking models of cultural analysis
- Revisioning epistemic violence in the vocabulary of aesthetic theory
- Revisiting the past through reparative, healing or confrontational readings
- Questioning the methodologies and roles of cultural history
- Theorizing moments of redistribution from within and around the arts
Keynotes

Denise Ferreira da Silva, Professor and Director of the Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

Nishant Shah, Professor at the Institute of Culture and Aesthetics of Digital Media, Leuphana University, Germany + Vice President of Research, ArtEZ University of the Arts, the Netherlands.

+ tba.

Practical information

For the conference, we invite papers from across broad fields of studies, such as art and aesthetics, cultural studies, gender studies, critical race studies, media studies, sociology, philosophy, political science & anthropology. Furthermore, we welcome scholars from artistic research as well as cultural workers from within and outside institutions.

We urge colleagues to suggest both abstracts for solo presentations (20+10mins), panels (90mins) and roundtables (120mins), and especially encourage scholars to develop transdisciplinary collaborations for this occasion.

Please submit your abstract proposal (max 300 words paper or 500 words panel/roundtable) and a short bio (max 100 words) to artasforum@hum.ku.dk no later than November 6, 2020.

The price of the conference will be 70 € + additional costs for conference dinner.
Emerging scholars and independent artists/cultural workers presenting papers can apply for support - we cover hotel costs and conference fee for up to ten persons in total.

Conference organizers

The conference is organized by the New Carlsberg Foundation research center Art as Forum, Department of Arts and Cultural Studies at the University of Copenhagen. Read more about the center and find announcements of keynote speakers here: https://kunstogkulturvidenskab.ku.dk/forskning/kunsten-som-forum/

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If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the organizers.