

Descriptions of workshops:

MARA TRAUMANE

Crimes and Concepts in Experience...

May 17th

The workshop “Crimes and Concepts in Experience...” will try to respond both practically and theoretically to the inspirational departure point of the “iImagine” workshops – the article by Irit Rogoff. Participants are invited to read and question two texts: “Smuggling. An Embodied Criticality” by Irit Rogoff and chapter “Spatial Stories” from Michel de Certeau’s “The Practice of Everyday Life”. How territories, displacement and the “illegality” and “crime” of creative intervention are seen by these authors? Participants are invited not only to prepare the argument but also to bring along and present materials – art-pieces, literature, films, sound and video files, other examples of cultural activities that you find interesting for this discussion. This is the first session of iImagine workshops, so it will also aim to introduce each participants’ interests to others.

Workshop participants will be coming from Latvia, Estonia, Poland and Lithuania – countries where clandestine trade and hand to hand deals have dominated local microeconomies in the 90’s and are still present in living memory. Therefore you are asked to reflect on: how you think term “smuggling” relates to creative practices and in what kind of environment it can be applied? Is it a relevant description for creative work? What limits and freedoms it imposes on us and how it positions us? And, of course, any other issues you discover by reading and thinking.

The provisional goals of the workshop are:

- collective listing of the arguments emerging within the discussions that could be send for the response by Irit Rogoff
- drawing the taxonomy of references – map and comments of the audio, visual and literature examples brought by participants.

AARON SCHUSTER

On Psychoanalysis and Philosophy

May 18th

“No, not happiness! Certainly not happiness! Pleasure. One must always set one’s heart upon the most tragic.”

Oscar Wilde, “The Picture of Dorian Gray”

Drive and desire, pleasure and enjoyment are central terms of modern philosophy, yet their meanings often remain obscure. The aim of this workshop is to explore the different senses of these basic concepts, especially in relation to psychoanalysis. No doubt psychoanalysis has profoundly affected our understanding of the dynamism of human life. Freud and Lacan can both be viewed as advancing a tragic conception of human existence, in line with Oscar Wilde’s witticism: between pleasure and happiness, man casts aside concerns for his own well-being and (tragically, fatally) chooses the path of pleasure.

Strangely enough, there seems to be something in the human psyche that resists the maintenance of its own integrity and proper “flourishing”. The question of how exactly to conceive the nature of such a “perverse”, self-sabotaging drive has been of the most pressing and difficult problems of psychoanalytic theory, and the point on which it also enters into a lively dialogue with different philosophical conceptions of pleasure, desire,

will, eros, and so on.

Beyond providing a historical overview of this problematic, the workshop shall focus on its implications for modern art and politics. First, we will look at Honoré de Balzac's "The Unknown Masterpiece" (1845), a short story that uncannily anticipates many developments in 20th century art. Balzac's story can be viewed as expressing one of the essential reversals that define the "crisis" of modernism. Put bluntly, the Absolute, when realized, turns to shit. The highest good, the most truthful truth, the radiant sublime at the very moment of its apparition suddenly transforms into its opposite. Desire is attracted by an Absolute that at the same time repulses it. What does this ambivalence entail for our conception of the artist's vocation and the function of the artwork?

Second, we will watch excerpts of Adam Curtis's four-part documentary "The Century of the Self" (2002), which examines the influence of psychoanalytic ideas on 20th century politics and the formation of the (consumerist) self (of capitalist democracy). This will allow us to ask about the political consequences of the psychoanalytic theory of the "driven-self", that is, the self as caught in an irremediable conflict between happiness, fulfillment, well-being, etc., on the one hand, and illicit, unruly, "tragic" drives, on the other.

SIMON SHEIKH

On exhibition making and imagination

May 19th

The idea of the workshop is to look at the exhibition as a medium, that is, to look at the activity of exhibition making as specific modes of address, that each delimit notions of art, of a world view and of an audience. An exhibition always imagines and attempts to actualize its audience within its specific mode of address, and different modes of address imagines the audience as audience, obviously, but also as community and/or constituency. These imaginings can be analyzed within the architecture; the exhibition lay-out, selection and narration; within the forms of works; and finally within the mediation (including writing and education). We shall therefore look at the genealogy of exhibition making in a reading of Tony Bennetts essay "The Exhibitionary Complex", and then look at (possible) contemporary forms, and if time permits do analyses of exhibitions *in situ* in Vilnius.