

The International Congress of Aesthetics organized by the International Association for Aesthetics, Krakow, July 21–27, 2013

Panel: **Technologies and Bio-Technologies, Individual Presentations**

Time and date: **Friday, July 26, 11.00 – 13.00**, Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art

Chair: Dr. **Ingeborg Reichle** (Humboldt-University, Berlin, Germany)

Speakers:

- Prof. Dr. **Ksenia Fedorova**, Transmediality, Transduction and Aesthetics of the Technological Sublime (Ural Federal University, University of California Davis, US)
- Prof. Dr. **Lyubov Bugaeva**, 'Enactive cinema' in Theory and Practice (St. Petersburg State University, Russia, St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Institute for Cultural Research, RU)
- Prof. Dr. **Cynthia Freeland**, Icon and Index Revisited: Photographic Realism and Medical Imaging Technologies (University of Houston, US)
- Prof. Dr. **Fay (Fae) Brauer**, Imagining Xenotransplantation and Transspeciation: The Affect of Patricia Piccinini's *Transgenic Art* (University of New South Wales College of Fine Arts, University of East London, UK)

Transmediality, Transduction and Aesthetics of the Technological Sublime

Ksenia Fedorova (Ural Federal University, University of California Davis, US)

In the proposed paper I intend to consider practices of media art taken within the context of the discourses of transmediality and the sublime. Digital technology creates phenomena that provoke new modes of perception and new sensory experiences, including those evoking a sense of something that is beyond representation, a feeling traditionally belonging to the aesthetic framework of the sublime. I am particularly interested in the analysis of affective qualities of the experience of transition across media borders and of the potential realm beyond the closed loops of these borders. I would like to explore possible connections between the concept of the beyond and the idea of the "in between" space of electronic transmission, challenging the presupposition about computation being the most objective and neutral means of translation between different media languages.

What kind of meaning does this translation produce on the level of phenomenological and aesthetic inquiry, but also in terms of increasingly complicated cultural relations? What is in this transfer or transposition from one medium to another, in this interstice created by transmedial operations that courts the modern consumerized sensibility? What is the correlation between "technological contamination", sensorium and the unutterable? How can "hypermediacy" (J.D.Bolter) as a strategy of disruption of the seamlessness of technological use contribute to the discussion of liminality effect? Finally, what are the strategies via which new media art enacts the sensorial tensions of transmediality?

The examples include practices representing diverse types of rendering relations: mutually affected recombinations of movement, speech and written text ("BodyText" by Simon Biggs and Sue Hawksley) and interactive projects, involving smell and gesture by Russian group "Where the Dogs Run".

CV:

Ksenia Fedorova is a media art researcher and curator. She is currently completing her PhD in Philosophy at the Ural Federal University (Ekaterinburg, RU) and is a PhD student at the Cultural Studies Graduate Group, University of California Davis. Her research interests lie within the spheres of media art theory and history, aesthetics, philosophy, techno-cultural studies, and curatorial studies. She is a co-editor (with Nina Sosna) of *Media: Between Magic and Technology* (Moscow-Ekaterinburg, 2013, in Russian). She has taught classes on media art theory and history in Russia and Austria and participated in conferences and workshops, including in Toronto, Copenhagen, Oxford, Moscow, Istanbul, Los Angeles, New York. She has been an initiator and curator of the "Art. Science. Technology" program at the Ural branch of the National Center for Contemporary Arts (Ekaterinburg, RU) and was a member of the Jury of Prix Ars Electronica 2012 and the selection committee for PRO&CONTRA 2012 symposium (Moscow).

'Enactive cinema' in Theory and Practice

Lyubov Bugaeva (St. Petersburg State University, Russia, St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Institute for Cultural Research, RU)

The enactive approach is based on two main points: "perception consists in perceptually guided action" and "cognitive structures emerge from the recurrent sensorimotor patterns that enable action to be perceptually guided" (Varela; Thompson; Rosch, 1991). Thus the enactive approach seeks to study the possibilities of perceiver's guidance. It is logical that the enactive cinema was born as the creative laboratory to test these possibilities. The paper explores today's theory and practice of enactive cinema. It analyses the reason why Sergei Eisenstein's theory and practice of montage and Alexander Bogdanov's tektology have become important for contemporary "enactivists" like Finnish artist Pia Tikka. There are two hypotheses that Pia Tikka aspires to prove in her artistic works: (1) cinema can serve as a creative laboratory for description of emotional dynamics; (2) the cognitive model can serve as a montage model for a film. How successful was the artist in her experiments? Does neurocinematics help to create the cinema of the future? The paper tries to give answers to these questions.

CV:

Lyubov Bugaeva is Ph.D., Associate Professor at St. Petersburg State University, Russia, and Senior Researcher at St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Institute for Cultural Research, author of "Literature and rite de passage" (St. Petersburg, 2010, in Russian) and of about 120 articles (in Russian and English). Her research focuses on Kino-text analysis and on narrating emotions in films.

Icon and Index Revisited: Photographic Realism and Medical Imaging Technologies

Cynthia Freeland (Department of Philosophy, University of Houston, US)

My paper explores a range of medical imaging technologies that challenge the icon/index distinction articulated by C.S. Peirce, ranging from echocardiograms to X-rays, ultrasounds, and fMRI images of the brain. To begin with, I review Peirce's distinction, including some remarks he made about the specific nature of photographic images. I question the nature of realism in indexical images, challenging some commonly held views about the "transparency" of photographs. I compare various types of medical images to photographs and discuss whether their causal origins make such images count as "transparent" (using Kendall Walton's criteria), even when the original source for the final image is not itself visual or related to light (but perhaps, instead, to sound). Following this analysis, I proceed to highlight the role and possibilities of interpretation and aesthetic choices available to artists using medical imaging technologies. I discuss work by various artists who have used these "automatic" imaging technologies for creative purposes, including Robert Rauschenberg, Gary Schneider, Gabriele Leidloff, Gabriel de la Mora, Wim Delvoye, and Kamila Szczesna. The presentation is accompanied by a PowerPoint slide show to illustrate the various categories and artistic examples under discussion.

CV:

Cynthia Freeland is Moore's Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the University of Houston. Freeland has published widely in the fields of aesthetics, feminist philosophy, and ancient philosophy. She has lectured in many countries and is member of a multi-year project Plato and Poetry at the University of Bergen in Norway. In 2011 she gave the Annual Lecture at the National Portrait Gallery of Australia. She has also served as director of Women's Studies, chair of the Department of Philosophy, Associate Dean, and Interim Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. Her books include *Portraits and Persons* (Oxford University Press, 2010); *But Is It Art?* (Oxford University Press, 2001); *The Naked and the Undead: Evil and the Appeal of Horror* (Westview Press, 1999); *Feminist Interpretations of Aristotle* (Penn State, 1998), and, with Thomas Wartenberg, *Philosophy and Film* (Routledge, 1995). Her book *But Is It Art?* has been translated into 14 languages. She is currently Vice-President of the American Society for Aesthetics.

Imagining Xenotransplantation and Transspeciation: The Affect of Patricia Piccinini's *Transgenic Art*

Fay (Fae) Brauer (University of New South Wales College of Fine Arts, University of East London, UK)

"*Transgenic Art is*," according to Edouardo Kac, "a new artistic terrain and art form based on the use of genetic engineering to transfer natural or synthetic genes to an organism – to create unique living beings." Yet not every artist exploring the narrative possibilities of biotechnology has found it necessary to create with human and non-human tissue as illuminated by Patricia Piccinini. Following the launch of The Humane Genome Project, Piccinini chose silicon, acrylic and fibreglass, rather than human and non-human tissue to produce The Mutant Genome Project (TMGP) and Lifeforms with Unevolved Mutant Properties (LUMP) – genetically mutant babies engineered to look like pink-skinned tumours or, in her words, "a cute grotesquery ... designed for cuddle comfort". Amidst feisty debates over stem-cell research and tissue transplantation, Piccinini combined silicon, fibreglass, plywood and fur in her *Superevolution* project to create SO2, *Still Life with Stem Cells* in which a mole is fused with a human foetus. As controversies raged over organ xenotransplantation and interspecies breeding, Piccinini used silicon, fibreglass, plywood, fur and human hair to create a human sow suckling a litter of newborn piglet babies.

In imagining the ramifications of biotechnologies, Piccinini's *Transgenic Art* reveals, as this paper will demonstrate, how experimentation in transplantation and transspeciation could culminate in humanoid pigs or moles that deeply disturb the comfort zones of normalcy and disrupt anthropocentric visions of genetic utopias. In seeming to bring these unsettling creatures to life, it will be argued that unlike biomedical physicians and technicians, Piccinini confronts her spectators with their deep-seated anxieties and paranoia that transplantation and transspeciation could lead to monsters as repulsive and uncontrollable as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Yet in creating creatures that are simultaneously repulsive and endearing, grotesque and alluring, it will also be argued that the 'affect' engendered by her *Transgenic* creatures can provoke empathy and the onto-ethical question of care, rarely raised in biotechnologies, about the subjectivity and nurturance of its own progenitors.

CV:

Fay (Fae) Brauer is Associate Professor in Art History and Cultural Theory, The University of New South Wales College of Fine Arts and has been recently appointed Professor in Art and Visual Culture at the University of East London Art and Design Centre. Her books are *Picturing Evolution and Extinction: Degeneration and Regeneration in Modern Visual Cultures* (2013), *Rivals and Conspirators: The Paris Salons and the Modern Art Centre* (2013), *The Art of Evolution: Darwin, Darwinisms and Visual Culture* (2009) and *Art, Sex and Eugenics, Corpus Delecti* (2008). Presently she is preparing the books, *Regenerating the Body: Art and Neo-Lamarckian Biocultures in Republican France*; *Symbiotic Species: The Art and Science of Neo-Lamarckian Evolution in the French Solidarist Republic* and *Unmasking Masculinity: Imaging Hysterical Men in Republican France*. She is also editing the books, *Building the Body Beautiful: Modernisms, Vitalism and the Fitness Imperative*; *Bloody Bodies: The Art and Execution of Dissection*, and *Vision and Visionaries: Psychology, Occult Science and Symbolism*.

Chair

CV:

Ingeborg Reichle is a trained art historian and today active as cultural theorist writing on contemporary art and new technologies, with a focus on biotechnology and artificial life. She lectures since 2011 at the Hermann von

Helmholtz -Zentrum für Kulturtechnik, Humboldt-University Berlin. From 2005–2011 she was holding a research position at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities. In 2004 she received her Ph.D. with a dissertation on art in the age of technoscience: *Kunst aus dem Labor. Zum Verhältnis von Kunst und Wissenschaft im Zeitalter der Technoscience* (Springer 2005), *Art in the Age of Technoscience. Genetic Engineering, Robotics, and Artificial Life in Contemporary Art* (Springer 2009). Her habilitation in 2013 dealt with the epistemology of images, diagrams and models in art and science. She is co-editor of five books: *IMAGE MATCH. Visueller Transfer, „Imagescapes“ und Intervisualität in globalen Bildkulturen* (Fink Verlag 2012, with M. Baleva and O. L. Schultz), *Atlas der Weltbilder* (Akademie Verlag 2011, with Chr. Marksches, P. Deufilhard, and J. Brüning), *Maßlose Bilder. Visuelle Ästhetik der Transgression* (Fink Verlag 2009, with S. Siegel), *Visuelle Modelle* (Fink Verlag 2008, with S. Siegel and A. Spelten), *Verwandte Bilder. Die Fragen der Bildwissenschaft* (Kadmos Verlag 2007, with S. Siegel and A. Spelten). In 2010 she curated the bioart exhibition “jenseits des menschen – beyond humans” at the Berlin Medical History Museum of the Charité. Since 2000 she has been a guest lecturer at various international institutions including the School of Visual Arts, New York; the Department of Biology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Boston; the Life-Science Lab, German Cancer Research Center, Heidelberg; Timbusu College National University of Singapore; SymbioticA at the School of Anatomy, Physiology and Human Biology, University of Western Australia; School of Creative Media, City University of Hong Kong; Lomonosov Moscow State University.