

Narratives in fugue II. Claire Fontaine

Co-ordinator: Nuria Enguita Mayo

Seminar/workshop (Inscription is required prior to presence):

* Date: 17th - 20th November 2009

* Time: Tuesday to Thursday, 10:00 - 14:00 h. | Friday, 10:00 - 18:00 h.

Lectures/secreeenings (Free attendance):

* Date: 17th - 19th November 2009

* Time: 19:00 h.

Venue:

Aula del Rectorado de la Universidad Internacional de Andalucía-UNIA (c/ Américo Vespucio 2, Isla de la Cartuja, Sevilla)

Narratives in fugue II. Claire Fontaine continues the series of meetings begun by UNIA artandthinking in spring 2009, looking at authors who have played a vital role in forming contemporary aesthetic debate, and whose first guest was Alice Creischer.

The idea is, again, through meetings and direct discussions with artists, to learn about their practice in their moments of fugue, in their most intense activity; not so much through direct contemplation of their work as through certain concepts, texts and images that reveal their attitude to the process of art and its context.

Claire Fontaine is an artists’ collective formed in 2004 and based in Paris, offering a sphere of collective activity that has nothing to do with the formats imposed by the art establishment. Their creative process is a kind of committed involvement that questions these very formats, often with the aim of understanding what the role of art might be in a world where consumption is no longer a mere activity but an unavoidable factor in the fabric of our lives. In a world of standardized subjectivity, where time and space are ruled by publicity, Claire Fontaine suggests the possibility of an interruption of active life, a human strike. “Art would simply be a way of paying attention to these interruptions, a space in which to talk about issues that are otherwise buried, an arena for formal intervention not to be seen as a means to liberation so much as a purely aesthetic space. As such, it would hold an enormous potential for criticism of the general organization of society.”

How to bring about this critical potential? How to neutralize the simplification of educators in the transmission of contemporary art? Accompanied by Michael Krebber and Elena Crippa, Claire Fontaine will propose “a free reflection, based on our reciprocate and different practices, on the question of the two main contexts of reception for

contemporary art - that are its two hells - the pedagogical space and the market”;

PRESENTATION

Wherever it’s exhibited, the artwork coexists today with the commodity in a permanent promiscuity, physical and symbolic. What is called the “context” is nothing but the grey zone of this cohabitation and this confusion. The use value of concepts and images has shrunken dramatically as their value of exchange has grown nonsensically inside the art-world.

The predominantly commercial places such as art fairs have been rehabilitated and successfully promoted as simple occasions for the public to view contemporary art.

On the other hand, the non-commercial life of the artwork is supposed to only evolve in the space of its regulated reception. Children and people in general according to international governmental strategies need to be put in touch with contemporary art as if it was something healthy or therapeutic.

After being an omnipresent topic of the avant-garde, the movements of the Seventies and the whole philosophy of the Twentieth century, life as a political problem has become an embarrassment for artists. Since then it has settled in the territory of the moving image and populates the documentary and fiction films, as if the encounter with the material world threatened it. If the purpose of art is no longer to construct or to depict possible worlds it’s because this task has been fully taken over by industry and television. Art has to address the viewer, this unknown subject that nevertheless must be taken into account.

Commercial democracy has engendered the hybrid figure of the client-user-citizen whose function is to claim what he has paid for. Now a paradoxical situation has been reached where if anyone from a public service, transport or school, has the necessity to go on strike in order to get his demands taken into account, the government can object that the strikers hold the population hostage and cause economic damage. Looking at this phenomenon from another perspective, the worker is now racketed by this new figure that pays for its rights and considers any form of struggle as an attempt against the law, whereas the law is nothing but the result of many struggles. The artist as part of the fabric of the same economy is in a similar situation, he cannot forget at any time that his work is a “sociable creature”;

In What is the act of creation? Deleuze ends the text by quoting Paul Klee: artists do their work for the people that are missing, never for an audience that already exist. And the artwork whilst it creates its audience, it creates the people that didn’t exist beforehand. The artwork is cited by Deleuze as a device of subjectivation for the viewer and not as a controlled pedagogical instrument. It’s conceived as a de-civilizing and liberating tool of revolt and not as an element of civic education.

The starting point of our discussion will be the enforced proximity between the artist and his public, the public of buyers

and sellers, the public of spectators. The consequences of this promiscuity are numerous but we would like to analyze them from the perspective of the artist and not from the sociological one. The continuous oscillation between seduction and self-censorship, the implicit work of re-formatting the art to make it compatible to the context and the necessity of self-inscription in a field where the critics are more and more absent, will be some of the points.

Of course one can object that artists are not forced to submit to these obligations and we can all agree on this fact, but what we call an artist today is somebody that performs these duties. Nobody knows anything about the others.

Claire Fontaine, 2009

SEMINAR-WORKSHOP

Tuesday_17th November 2009

- 10:00 - 12:00 h.

Institutional Nightmares, by Claire Fontaine

A comprehensive presentation of the project will be delivered. The approach to art as a tool for subjectivisation will be compared to the pedagogical simplification that, in order to make it widely accepted and more and more public, reduces contemporary art to an illustration of positive values. The aim of the seminar would be to analyze the possibilities of art as a disturbing agent that contradicts our model of civilization and continuously questions the model of accumulation as a viable one.

- 12:00 - 13:00 h.

Some Concepts of Neo-Formalism and some of old formalism in the arts, by Michael Krebber

Michael Krebber will present samples of works by several artists recently labelled Neo-Formalism together with samples by German sculptor Antonius Höckelmann and underground filmmaker Jack Smith.

- 13:00 - 14:00 h.

Curating in a commercial setting, by Elena Crippa

Elena Crippa will briefly present a number of exhibitions and projects she organized while working at the Lisson Gallery from 2006, when the market was still booming, to 2009, well into the recession and stagnation of the art market.

Wednesday_18th November 2009

- 10:00 - 14:00 h.

Discussion with the lecturers, chaired by Claire Fontaine

The different subjects presented by the lecturers will be discussed, examining more closely the issues of theatricality and eventually of relational aesthetics for the construction of the new figure of the spectator / interactive consumer and of the artist as service provider.

Thursday_19th November 2009

- 10:00 - 14:00 h.

Presentation and debate of the works of the people registered in the course

The discussion will focus on the different approaches presented by the participants to examine the possibilities evoked by their visions.

Friday_20th November 2009

- 10:00 - 18:00 h.

Work session with the people registered in the course

LECTURES/SCREENINGS

Tuesday_17th November 2009

- 19:00 h.

Imageless political education, by Claire Fontaine

Presentation of the three movies that will be screened during the seminar and explanation of their relationship with its general contents. The conference would revolve around the difficulties and the contradictions carried by the pedagogical approach within emancipator politics and in the diffusion of contemporary art.

- 20:00 h.

Screening of the film Sean, by Ralph Arlyck, USA, 1969, 15 min, original soundtrack with Spanish subtitles

San Francisco, 1969. A child of four and a half, with bare feet and tousled hair, looks candidly into the camera and confesses, with a smile: "I smoke grass". The boy, who rejects police authority but cannot name the days of the week, is portrayed by twenty year old Ralph Arlyck, who can be heard questioning him off camera and who films him for several days. He is one of his neighbours in Haight-Ashbury, emotional epicentre of the hippy movement. Of this film, with only two voices separated by a generation and against the background of Vietnam, François Truffaut said: "I have nothing but compliments for the director and the little star who is truly the 'kid' of our Modern Times".

Wednesday_18th November 2009

- 19:00 h.

Puberty in painting, by Michael Krebber

An attempt to link concepts of dandyism with concepts of painting and to disassemble this construction right away. Perhaps the word painting, the P-word, resembles the word art insofar as most people who are involved with it in any role

whatsoever tend to pronounce it with a wink, or with the gesture that indicates quotation marks, even if - or indeed, precisely because - they retain some respect for this field, which connotes the institutional or power aspect of the concept.

- 20:00 h.

Screening of the film *‘Amore si vive*, by Silvano Agosti, Italy, 1984, 94 min, original soundtrack with Spanish subtitles

‘Amore si vive [One Lives by Love] started as a film series made for television (and running about nine hours) and was later edited into a shorter feature length movie. Shot in the city of Parma, the movie examines in slow precise details the workings of love, especially among society's rejected, physically and mentally challenged and socially excluded.

Thursday_19th November 2009

- 19:00 h.

On issues of presentation and presentness, by Elena Crippa

Michael Fried's reading of Minimal Art as *‘theatrical’* has been object of much debate and criticism. Yet, Fried's analysis demonstrated an acute awareness of the changes taking place in the relation between artworks and their public and points at an understanding of art as a device of subjectivation. Issues of theatricality, changes in the modes of addressing the audience and in the relationship between artworks and increasingly commercial contexts of presentation and consumption will be analyzed in as part of an historical trajectory.

- 20:00 h.

Screening of the film *Koko: A talking gorilla*, by Barbet Schroeder, France, 1978, 80 min, original soundtrack with Spanish subtitles

In 1977, acclaimed director Barbet Schroeder and cinematographer Nestor Almendros entered the universe of the world's most famous primate: Koko. This documentary was filmed soon after she was brought from the San Francisco Zoo to Stanford University by Dr. Penny Patterson for a controversial experiment: she would be taught the basics of human communication through American Sign Language. The film sheds light on the ongoing ethical and philosophical debates over the individual rights of animals.

SPEAKERS

Claire Fontaine

It is a Paris-based collective artist, founded in 2004. After lifting her name from a popular brand of school notebooks, Claire Fontaine declared herself a "readymade artist" and began to elaborate a version of neo-conceptual art that often looks like other people's work. Working in neon, video, sculpture, painting and text, her practice can be described as an ongoing interrogation of the political impotence and the crisis of singularity that seem to define contemporary art today. But if the artist herself is the subjective equivalent of a urinal or a Brillo box - as displaced, deprived of its use value, and exchangeable as the products she makes - there is always the possibility of what she calls the "human strike." Claire Fontaine uses her freshness and youth to make herself a whatever-singularity and an existential terrorist in search of subjective emancipation. She grows up among the ruins of the notion of authorship, experimenting with collective protocols of production, détournements, and the production of various devices for the sharing of intellectual and private property. Recent shows include, Arbeit Macht Kapital, Kubus, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau, München; They Hate Us For Our Freedom, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis; Lucky In The Misfortune, Masion Descartes, Institut Français des Pays-Bas, Amsterdam; Feux de Détresse, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris and Claire Fontaine, The Exhibition Formerly Known as Passengers, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco; Recessions, Galerie Gabriele Senn, Vienna; Inhibitions, Reena Spaulings Fine Art, New York. She is now preparing a book around the concepts of "ready-made artist" and "human strike". www.clairefontaine.ws/

Elena Crippa

She is an Italian curator and researcher based in London, where she studied Curating Contemporary Art at the Royal College of Art. Until recently, she was Associate Director of Exhibitions at the Lisson Gallery, where, over the past three years, she has organised numerous solo exhibitions as Daniel Buren, Allora & Calzadilla and Dan Graham. and group exhibitions and off-site projects as Perplex in Public, a series of off-site works and performances presented at various sites around London, 2008, and a series of shows part of the one-year long programme "Lisson Presents", 2009. She is part of the London based curatorial collective RUN and she has recently been awarded a Leverhulme Trust Bursary to conduct a PhD with the London Consortium and the Tate Research Department on the project Art School Educated, Curriculum Change in UK Art Schools 1960-2010.

Michael Krebber

He is a Cologne based artist and he is teaching at Staedelschule in Frankfurt as a professor for painting. Although a professor at Staedelschule is not obliged to carry over concepts or denotations like painting, sculpture, photography etc., he voted for keeping this term. In 2004 he was invited to participate in Formalism: Modern Art, Today in Kunstverein Hamburg. In 2005 he published Alien Hybrid Creatures with the text "Puberty in Painting", and also that year John Kelsey wrote in a text with the title "Stop Painting Painting": "Krebber has famously declared his own lack of ideas, since anything good he might think of has already been thought before. So he has devised two escape routes: First, don't escape. And if you do, turn yourself in". Krebber occasionally writes for Texte zur Kunst and in the Nr.1 issue of May he wrote a text about the relation of René Magritte's Période Vache and the concept of Bad Painting.

PROGRAMME

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Friday_20th November 2009

- 10:00 - 18:00 h.

Work session with the people registered in the course

* Free attendance

REGISTRATION

Seminar/workshop >> This seminar is for artists or students of art, audiovisual communication, anthropology, sociology or economics, as well as arts producers and the general public, interested in examining ways of making art compatible with its context and discussing how it can rejoin a world dominated by consumption and the standardization of subjectivity.

Maximum number of participants: 20 people.

Number of hours: 35 h.

REGISTRATION IS FREE OF CHARGE.

Applications should be presented by filling this form or sending an email to the UNIA email address uniaartepensamiento@unia.es before 14:00 hours of the 12 November 2009, including personal information and a brief consideration on the reasons for wishing to participate in the seminar-workshop. Admission will be communicated personally to selected participants.

Selected participants who are interested and working on these themes on an artistic, academic or self-taught level, will have the opportunity to present their works if they wish to do so to contrast them with those of the speakers and other participants.

Certificates

Students registered in the seminar-workshop that can prove their attendance to at least 80% of the talks and, if such is the case, they have passed the evaluation criteria established in the course, will receive an attendance certificate stating the number of hours of the course (35 hours).

