

***Text, Image, Sound, Space (TBLR). Norwegian Researcher Training School –
Analysis, Interpretation, and the Exchange of Theories and Ideas***

The University of Agder, The University of Bergen, The Norwegian University of Science and Technology, The University of Oslo, The University of Stavanger, and The University of Tromsø

Call for papers

What is contemporary?

**Maison des sciences de l'homme, le Programme franco-norvégien en sciences sociales,
Paris, January 12th–15th 2016**

The notion of the contemporary has been one of the master tropes of the aesthetic disciplines and practices since the 19th century. Whether conceptualized as *moderne*, *zeitgemäß*, *fashionable*, or even *up-to-date*, a *sine qua non* condition for aesthetic valorization has been the *topical* nature of the relation of literature, design and the arts to the present of which they are a part. Topicality, or *aktualitet*, to use the Scandinavian counterpart, has been an inevitable condition for the aesthetic relevance of new works of art. “Ikke-aktuell”, non-topical, has been a verdict against which no other aesthetic merits can possibly prevail. Or, in the words of poet Arthur Rimbaud’s famous imperative: *Il faut être absolument moderne* – One must be absolutely modern.

While the hegemony of this aesthetic tenet leaves little room for traditionalism or classicism, it has proven elastic enough to be compatible with any major avant-garde movement of 20th century. Alongside the Baudelairean concept of *modernity* the notion of the contemporary appears as the expression of a society that sees transformation rather than continuity as its primary characteristic. However, despite the apparent non-negotiability of the contemporaneity imperative, it was from its inception haunted by a negative double. *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*, or *Untimely Meditations*, the provocative title of an early work by Nietzsche, conceived only a few years after Baudelaire coined the neologism *modernité*, challenges and problematizes the notion of a heterogeneous time.

While *contemporary* and *modern*, or, *contemporaneity* and *modernity*, in many aspects come across as symmetrical conceptual figurations, they also differ in substantial ways. Perhaps most strikingly in that *contemporary* focuses a *temporal* relation, while *modern*, through the Latin radix *modo* (or *mode*), emphasizes *formal* relations. This significant difference has recently provided the grounds for various attempts at conceptualizing *the contemporary* and *contemporaneity* as aesthetic, historical, or even ontological, terms distinctly different from that of *modernity*. Hence, philosophers such as Giorgio Agamben and Peter Osborne, drawing on thinkers as variegated as Hegel, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, Michel Foucault and Arthur Danto, have lately argued for a concept of the contemporary as a present comprising a heterogeneous complex of mutually entangled temporalities.

These conceptual developments will provide the backdrop for our seminar as a possible analytical framework for capturing the specificity of the aesthetic experience of the 21st century and identifying the matters of concern that mark contemporary art and literature.

Key-note speakers: Jacob Lund Aarhus universitet, Cathrine Perret Université de Paris IX, Judith Revel Université de Paris I (tbc) and Bernard Stiegler Université de Champagne Compiègne.

Participating faculty : Ina Blom, Universitetet i Oslo; Janne Stigen Drangsholt, Universitetet i Stavanger; Knut Ove Eliassen, NTNU; Randi Koppen, Universitet i Bergen; Unni Langås, Universitetet i Agder; Lars Sætre, Universitetet i Bergen; og Frederik Tygstrup, Københavns universitet.

Program: The program will consist of plenary lectures (45 minutes + 30 minutes of discussion) and group work. It will begin with a welcoming lecture in the afternoon of Tuesday the 12th of January and end with a dinner party on the evening of Friday the 15th.

PhD students from the TBLR member universities are invited to attend. In addition, the course will be open to students from Copenhagen University and Aarhus University. The number of participants is limited to 18.

As the number of participants is limited, those who would like to attend should fill in the application form and submit a short draft of their papers by 10th of November at the latest (300 words). If the number of applicants exceeds 18, a selection will be made on the basis of relevance, previous participation in the TBLR program, affiliation and status of PhD training; beyond that, early applications will be prioritized. Applicants will be informed of acceptance/non-acceptance within 10 days.

Papers to be presented must be submitted at the latest 5 January. These will then be made available to the participants.

Working language: As there are non-Scandinavian speakers present at the various sessions, working language at the PhD-course will be English.

Credits: Participation 5 ECTS Signed and authorized course diplomas will be bestowed upon each PhD-student participant on completion of the course.

Venue: Le Programme franco-norvégien en sciences sociales, Fondation de Maison de sciences de l'homme, 190, Avenue de France 75013 Paris.

Hotel: *Le Programme franco-norvégien en sciences sociales* and the TBLR researcher training school will cover board and lodging for the participants for the duration of the 4 course nights. Hotel reservations will be made by the organizers. Those who would like to prolong their stays must themselves make the necessary arrangements and cover any extra expenses.

Travel: PhD students are expected to cover their own travel expenses.

Texts: Reading materials will be made available for the participants by Dropbox no later than a month before the seminar. The reading list will include texts by: Giorgio Agamben, Charles Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, Arthur Danto, Michel Foucault, Peter Osborne, Terry Smith.

Application Form

Text – Image – Sound – Space
National Researcher Training School

What is the Contemporary?

PhD course

Program franco-norvegien, Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme
January 12th –15th, 2016

NAME

INSTITUTION

ADDRESS

PRIVATE ADDRESS

E-MAIL

MOBILE PHONE

TITLE OF PHD PROJECT

NAME OF SUPERVISER

HOW RELEVANT IS THIS COURSE FOR YOUR PROJECT?

TITLE OF PAPER

OTHER TBLR COURSES YOU HAVE ATTENDED

STATUS OF YOUR PHD EDUCATION
(ECTS POINTS ACHIEVED)

Deadline for application: November 10th, 2015

Deadline for paper: January 5th, 2016

To be submitted to: Knut Ove Eliassen, HF, NTNU: knut.eliassen@ntnu.no