

TBLR – Norwegian Researcher School in the Humanities

Aesthetic Crossings: Materialities and Conceptualizations

PhD-Seminar, November 16–18, 2022

Centre Universitaire de Norvège à Paris, CUNP, FONDATION MAISON DES SCIENCES DE L'HOMME

Aesthetic crossings are the order of the day. Across media, formats, and techniques, artistic practices are thoroughly marked by adaptations, appropriations and remediations. Whether in the form of TV series, graphic novels, and movies or the more minute operations of lyrical ekphrasis, musical arrangements, video art, or installation art, an aesthetics of re-appropriation is an increasingly noticeable as a feature of the current art scenes, visual, auditive, or literary.

In the current aesthetic ecology, immense archival resources are available and circulated, regulated and exploited in various media. Increasingly fluid, sounds, images, and words rarely stay separated for long. Artistic practices take place within a cultural environment irrevocably marked by the logic of the digital platform economy, social media, globalization, and neoliberalism forcing the questions: How does this situation impact the arts? And what does it do to our aesthetic categories? What conceptual resources give us purchase on this unfolding landscape, at a time when philosophical aesthetics is making a comeback, and terms such as adaptation, multimediality, and multimodality have gained widespread circulation?

The current plethora of adaptations and appropriations is not without its historical precedents. A work like Ravel's 1922 orchestral arrangement of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* not only renders 'visual' the synesthetic crossing immanent in the original piece. It exposes a whole spectrum of undisclosed materialities – timbres and coloring – that is now inseparable from the composition. Even at a much earlier stage, Mary Shelley's monster in *Frankenstein* (1818), constructed out of heterogeneous body parts, prefigures a complex history of artistic appropriation of the Frankenstein motif over two centuries. An 1823 London play, inspired by the novel, triggered Shelley's 1831 revision, later to be followed by a long line of adaptations in cinema, visual and plastic arts, comics and graphic novels, not to mention computer games.

The crossing of different artistic forms, modes, and media is presently a salient feature of the global art scene. Characteristic for aesthetic practices across the board, it can be deemed one of the current aesthetic regime's distinctive operations. Thus, Bruno Latour's recent series of curated 'thought exhibitions' picks up the thread from Harald Szeemann's framing of the art exhibition as 'poems in space'. Likewise, the current 'spacing of

philosophy' introduced by Jean-François Lyotard's 1985 exhibition *Les immatériaux* – a postmodern milestone – stands out as a precursor to the current mixing and increasing fluidity of not only media and genres, but also of the aesthetic modalities of thoughts, actions, and objects in themselves.

This seminar investigates how various aesthetic crossings relate to the material demands of specific media and practices, as well as attempts to capture the field or network underlying such crossings. The seminar welcomes presentations from PhD candidates researching within the fields of music, literature, theatre, film, art, architecture, and philosophy. Topics relevant for presentations will be adaptations, appropriations, ekphrases, and various other forms of aesthetic crossing between different artforms, media, and modes.

PhD students from TBLR member universities are invited to attend and present their work. In addition, the course will be open to a limited number of students from other universities. The number of participants will be limited to 20.

Should the number of applications exceed the places available, a minimum of one place will be reserved for each of the TBLR member universities. Further priorities will be made based on relevance, previous participation in the TBLR program, and status of PhD training. Early applications will also be prioritized.

Key-note speakers

- Prof. Knut Ebeling, Weißensee Kunsthochschule Berlin (confirmed), tba
- Prof. Ariane Hudelet, Université Paris Cité / LARCA (confirmed), tba
- Prof. Peter Szendy, Brown University (confirmed), tba

Program

The program will consist of plenary key-note lectures (60-minute presentation, 30-minute discussion) and group work. Participant papers will be presented in a conventional conference setting (20-minute presentation, 15-minute discussion). In addition, there will be text reading sessions. Participants can choose between presenting their own work or a theoretical text from the reading list for a text session. (See below.)

Working language

English.

Credits

2/5 ECTS. Participation and presentation will result in 2 ECTS, working over and submitting an edited version of the presentation (10-12 pages) after the seminar, will yield an additional 3 ECTS. Signed and authorized course diplomas will upon request be bestowed upon each PhD student participant having completed the course.

Hotel

Hotel reservations will be made by the participants themselves. Up to four nights will be reimbursed (up to 160 euro per night) for students from the institutions participating in TBLR.

Meals

Lunch every day and dinner Thursday night (Wednesday night, participants will make their own arrangements). Departure Friday in the afternoon.

Travel

PhD students are expected to cover their own travel expenses.

Texts

A reading list (that might be supplemented) will be made available to the participants by Dropbox two months ahead of the seminar.

NB!

Participants are most urgently advised to closely follow status and updates on the quarantine policies of both Norway and France.

Deadline for application: 1 October.

[Applicants should submit the form available at our website](#)

Questions should be addressed to the organisers:

[Charley Armstrong UiA](#)

[Knut Ove Eliassen \(NTNU\)](#)

[Sigurd Tenningen \(UiA\)](#)