

Contemporary art: object, hybridity and experience

Object

From conceptual art to multimedia, art has absorbed many kinds of practices and objects that art history has regrouped under the generic title of “contemporary art”. Today, the idea of contemporary art is specific by its diversity. This paradoxical definition is mainly driven by the complexity of the objects described. It appears that contemporary art’s identity is more of an idea of art than it consists of concrete objects.

As this gap between the theory and the art objects themselves is now a major concern of aesthetics, this theoretical trick around contemporary art objects and their material conditions requires to be defined. In fact, it seems that the true issue about contemporary art objects is the integration of new materials or practices that are not specific to the art field. The objective of this presentation is to clarify this misunderstanding about the materiality of contemporary art by exploring how its terms of existence have changed. Our purpose is to suggest a definition of the *object* that includes and considers the variety of art objects represented by this idea of contemporary art.

Mrs. Sirois-Rouleau will describe the main issue of this diversity by using the research of Nelson Goodman on the mode of existence of art, and the qualified reservation of Gérard Genette about those theories and his study of the activity of art objects. She will expose how contemporary art objects are no different from traditional ones. The former have simply accentuated the differences between the object and the “*oeuvre*”. In other words, Sirois-Rouleau will use those theories to put forward some solutions to this confusion about the material condition of contemporary art. She will propose to modify the conventional approach by using this theoretical frame on particular objects, such as the work of Janet Cardiff, in order to clear up the ambiguity about the object of contemporary art.

CV

Dominique Sirois-Rouleau is a PhD student and lecturer at the Art History department of Université du Québec à Montréal. Her research focuses on the ontology of contemporary art and the notion of art objects in current artistic practices. She has participated in several conferences in art history and philosophy and published in different art magazines concerning emerging art practices and ideas. Mrs Sirois-Rouleau is currently working as an art critic and a curator.

Hybridity

In her presentation “The Simultaneous Book”, Maryse Larivière will discuss the potential hybridity of the contemporary novel, between literary and art object, through a case study of the novel “Belle et bête” by French philosopher, Libération editorialist and jurist Marcela Iacub. Written as an autofiction novel, “Belle et bête” is a crude account of the passionate affair Marcela Iacub entertained with the demised Socialist politician Dominique Strauss-Kahn in the aftermath of his arrest for sexual assault in New York. “Belle et bête” is a subversive example of “performance philosophy” which was immediately put on trial by DSK for “atteinte à la vie privée.” The legal pursuits were actually prompted by the exclusive interview given by Iacub in

Le Nouvel Observateur in which she discloses the identity of the novel's main character and lover as DSK.

In this light, the publication of Iacub's novel "Belle et bête" in 2013 provoked such a polemic in France that its reception fostered an ideal context for us to imagine it simultaneously as a literary experiment and art object. Yet, Marcela Iacub does not claim to be an artist, and her novel does not present any of the formal characteristics usually attributed to artists' books. Taking a closer look at the photographic collages accompanying the interview and the legal leaflet inserted in the book as a result of the trial, this presentation analyses the cultural material produced around "Belle et bête" in order to consider how it modifies and expands the art historical category of institutional critique.

CV

Maryse Larivière is an artist whose practice encompasses dreamed realities, psychoanalytic examinations, reposts to published work, reiterations and collaborations. Taking the form of performance, video, sculpture and writing, her work lies at the intersection of art, literature, politics and theory. Passion always comes over reason in her unorthodox art writings. She is a doctoral candidate in Arts & Visual Culture at Western University in London, Canada, specializing in art writing and the history of artists' books.

Experience

Catherine Nadon's presentation is an epistemological reflection on the teaching-learning process of the aesthetic experience of contemporary art in the final years of pre-university studies. Like the history of science, art history has adopted different paradigms in turn. One need only think of the classicism paradigm, based on the notion *mimesis*, and the modernism paradigm, made up among other things of the Greenbergian concepts purity and self-referencing. The fact that these two aesthetic paradigms have such encompassing concepts facilitates their teaching and learning, which is not always the case with contemporary art. What's more, one of the defining characteristics of the contemporary art paradigm is precisely the loss of aesthetic criteria (Michaud, 2005), rendering more complex the task of defining its properties as a way to encourage its reception. Taking as her premise that a contemporary art paradigm nevertheless exists, Nadon has thus established, as part of an empirical research project for which she interviewed teachers and different actors in the arts community, a disciplinary model (Kuhn, 1983; Delavay, 1992) for the teaching-learning process of the aesthetic experience of contemporary art. This model will make it possible to ascertain the educational state of affairs in the discipline and to bring out a few encompassing concepts in order to give coherence to every form of knowledge that should be taken into account when teaching and learning about the aesthetic experience of contemporary art. In this presentation she will discuss this disciplinary model in the light of three works of art: *Self-portrait as Selene and Helios* (2012) by Francesco Vezzoli, *Chess* (2013) by Lorna Simpson and *Mogamma* (2012) by Julie Mehretu.

CV

Catherine Nadon is an art historian who teaches in pre-university colleges and universities. She also has worked as a curator, notably for the second edition of Orange, The Contemporary Art Event of Saint-Hyacinthe. She is pursuing doctoral studies in arts education at the University of Ottawa, where she is interested in the aesthetic experience of contemporary art in teaching art

history. For her doctoral research, she receives support from the Fonds de recherche du Québec - Société et culture, from the Ontario Graduate Scholarship as from the Excellence Scholarship program of University of Ottawa.