

Art and the Notion of Civilization

7th International Springtime Academy
Montreal, May 11–15, 2009

A Theme

It is the premise of this Academy that to explore the intersection of art, art history, and civilization is to reveal critical aspects of our discipline and its subjects. Whereas for some, civilization might seem to be a vague but unquestionably prestigious notion, for others it may appear as a threadbare notion that needs to be retired: nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine art history's development without a concomitant notion of civilization. As agent and emblem of civilization, art may act on the individual to refine him/her, or it may stand as proof of the individual's refinement, just as, for the collective, art might indicate the degree of advancement, might contribute to its progress and status or define its character. It might be the proof or motor of civilization's progress, expansion, or decline, and, it most assuredly claims to be at the antipodes of barbarism. In this sense, all periods, all media, and all locations of art's history might be informed by this optic, just as all aspects of art's making might be touched by that entity called civilization. The purpose of our 2009 Academy, then, is to invite the Consortium's scholars to interrogate our practice across the great multiplicity of links amongst art, art history, and differing notions of civilization.

7th International Springtime Academy

An Academy

It is to this subject that the International Consortium on Art History will dedicate its Seventh Springtime Academy, which will be held in Montreal from May 11 to 15, 2009. It will once again permit graduate students of diverse specialties and approaches to compare their research, approaches, and experiences with each other and with those of more advanced researchers. Participation in a Springtime Academy constitutes an essential element in obtaining a certificate recognizing international experience in art historical studies.

The Procedure and the Proposals

This call for papers will be published on the website of the INHA (www.inha.fr), as well as on the site of the International Consortium (www.proartibus.net). Students—master's, doctoral, and postdocs—who wish to participate in this Academy are requested to send a single proposal describing their **20-minute talk**, as well as a brief c.v. to the organizers at the Université de Montréal (EDP2009@histart.umontreal.ca), as well as to their national correspondent (see list, below) before 12 January 2009. Proposals should not exceed 1800 characters or 300 words and must be written in English, French, German, or Italian. They should be submitted as Word documents and *must include the e-mail address of the candidate*. They must also **name the specific session or sessions**, which are outlined below, **that correspond(s) to their proposal**. Representatives from each participating country will work with the organizing committee and the scientific committee to produce the definitive program, which will be announced to the participants in early February 2009.

(Please note that following the acceptance of proposals, participants will be required to send, within two weeks, a translation of their proposals in a second language of the Consortium.)

Proposals (Student Respondents)

Students who have presented two papers or more at previous Consortium Academies are requested to apply as respondents. This function is also open to other advanced graduate students and junior scholars. Respondents will be responsible for the material covered in each session. Respondents are expected to act



ANONYMOUS PLATE, IN F. BABIÉ, *VOYAGES CHEZ LES PEUPLES SAUVAGES, OU L'HOMME DE LA NATURE; D'APRÈS LES MÉMOIRES DU CITOYEN R. (L'ABBÉ RICHARD)*, PARIS, IMPRIMERIE DE LAURENS AÎNÉ, 1801.

as mediators during the discussion period by framing a given session's key issues, posing new questions, or drawing on their own research in order to stimulate the debate. Those who wish to take part in this Springtime Academy as respondents should submit a c.v. and a short letter that describes their experience, aptitudes, and research interests. In their proposals, candidates should **name the particular session or sessions in the program in which they would like to take part**. We also ask that they make clear how their research interests intersect with the chosen session(s). Proposals should not exceed 1800 characters or 300 words and must be written in English, French, German, or Italian. They should be submitted as Word documents *and must include the e-mail address of the candidate*. Candidates should send their documents to the organizers at the Université de Montréal (EDP2009@histart.umontreal.ca), as well as to their national correspondent (see list, below) before 12 January 2009.

Proposals (Consortium Professors)

As in previous years, members of the Consortium who wish to give a paper, chair, or respond to a session, should make their intentions known to the Montreal organisers by sending a brief proposal to the following address: EDP2009@histart.umontreal.ca.

Session Themes

Please note that the following session themes are intended to provide concrete examples, but that we will no doubt refashion sessions according to the proposals we receive. We also welcome proposals that directly dispute specific tenants of the call.

I. Historical Models

1A. DEFINITIONS: *CIVILISATION*/ *CIVILIZATION*/*KULTUR*

National and linguistic convergences and divergences through time. Signs of civilization in art. Civilization as “value” (both as an ideological notion—the principles and moral standards of an individual or a group—and as a semiological notion—the differential production of meaning).

1B. MAJOR AUTHORS: CRITICAL AND HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

Examples: Jacob Burckhardt, Sigmund Freud, Franz Boas, Norbert Elias, Edward Said, Pierre Francastel. What are the models and innovations that they proposed? What relation do they have to the objects of their study and to their eras? What is their applicability today?

1C. ARTISTIC ORIGINS AND SUMMITS OF CIVILIZATION

How are points of origin, apogee, and decline constructed, e.g., Pharaonic Egypt; Classical Greece, etc.? What epistemological models (organic, temporal, spatial) and what formal models (simplicity, harmony, ornateness) characterize a particular phase of civilization, as in the cases of Winckelmann, Dimier, Focillon, etc.? Art’s role vis à vis other factors, such as the origins of writing.

1D. CIVILIZATION AND PROGRESS

Art, artists, and techniques as

vectors of civilization’s dynamism. How do they contribute to the narratives of civilization? Are revivals and the *eternal return* the antithesis of progress and therefore of civilization?

2. Artistic Models and Cases

2A. ART HISTORY’S INSTITUTIONS OF CIVILIZATION

Museums and universities, their fashioning of our discipline, their role in the public sphere. To whom do these institutions belong, and for whom do they function? Foundational cases, as well as recent ones (e.g., the British Museum, the Musée du Quai Branly, the American Museum of Natural History). Repatriation; the heritage industry.

2B. THE ARCHITECTURE OF CIVILIZATION

Architecture and urbanism as embodiment and purveyors of civilization’s values, including international currents and vernacular practices.

2C. SAVAGE OBJECTS/ CIVILIZED OBJECTS

How are civilization and barbarism revealed in specific objects? Contact and questions of artistic hybridity. The fetish and the work of art.

2D. CIVILIZATION’S ENEMIES

Vandalism and iconoclasm. Degenerate Art. Anti-art movements, e.g., Dada. Can civilization’s destruction serve the cause of regeneration?

2E. REFINEMENT, INCLUDING THE COURTLY ARTS

The notion of civility.

2F. RELIGIOUS ART

The role (or non-role) for religious art and the art history of religious art, in light of the Enlightenment’s desacralizing vision of history that gave rise to theories of progress and the concomitant modern notion of civilization.

3. Civilization and Alterity, Pluralism and the Global Field

3A. IDENTITY, ALTERITY AND THE SUBJECT

Civilization as framework and constraint in the formation and expression of subjectivity.

3B. TRAVELLERS AND CIVILIZING MISSIONS

The production and conservation of art as impacted by diverse civilizing briefs through the ages. Examples: the evangelical export of religion in the Americas, the colonial export of civilization, the imperialist export of democracy in recent years and the consequences for the museums of Baghdad.

3C. TRANSFERS OF CIVILIZATION

Spoilation and its representations, e.g., the Arch of Titus; the rise of new artistic powerhouses, e.g., China in contemporary art.

Contacts

The Organizing Committee:

Todd Porterfield (Université de Montréal)
Christine Bernier (Université de Montréal)
Johanne Lamoureux (Université de Montréal)
Alexis Sornin (Canadian Centre for Architecture)

EDP2009@hstart.umontreal.ca

The National Correspondents:

CANADA:

Todd Porterfield (Université de Montréal)
todd.porterfield@umontreal.ca

FRANCE:

Anne Lafont (INHA)
anne.lafont@inha.fr

GERMANY:

Thomas Kirchner (Goethe-Universität
Frankfurt am Main)
kirchner@kunst.uni-frankfurt.de

ITALY:

Maria Grazia Messina (Università di Firenze)
mariagrazia.messina@unifi.it

Marco Collareta (Università di Pisa)
m.collareta@arte.unipi.it

SWITZERLAND:

Dario Gamboni (Université de Genève)
dario.gamboni@lettres.unige.ch

UNITED KINGDOM:

Richard Thomson (University of Edinburgh)
r.thomson@ed.ac.uk

UNITED STATES:

Henri Zerner (Harvard University)
hzerner@fas.harvard.edu

3D. THE UNIVERSAL EXHIBITIONS
From the *Great Exhibition* of 1851 to
Montreal's *Expo '67*; other architectural
and artistic events that stage
global competition. How do hierar-
chies among different civilizations
intersect with cultural hierarchies
between major and minor arts
or between art and industry?

3E. IMPERIALISM AND POSTCOLONIALISM

Art and empires, Oriental-
ism and occidentalism, noble
and not-so noble savages. The
question of primitivism.

4. Conclusion

4A. CIVILIZATION IN THE 21st CENTURY: CURRENT STAKES

The so-called clash of civiliza-
tions; recent controversies, i.e.,
the Mohammed caricatures. New
approaches in contemporary art.

4B. OPEN SESSION

Proposals that address the inter-
sections of art or art history and
civilization, which are not specifi-
cally addressed in this call.