

ABSTRACTS: WORKSHOP 2: ART HISTORY & PSYCHOANALYSIS

14:00 – 18:00, Saturday 8 June, 2013 Seminar Room 3+4, Art History Department, 20-21 Gordon Square, University College London

Keynote Speaker: Janet Sayers (Emeritus Professor of Psychoanalytic Psychology, Psychology Department, University of Kent) *Two-way traffic in Art and Psychoanalysis*

Much has been written about the influence of psychoanalysis on surrealist and abject art. Rather less has been written about the influence of art on psychoanalysis. To counter this relative lacuna I will raise for discussion the influence of romanticism in art on the psychoanalytic work of Sigmund Freud; Marion Milner's account of the influence of abstract expressionist art on psychoanalysis; and the two-way traffic between art and psychoanalysis in the work of Adrian Stokes and Melanie Klein.

*Janet Sayers is Emeritus Professor of Psychoanalytic Psychology at the University of Kent. Her books include *Freudian Tales* (1997), *Kleinians* (2000), and *Freud's Art* (2007). She is currently completing a biography of the psychoanalytically-minded art writer, Adrian Stokes.*

Speakers:

Maité Marciano (Kingston University) *Divergent perspectives on Magritte's Time transfixed*

In opposition to André Breton, who defined surrealism as a “psychic automatism”, directly embracing Freud’s theory of the subject and of the unconscious, René Magritte had an ambiguous relationship to psychoanalysis. Not only did he expressly reject psychoanalytic interpretation as a symbolist iconography late in his career, he in fact quite explicitly refers to Freud’s *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* in some of his artworks. In this regard, paintings such as *Time transfixed* (1938) pose methodological issues, which pushes one to go beyond the limit of its own field of interpretation. By exposing the art historical and psychoanalytical approaches toward this painting and their limit, this paper will engage speculatively with the possibility of a third position. What may be called a Freudian approach will be developed from Jean Pierre Sag’s intervention, which presents a double step of observation and analytical description that considers the artwork independently from the artist’s intention. This will be confronted with an art historical critique that engages with Magritte’s “problématique”, more abundantly developed in his well-known lecture entitled *Lifeline*. It will be argued that a critical third position could emerge that attempts to show that beyond Magritte’s discourse a transposition of methods from the *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* into a poetic may be at stake.

Maité Marciano graduated in June 2012 with a bachelor (undergraduate degree) in Art History and Archaeology from the Free University of Brussels (Université Libre de Bruxelles). She was successfully selected to study abroad within an exchange program at the University of Washington in Seattle

in 2011 (September 2011- January 2012). Maité is currently enrolled as an MA student in Aesthetics and Art Theory at the Center For Research in Modern European Philosophy (CRMEP) at Kingston University.

Jenny Nachtigall (University College London) *Techniques of recording in Dada performance and psychoanalysis*

In my PhD research on the practices in and around the Dada avant-garde in Berlin I focus on the relation between the politics of reproduction (in regard to feminism and media theory) and psychoanalysis. In the frame of the workshop I would like to discuss two aspects concerning the relation between Dada performance and psychoanalysis. Firstly, I am looking into the ways in which psychoanalytic knowledge, that artist like R.Huelsenbeck (who trained as a psychiatrist during his involvement with Dada and later in his life became an analyst) and others had access to, was translated into and politicized in Dada performances and the texts, photographs and bodies that constituted them. The methodological framework I'm working with (and against) at the moment is Friedrich Kittler's "discourse network", which allows reconsidering artist's use of psychoanalytic knowledge as a process of recording that resonates with a broader shift in systems of signification. Arguably, psychoanalysis too functioned as a recording system (think only of Freud's description of the analyst as a "telephone receiver"). The larger questions that arises then, is what did Dada and psychoanalysis as two "recording systems" share, where did there common epistemological ground lie, and how did their work of recording differ?

Jenny Nachtigall is a PhD candidate at the History of Art Department at the University College London, where she works on a thesis exploring the historical and theoretical nexus of Berlin Dada, the politics of reproduction and psychoanalysis. Jenny also works as a writer, translator and critic and has written for Artforum and Texte zur Kunst among others.

Robert Kilroy (Trinity College Dublin) *Psychoanalysis and Art History: From Parallelism to Parallax*

In his 1984 work *Pictorial Nominalism* Thierry de Duve responds to the epistemological issues raised by the relationship between art and psychoanalysis with what he terms 'Heuristic Parallelism': an approach which remains attentive to the inversely proportional truth-function "which crosses the two parallel series" (1984: 4). A radically alternative position has recently been articulated by Slavoj Žižek, who argues that our ultimate horizon should not be to work on a discipline's limitation "by relying on the other to fill up its lack" but to replace "the polarity of opposites with the concept of the inherent tension", what he calls a 'Parallax View' (2007: 7).

This paper will attempt to move beyond De Duve's parallelism by asking: what does it mean to adopt a parallax view of the relationship between art history and psychoanalysis? Through a 'short-circuiting' of Lacan's symptomatic reading of the image and Panofsky's iconological approach to the art work I will attempt, following Žižek, to reactualize art history through the prism of psychoanalysis while rehabilitating psychoanalysis in its aesthetic core. Ultimately, this shift from parallelism to parallax frames the inter-disciplinary

crossover not as external opposition but as two sides of the same discourse, which for structural reasons can never meet.

Robert Kilroy is a PhD student in the department of French, School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultural Studies, Trinity College Dublin. His research project, entitled 'Marcel Duchamp: Resolving the Word/Image Problematic', aims to re-position the writings and artworks of Marcel Duchamp within a broader history of word and image by locating art historical evidence within the conceptual framework of the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. He also engages with the fields of cultural theory and digital culture as well as with the writings of Hegelian philosopher and Lacanian psychoanalyst Slavoj Žižek.

Yasco Horsman (Leiden University) *Listening to Art: On Theodor Reik's notion of the Third Ear*

In my intervention at the workshop, I will re-introduce the work of the Viennese psychoanalyst Theodor Reik (1888-1969). I will focus on his concepts of the 'Haunting Melody' and 'Listening with the *Third Ear*.' Both concepts were introduced by Reik in his book *Listening with the Third Ear* (1948), and have later been elaborated by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe (in the context of continental aesthetics), and by Wilfred Bion (in a clinical context). The aim of my paper is not to trace the history of these concepts, but to tease out their implications for a rethinking of the artistic object in psychoanalytic terms, in ways that differ fundamentally from the better-known Freudian approach to the art object. Whereas the traditional Freudian approach sees the artwork as either an *expression* or a *representation*, Reik's work invites us to think of the artwork not as an *object*, but as a *mise-en-scene* of a situation that allows the spectator to 'listen' differently, i.e. with a 'third ear.' As I hope to demonstrate, this approach to art opens up ways of understanding the affective dimension of contemporary artistic practices, not just in obvious fields such as sound art, but also in what has come to be called 'relational art' or 'relational aesthetics' (Bishop, Bourriaud), practices in which the art object itself sets up an intersubjective relationship that could (I hold) productively be compared to the psychoanalytic situation as Reik understands it.