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The resurrection of the body

Never has the importance of natural intelligence for purposes and meanings been as clear as it is currently, in the era of artificial intelligence. Natural intelligence is not critical because it transcends machine computing but because it has a body, an organism with its urges and mortality.

Ferraris, Maurizio (Keynote speaker)

Università di Torino

Seeing the screen: the materiality of modern knowledge production

Contemporary images made from data or signal processing—such as the photorealistic presentation of infrared sensor information transmitted by the James Webb Telescope—can be striking in their authoritative and “realistic” production of knowledge. Though materially complex, these images often appear to be transparent, simple presentations of natural or cultural phenomena. Their constructed-ness, nearly invisible in the present, becomes apparent with historical distance as quaint language, antiquated graphics, and outmoded data models come into view. Modern traditions frequently link knowledge with empiricism, bypassing attention to material modes of production in favor of metaphors of windows and mirrors. Such approaches ignore the codependences of materiality and epistemology—the ways textual records, quantitative measures, and physical artifacts shape research differently. This talk proposes a concept of “screen” as the fundamental site and instrument of knowledge construction with attention to its often invisible materiality in scholarly and popular understanding.

Johanna Drucker

UCLA

Seaborn(e) modernisms literature, art, navies

In the ecological paradigm which has embraced not only Media Studies but to certain degrees also Literary Studies and Art History since a couple of years, the question of the „Materiality of Modernisms“ has to be formulated as the question of those hybrid „MediaNatures“ (Jussi Parikka), which constitute the environmental conditions of art and literature. However, already long before the ecological turn literary scholars as well as art historians have contended that the sea is the medium of literary modernism (e.g. of Melville und Conrad) and of the modernism of art (e.g. of Mondrian). Nevertheless the narratives of modernism either of art history or the history of literature have only rarely transgressed the limits of their respective disciplines. By contrast, I suggest to connect modern art and literature to (media-)technological changes which immerse the apparatus of human perception in environments which require the introduction of a new prosthetic organization of sense routines.

That the key feature of modernism is the switch from representation to self-referentiality is a long-established truth. But by dealing with its own medial or material properties a system makes observable its own external technical-discursive conditions. Thus, I hope to show how literature (Erskine Childers) and art (Neo-Impressionism and Cubism) are enmeshed in the sea as „a special kind of medium for modernism“ (Rosalind Krauss). The naval space of operations around 1900 is an environment, which involves literature and art in a special way into the crisis of Cartesian/Kantian phenomenology and representationality.

Siegert, Bernhard

Bauhaus University Weimar

Celebrating *Ulysses* at 100

Roundtable

This round table intends to explore and discuss some of the features that concurred to make *Ulysses* by James Joyce one of the most influential novels of the last century (and beyond). Particular attention will be given to the “material” aspects of the text not merely in terms of its publication which, as it is known, is an odyssey in itself, but also in the way the novel responds to contemporary technological developments in the field of communication.

Marianna Gula

University of Debrecen

Bartholomew Ryan

NOVA FCSH

Annalisa Volpone (moderator)

Università di Perugia

Undoing myths with documents

Roundtable

The round table dedicated to the Week of 22 in São Paulo will be a moment to question Brazilian modernism both within and beyond this mythical week (in both its literary and artistic aspects). Following the theme of the conference, we will debate both the consolidated narratives about the Week of 22 and alternative readings to the mythification of the Week of Modern Art as the initial moment of modernism in Brazil, through a problematising reading of specific works (either documentary or visual).

Eduardo Jorge de Oliveira

University of Zurich

Clara Rowland

NOVA FCSH

Cristiana Tejo

NOVA FCSH

Mariana Pinto dos Santos (moderator)

NOVA FCSH

Modernisms in motion

Roundtable

The reconfiguration of the body is not one of the more frequent topics in the discussions on Modernism. Nevertheless, the rethinking of the relation between body and machine, the diverse approaches to gender identities, the idea of a metamorphic body and the paradoxes of the double cross artistic practices, from painting to photography, from cinema to dance. The aim of this round table is to understand the multiplicity of this complex and contradictory performative versions of the body and contribute to a better understanding of its eventual consequences.

Sara Burkhalter

(Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA))

Maria José Fazenda

Instituto Politécnico de Lisboa

Luís Umbelino

Universidade de Coimbra

Delfim Sardo (moderator)

FBAUL

Literature as technique and montage:

"Zoo, or letters not about love" by Viktor Shklovsky

"Zoo, or Letters Not About Love", first published during Viktor Shklovsky's brief period as an émigré in Berlin in 1923, is to this day considered one of the pivotal texts of formalism in literature. Only apparently an autobiographical and epistolary novel, it actually reveals itself to be first and foremost a novel about literature, in which all the topoi of the genre are broken and reconstructed both from a formal, and a content-related point of view. The unhinging of the internal rules of the genre starts with a work on the "thresholds" (as per G. Genette's definition): the canonical temporal indications of each letter disappear, different addressees than the two main participants in the exchange appear, as well as the intertitles (in which the voice of the first-person narrator mixes with that of the author/reviewer/editor). The ban, imposed by the beloved woman (but who is not in love with him), on writing love letters to her, is circumvented through the use of extremely recurrent metaphors, in which the amorous feeling is embodied in the symbols of modernity (mostly cars and machinery), also revealing Shklovsky's connection with the avant-garde, both literary and artistic (it is not by chance that the designer of the cover of the first edition was the suprematist El Lissitzky). These metaphors are to be placed in the broader context of the formalist theory that Shklovsky and the other members of the Opojazz were developing in those same years, where the concept of technique and montage are fundamental: reality and fiction overlap and blur in an inextricable maze, in which only the Word survives and stands out, and where the material element takes on ever greater weight, constituting the prodromes of the theoretical formulation, a few years later, by the critic and writer, of a new literature theory, the factography.

Noemi Albanese

University of International Studies of Rome

Inter-artistic approach to Walt Disney's cinema: readings from Almada Negreiros and Mário de Andrade

This talk proposes a comparative reading of the texts *Desenhos Animados Realidade Imaginada* (1938), from José de Almada Negreiros, and «*Fantasia* de Walt Disney» (1941), from Mário de Andrade. Although these texts are focused on two different works from Walt Disney (*Snow White* and *Fantasia*), there is a general reflection on cinema as art which is born from the conjunction of several other arts and which concomitantly benefits from technological advances. I propose a comparison between the two aforementioned texts in what regards their views on the role and the statute attributed to these arts, as well as between the inherent combinatorial modalities (conceptual and technical) to the composing process, without disregarding José de Almada Negreiros' and Mário de Andrade's remaining critical essays on the 7th art, respectively compiled on *Sobre Cinema* (2019) and *No Cinema* (2010). Since cinema holds the potential for the articulation of all arts (with the exception of sculpture), I shall question how these authors, with this composite art as a starting point, reflect upon the schemes of identification, hierarchy, differentiation and conjunction applied to fundamental arts. I intend to carry out a comparative exploratory research on the theoretical interest which Almada Negreiros and Mário de Andrade had on Walt Disney's cinema, by inquiring up to what extent do the inter-artistic practices reinforce or deregulate the aforementioned regimes of separation and conjunction of the arts. The words “communicating vessels”, “transposition”, “mediation”, “assemblage”, “adaptation” or “translation”, shall have an important role on this inquiry.

João Albuquerque

NOVA FSCH

Object situations

The notorious final (“silent”) seminar of Jacques Lacan of 1979, dedicated to the theme of “Topology & Time,” involved Freud’s major re-interpreter in a last-ditch effort at diagramming the Real in its relation to the subject, the imaginary & the symbolic order, like a character from Ionesco or Beckett. Lacan’s descent into riddles, silence & interminable Borromean knots, nevertheless gives expression to that Freudian thing which, speaking from or as the unconscious, is unrepresentability itself. The materiality of this “missed encounter,” palpable, inscrutable, verging on silence, at the far edge language: like a spectre haunting modernity in the wake of the failed enlightenment project (to represent everything).

From Lacan’s first text on paranoia, published in the Surrealist journal *Minotaur*, alongside Dalí’s text on paranoiac critical method – to Breton’s lecture on the Surrealist object & the closing section of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* – to Yves Klein’s ‘The Specialisation of Sensibility in the Raw Material State into Stabilised Pictorial Sensibility, The Void’ (1958) & Burrough’s spectral tape recordings of empty rooms: the materiality of the unrepresentable – neither articulated through “form” nor “content,” but in the tropic movement of signifying possibility. The evanescence of the Lacanian objet a, the hermeneutic “vicious circle” of Sartrean phenomenology, the technicity of montage, the heterology of Bataille, & the “autonomous” “empty availability” of the aesthetic commodity, each détournes the logic of a materiality as “embodied meaning” & the “meaning of embodiment.” This does not signal Modernism’s incapacity to come to terms with its object, so to speak, rather it is a symptom of a failed objectification of modernity.

Louis Armand

Charles University Prague

Encounters with modernism. Travels to Munich of the Romanian female artists in search of a professional education (1890-1914)

This paper aims at examining the role of Munich as an artistic centre in educating Romanian female artists at the beginning of modernism. The approach will analyse the travels made by five women to improve their instruction during the interval 1890-1914 and the journey to discover their artistic path. The research will investigate the importance of Bavaria's capital as an artistic destination as well as the relationships between this European city and the Romanian culture at the dawn of the 19th century. The present paper will try to answer the following questions: Why was Munich a desirable destination for Romanian artists? Who were the contacts established by these female painters and sculptors during their studies in Germany? What circumstances made their artistic career possible? How was their formation impacted by encounters with other artists working in Munich during the end of the mentioned century? One of the objectives of this investigation will be to examine the modern historical context in which the cultural transfer between Germany and Romania occurred.

Silvia Marin Barutcieff

University of Bucharest

A spiked decision: semantic questions around the cacti fences of the rationalist houses of O'Gorman, Rivera and Kahlo (1929-1932)

Between 1929 and 1932, Juan O'Gorman (1905-1982) designed a house for his father and two combined studios/houses for the Rivera-Kahlo couple over adjacent plots in Mexico City's suburbs.

Whereas the buildings expressed the main Functionalism tenets, formally, but furthermore, conceptually – quoting Corbusier's five points, but also echoing broader serialisation principles, rational and cost-effective construction using modern industrial materials –, the surrounding living cacti fences – used on other O'Gorman's residential projects – sharply contrasted with the stereotyped understanding of what the northerly-founded International Style model was becoming.

The plots' enclosing organ cactus hedges, interrupted by gates, were a cost-effective solution but also a reference to vernacular architecture, ancient plantations in Oaxaca valley and living fences used to enclose fields, patios or kitchens.

Thus, this decision transcends the mere functionality of a fence; it has to be comprehended as a "revolutionary action in itself", reflecting several issues centred on reaffirming a primitivist vision of the autochthonous culture – foreshadowing current post-colonial readings –, like:

- the intense experimentation in the political and socio-cultural spheres that followed the Mexican Revolution (1910-20);
- a broader self-awareness of Latin-American cultures, analogous to 1920's *Pau-Brazil* and *Antropofagia* movements in Brazil;
- a perception of vernacular architecture (pre- and post-Columbian) as an outcome of similar proto-functional processes;
- O'Gorman's approach to radical functionalism as an agent of social and political reform toward a modern Mexican equitable society;
- a critical view of the European and Northern American landscape models, with the visual predominance of modern building over nature as a statement;
- a consciousness symptom of the function degeneration by aesthetic values that drove O'Gorman away from architecture;
- a foresight of Helen Fowler (O'Gorman's second wife), Mina Klabin and Burle Marx's oeuvre in founding an autonomous language of landscape architecture in tune with the indigenous flora character.

Carlos Bártolo - Universidade Lusíada de Lisboa

Maria João Fonseca - CIJVS, Santarém

Translanguaging in a time of transparency: the modernist translations of Pound and Eliot

This paper uses the theoretical framework proposed by the (ongoing) ‘material turn’ in Translation Studies (Littau 2016; Bennett 2022) to explore some of the translation experiments undertaken by Pound and Eliot to enrich the poetics of English and serve as a springboard for their own compositions. It interrogates not only the reasons for and consequences of these practices, but also attempts to contextualize them within the linguistic climate of the day – a context dominated by transparent discourse, invisible translators (Venuti 2008) and assumptions of full translatability, all underpinned by modernist linguists’ notions of the ‘arbitrariness of the sign’ (Saussure) and ‘separation of sign and referent’ (Frege).

As well focusing on the materiality of their ‘conventional’ translations (such as Pound’s ‘Seafarer’ and Eliot’s ‘Anabasis’), it also considers Pound’s *Cantos* and Eliot’s *Wasteland*, as exercises in translanguaging and self-translation, thereby opening them up to analysis as precursors of the ‘multilingual paradigm’ of late modernity.

Karen Bennett

NOVA FCSH

“I have no face”: investigation on physiognomy, identity and portraiture in Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf’s works

In 1937, Virginia Woolf writes to Vanessa Bell, “do you think we have the same pair of eyes, only different spectacles?” The problematic but prolific relationship between the two women has widely been the focus of critics who often romanticize the competition among the sisters. The objective of my paper is to highlight their inter-artistic exchange by opening up a new critical perspective that has at its core the shared practice of sweeping away the faces of the characters, either in painting or literature. Thus, on the one hand, I will analyze a selection of artworks by Vanessa Bell, mainly portraits, such as *Virginia Woolf in a Deckchair* (1912) or *A Girl Reading* (1932), among others, which will guide me through an artistic trajectory of faceless figures that not only promote interiority rather than likeness, but that also subvert the very foundation of the genre of portraiture. On the other hand, I will concentrate my attention on the faceless correspondence in Woolf’s novels and short stories such as *The Waves* (1931) and ‘The Lady in the Looking Glass’ (1929). While in the former one of the six characters, Rhoda, refers often to the word face and to not having a face; in the latter, not only does the main character wander as a ghostlike and faceless figure throughout the entire narrative, but when revealed at the end she also seems “perfectly empty. She had no thoughts. She had no friends. She cared for nobody.” (80) In sum, both Vanessa and Virginia, through their respectively languages, depict feature-less characters in order to call upon matters related to identity, fragmentation (of memory) and truthfulness, which allow a broader discussion that not only transcends the barriers of media, but that also makes one discourse permeate into the other and *vice versa*.

Gianmarco Bocchi

University of Toronto

Causeries, rêverie, rythme: Gaston Bachelard and the radio

After the Second World War, the French epistemologist and literary critic Gaston Bachelard has been a frequent guest on *Radio France* to deliver a series of lectures on his philosophy of imagination. The experience as a radio speaker was an opportunity for Bachelard to philosophically reflect on the radio and its poetic and pedagogical possibilities. In the short essay “Rêverie et radio” (1951), Bachelard analysed this mass medium through concepts present in his epistemology and aesthetic thought, that had considerably been influenced by the French Surrealist movement of the 1930s. The philosopher described the radio as the realisation of a utopia which was typical of the avant-garde *koinè*: a universal and dreamlike *logosphère* capable of giving a rhythm to the action and repose of the human being’s daily life. In the same vein, Bachelard argues that the seductive power of the radio could transmit poetic archetypes more profoundly than the silent reading of books: the radio voice accompanies the listener’s *rêverie*, almost as if the former follows the psychoanalytic method of the *rêve éveillé dirigé* as reinterpreted in the Bachelardian theory of reading. This paper aims to analyse the aesthetics of the radio medium as elaborated by Gaston Bachelard. After a concise introduction to the French philosopher’s thought, we will proceed with a close reading of the essay “Rêverie et radio”, showing the connections between the latter and concepts present in earlier Bachelardian works, such as the epistemological and aesthetic masterpiece *Dialectique de la durée* (1936), and future ones, such as the fundamental *Poétique de l’espace* (1957). The paper will conclude with a brief comparison of Bachelard’s radio aesthetics with that of one of the most important interpreters of European modernism: Walter Benjamin.

Carlo Caccia

University of Eastern Piedmont

Un Coup de Joyce by Aragão

António Aragão is a founder of Poesia Experimental Portuguesa (Portuguese Experimental Poetry), a movement initiated in the 1960s with authors like E. M. de Melo e Castro and Ana Hatherly. The stepping-stone for this neo-avant-gard movement is the first issue of the anthology Poesia Experimental (Experimental Poetry), a magazine-object published in 1964, where António Aragão played major roles (as editor, poet and providing financial support) alongside with Herberto Helder.

This study chooses to analyze the material and visual strategies used by António Aragão in the text “Romance de Iza Mor Fismo” (“Romance of Iza Morphism”) that appeared in Poesia Experimental 1. The conceptual framework of this proposal includes theoretical approaches developed by the Concrete Poetry of the Noigandres Group and by Umberto Eco’s Opera Aperta (The Open Work) with the purpose to address reference authors for Modernism like Stéphane Mallarmé and James Joyce.

Sara Lacerda Campino

NOVA FCSH

“There is no nationality in sound”: sound as an epistemological tool in E.M. Forster’s fiction

Sound resonates on many levels in E.M. Forster’s fiction. A novel like *Howards End* uses sound to expose to the readers and make them experience the technological, material and societal changes happening in England at the turn of the century. The “sounds of a London morning”¹, including the one of cars, are thus a new element in the characters’ lives that the author also has to tackle and incorporate in his writing. To open the reader to the importance of sound in a literary work is itself a formal and epistemological challenge to the author. In *Aspects of the Novel*, Forster’s description of the structure of an orchestra emphasizes the correspondences between the literary and sound media.

In *Howards End*, sound is also connected to the ever-present theme of social environments and relations. Indeed, sounds often hint at a certain social class. The “clink of cup against saucer”² is, for example, not familiar to everyone, thus showing that certain soundscapes are interwoven to one’s life. What these references to sound furthermore do is to stress its materiality, which is, ultimately, the one of the characters’ everyday lives. If sound works as a revealing agent, whether of one’s social and material environment or one’s truthfulness when characters evaluate intonations, its blurring potential is as well exploited by Forster in his writing. In *A Passage to India*, the unidentified sounds which resonate in the cave, including the famous and mysterious “ou-boum”, offer a reflection on their expressiveness.

Forster’s modernism aims at showing sound as a primitive and instinctive expression interrogating our closeness to meaning, and tries to compensate for the distance writing establishes. It leads the writer to think about words and, in the case of *A Passage to India*, about names as sound assemblages first and foremost. This desire to come back to a purer form of expression enabling an almost physical proximity to knowledge is also an interrogation on the role of the writer as a middle-man. As there is “no nationality in sound”³, to use the narrator’s words in the short story “The Eternal Moment”, it represents an endless creative source for the writer in his modernist explorations when pondering on identity and knowledge.

Anasthasia Castelbou

University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès

¹ E.M. Forster. *Howards End*, London: Penguin Classics, 2000 (1910), 6.

² *Ibid.*, 78.

³ E.M. Forster. “The Eternal Moment”, *Selected Stories*, Edited with an introduction and Notes by David Leavitt and Mark Mitchell, London: Penguin Books, 2001, 166.

Wastelanders: from T.S. Eliot to Juan Muñoz

Following the interest of new modernist studies in the expansion of “the archive of modes, genres, media, creators, and thinkers of plural and planetary modernisms” (Friedman 2021), my paper addresses the transmedialization of T.S. Eliot’s 1922 poem *The Waste Land* by Spanish artist Juan Muñoz.

Muñoz, born in Madrid in 1953, at the age of seventeen moved to London, where he deepened his knowledge of art and developed an interest in sculpture. In 1984, he had his first exhibition in Madrid and rapidly established himself as one of the most remarkable sculptors of his age. He died in Ibiza in 2001.

Building on Rosalind Krauss’ theory on the autonomy and fragmentation of the artistic medium, Muñoz, who was also influenced by Richard Serra’s postminimalism, elaborated a poetics based on the contamination of different media. His other major interest is in history, “la casa de la memoria”, as is evident from his tributes to such different artists as Borromini, De Chirico, Borges, etc.

The installation titled *The Wasteland* was created in 1986 and displayed in Muñoz’ last exhibition, *Double Bind*, held at the Tate Modern in London in 2001. By echoing Gregory Bateson’s concept of double bind, which describes a communicative scenario characterised by two or more conflicting messages, Muñoz aimed at problematising the relationship between verbal and visual text, artist and viewer.

After some considerations on the crossmedial features of T.S. Eliot’s poem, I will address its connection with Muñoz’ installation, starting with Muñoz’ alteration of the poem’s title, a phenomenon whose history has been in part outlined by poet and critic John Fuller (2011). In particular, I will deal with the following aspects in a comparative manner: 1) the role of memory, myth, and tradition in connection with medium experimentalism; 2) the function of optical techniques (axonometry, anamorphism etc.); 3) ventriloquism and miscommunication as *un*grounding of the artistic message; 4) readymade resources and “empty” contexts; 6) temporal dislocation.

Fausto Ciompi

University of Pisa

“Exercising our imagination”: Wyndham Lewis, blindness, and visualising the body

In 1922, in the second and final issue of his avant-garde magazine *The Tyro*, Wyndham Lewis declared that “the eye, in itself, is a stupid organ – or perhaps a stolid one [...] It is more difficult to exercise our imagination when the eye is operating”. This is a strange statement for a visual artist to make, especially one who, in both literature and art, possessed an intense interest in what he termed ‘the *shell*, the *pelt*, the physical behaviour of people’. How and why did Lewis’s views on vision change over this period, and how can his interest in bodies be reconciled with this attack on the eye? Using Lewis’s “Tyronic” art, his literary work of the 1920s, and his final novel *Self Condemned*, published after Lewis’s own medical blindness, I argue that this rejection of sight marks a radical shift in how Lewis conceptualised visual culture, and the role the eye plays in both representing and fabricating modernity. His blind beggars, mucus-squirting eyes and grotesquely distorted bodies use equally “blind” words to physically embody vision in the world, defamiliarising the impersonal, common-sense world captured by the eye undermining our perceived detachment from the façades and propaganda our eyes uncritically observe as truth, manufactured for profit by mass-media and popular culture. By adapting visual imagery to literary contexts, Lewis creates new literary codes for representing the unseen material reality “underneath the world of the camera”; a new way of representing modern(ist) reality below the surface-level façades of modernity with the same immediacy and intensity as vision. Lewis troubles our straightforward relationship with the visual world we inhabit, and the relationship between the subject and object of our looking, by revealing the invisible violence inflicted upon individual bodies in reducing them to mere voyeuristic objects of vision.

David Cruickshank

King’s College London

His and her materials. The fabric of impressionist painting.

Looking at *Julie Pissarro Sewing beside a Window*

In one of Camille Pissarro's portraits of his wife titled *Julie Pissarro Sewing beside a Window* (1877), Pissarro kept the cloth in Julie's hands unpainted, leaving the diagonal weave of the canvas visible and palpable. Featuring only a few touches of colour, the bare ground suggests texture and movement in the fabric that Julie is manipulating. The manipulated fabric appears to take on the shape of the hand hidden underneath the cloth and evokes the relationship between sewing, painting and the traditional woven painting support. The cloth Julie Pissarro holds is (also) the canvas. In that sense, the painting could be interpreted as a double portrait of *his and her* materials – the merging of Camille's *touch* and his wife's hand.

The relationship between sewing, weaving and paint was very much at play in (post)impressionist paintings. Artists such as Edouard Vuillard (whose mother and sister were seamstresses; his studio was next to theirs) painted weavers, seamstresses or interiors filled with patterned fabrics interrupted by bare canvas scattered across the surface, partaking in the blurring of the borders between craft, labour and so-called high art. They produced emergent images that challenge the figure-to-ground relationship.

Like several of his colleagues, Pissarro favoured matte finishes (rejecting varnishes) and specific types of canvases. In his case, it was a fine twill weave machine-woven linen (featuring an uncommon diagonal weave). A stamp from the Parisian supplier appears systematically on the canvas backs. Though changes in the choices of canvas types and preparations after 1870 have been the subject of studies in conservation, their aesthetic implications are rarely considered. I propose a close reading of *Julie Pissarro Sewing beside a Window* as the point of departure for a more comprehensive analysis of canvas in late-nineteenth century paintings and of the underestimated aesthetic role the material support plays.

Hannah De Corte

University of Oxford / Université Libre de Bruxelles

The author and the enigma of reality in literary modernism

In 1968 Roland Barthes states that the writer's hand writes things that his/her head still ignores. This powerful statement, that appears on the tombstone of the omniscient Author, seals a cultural and political process that leads to a new awareness: the writer's hand is no longer a tool executing what the mind commands. Therefore, the body, namely what Descartes used to call *res extensa*, performs autonomously. In this scenario, it is not surprising that the Author, as a pure immovable God, loses its aura, becoming something (or someone) more involved in the earthly reality. Furthermore, the Author, from being an entity shining with its own light, turns into a pro-duct (brought forth) of its own writing. This radical shift is foreseen not only by Barthes, who renames the Author the Writer, but also by the less radical intellectual, Erich Auerbach. In the last chapter of his well-known book *Mimesis. The representation of reality in Western literature*, Auerbach lingers on an extract from Virginia Woolf's novel *To the lighthouse*, where the author, rapidly entering the scene only to comment on Ms. Ramsay's look, reveals all her lack of awareness about the character of her own novel: «never did anybody *look* so sad». The statement, which sounds more like a vague impression of a passer by rather than the author/narrator's trustworthy assessment, is explored by Auerbach by using the word "enigma", which recurs several times in *Mimesis*' last chapter.

After exploring some relevant reflections on modernist authorship, the speech will focus on the relation between the Author's decline and Modernism, to show that 20th century literature testifies that the enigma does not lie beyond reality but is rather a visible yet unknown glaze that participate in the phenomena: a glaze that the modernist author cannot reveal but only indicate.

Camilla De Simone

University Gabriele D'Annunzio Chieti-Pescara

A corporeal experience of the world: on poetry and materiality in Manoel de Barros

The relationship between material world and poetry is expressed on several levels in the production of Manoel de Barros. The key symbolic elements of the Barrosian poetic discourse feature corporeal relevance, with particular emphasis attributed to the act of writing with the body, identified in the *lesma*, the slug, and expanded into a conception of the experience of reality through close physical contact. Through multiple synesthetic perceptions and osmotic metamorphoses Barros celebrates the materiality of objects regardless of their function, outlining an apology for waste and uselessness, or rather *desutilidade*, which touches things and entities and reaches the human being as a marginal individual, alien to the dynamics of civilized society.

The need to cross the boundary between word and thing is an obsessive theme of the poet's numerous metapoems, and constitutes the reference point for the activation of various experimental paths. Among these, particularly prolific is the approximation between writing techniques and visual and plastic arts and the search for ways to expand the expressive potential of the text, such as the use of illustrations, drawings and images, punctuation and white space and the exploration of the book/object as a meaningful resource.

For a period of over seventy years, Barros produced poetry books, children's books, photographic books, weaving a labyrinth of correspondences that tend to cancel the distance between poetry and the real world, between words and entities, in a peculiar celebration of the material dimension of things and beings that are nonetheless transfigured in the poetic text.

Francesca Degli Atti

Università del Salento

Fernando Pessoa's notebooks and the poet's evolution as a reader

The twenty-nine notebooks that belonged to Fernando Pessoa, already digitalized and delivered to the public by the “Portuguese National Library”, although they don't represent the whole number of notebooks that were already identified, they are considered to be an added value to the understanding of Pessoa's thought about multiple topics and themes.

This paper intends to present and analyse how these notebooks show the evolution of Fernando Pessoa as a reader particularly in what concerns to lists of books that the Portuguese writer intended to read or to buy (in his own name or in the name of “others”), reading diaries, translations or comments which were related to specific texts and authors.

This paper also intends to identify and understand the representativeness of these particular features and topics in “Fernando Pessoa's Private Library”, establishing a connection between those notebooks and his evolution as a reader.

Maria do Céu Estibeira

NOVA FCSH

Automated search for the poetic imagery of Cesário Verde

Cesário Verde (1855–1886) is often considered to be the first Portuguese modernist, as he stands at the transition between romanticism and modernism in nineteenth-century poetry (Lopes, 1987). His poems are characterized by an extremely perfected structure and powerful visual imagery. In fact, the strength of his images has been repeatedly (albeit posthumously) recognized as a decisive factor in the emergence of modernist poetry in Portuguese language (Martelo, 2012). If we consider the three kinds of poetry as defined by Pound (1931) – who provided a classification of poetic language according to the type of sensory perception that it triggers in the reader – then the poetry of Cesário Verde is a prime example of *phanopœia*, i.e. “a casting of images upon the visual imagination”. In this presentation, we intend to demonstrate how the poetic works of Cesário Verde contain the power to awaken the visual imagination of the reader, thus being a perfect fit to Pound’s category. For this purpose, starting from the poem “*De tarde*” (“*In the afternoon*”), we use present-day technologies to search for images based on its verses. Specifically, we use a state-of-the-art machine translator, a natural language processing library, and an image bank database. The image retrieval process can be fully automated, but the result can still be improved by tweaking the translation, the choice of keywords, and the final image selection. The result is an aesthetically pleasing sequence of images, where the order of presentation, more than their pictorial accuracy, is reminiscent of the awe provoked by the original poem. The fact that such process can be carried out automatically, or at least semi-automatically, suggests that the aesthetic and visual appeal of that imagery comes from the poetry itself and not from the transformation process of poetry into images.

Diogo R. Ferreira

IST, University of Lisbon

Isabel Sargento

Independent Researcher

On a critical edition of an artist's book by Almada Negreiros

Almada Negreiros (1893-1970), one of the most prominent Portuguese Modernists, left a legacy of literary and visual works which encompass many styles and movements. Towards the end of his career, he delved into geometrical abstractionism, inspired by his own thoughts on how geometry supports a better understanding of the universality of art.

A recent study of his estate, within the modernismo.pt project, revealed a great number of drawings, mostly unpublished and unknown to the general public, which reveal a very deep geometric research. Among these, there is a cohesive collection of about a hundred of drawings (on 50 x 70 cm pages), that have a clear discursive intention, bearing the name “Language of the Square”. Since their discovery, these drawings have received some attention in both research papers and books.

A few of the drawings of the collection are clearly essays for a possible cover, as if the whole collection would be understood as a large-scale book (there is even a reference to an imaginary editor, “Edições Nónio”). In this paper, we propose a critical edition of this book, bearing in mind the intentions of the author, formal aspects of the drawings, their varying complexity, an extant (and incomplete) numbering and, of course, the context of the total geometric work of Almada Negreiros.

Pedro Freitas

CIUHCT - FCUL

Simão Palmeirim

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Writing the body in the Italian modernist literature of the 20th century

Different perspectives on body invite us to explore its manifestations in Italian society during modernism (Luperini, 2014; Hillman, Maude, 2015; Taylor, 2015; Watts, Hall, Hackett, 2019). The present study offers original overview on body as a place, a locus of meaning. The paper sheds light on different issues regarding the aesthetics of modernism through the novels of some of the key Italian writers such as Luigi Pirandello disrupting aesthetic and political statements. His characters try to preserve their identity in the fragmented and modern world, concerned by the modernist crisis of consciousness in his novels and plays. Constructing the concept body in the modernist literary context in Italy is a process without observations especially through phenomenological point of view. The present study brings to light cross-cultural points. It represents the variety of ideas on body as a key concept in the Italian literary context in the first half of the XX century. It aims at appreciating the relations between body and literature, body and society. This paper suggests ways in which modernist ideas are embodied, exploring society, politics, literature.

Radeya Gesheva

Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski'

Eileen Agar's self-curated legacy at the Tate Archives

The study of archival materials left by female Surrealist artist Eileen Agar (1899-1991) presents its own issues within the scholarship of Surrealism, ranging from accessibility to availability and materials in different locations. On one hand, censorship and filtering – whether by the artist or by keepers – create an artificial construction of the artist's life and career. On the other, there is a right to privacy, and an archive will always feature a selection of relevant materials, as it cannot include every item from the kitchen junk drawer. Nevertheless, someone chooses what remains, and these choices are not neutral. Furthermore, when focusing on Agar, questions of narrative shaping, biases and gatekeeping must be considered and accounted for in the way they potentially affect research and legacy.

I aim to explore these issues of narrative and methodology as well as obstacles when researching Agar's materials and work. She has recently garnered the attention of scholars, and the recognition that was long overdue has created a new desire for access to her archives, bringing in questions of what has and has not been inventoried. The lack of standardized archival curatorship leads to discrepancies regarding timelines, conditions of production and reception, complicating the researcher's task and adding another layer to consider regarding prioritization.

Moreover, the independent, investigative quality of archival research countered with the collaborative aspect of building from previous scholarship work together to reveal the essence of the archives. In the instance where an artist has the opportunity to make arrangements for a donation of their archives, like Agar and the Tate, both a narrative and a legacy are fashioned. This curation of both how the artist would like to be remembered and the way in which archivists and curators choose to present materials as worthy of consideration shapes the canon of art history.

Christina Heflin

Université de Paris I – Panthéon-Sorbonne

Moderate barbarogeniuses: technology and modernism in Fernando Pessoa, Srečko Kosovel, and Adele Gloria

Connecting Portugal, Sicily, and Yugoslavia, this paper will explore three “barbarogeniuses” (term coined by the Yugoslav Zenitist School) from the European South and their take on technology within the framework of European Modernism: Fernando Pessoa, Srečko Kosovel, and Adele Gloria. As the title suggests, these three “moderate” poets each in their own way rejected the extremist positions of Futurism and other Avant-Gardes in favor of a more humane, moderate, and nuanced attitude towards the transformations brought about by technological progress at the beginning of the 20th century. I will read comparatively several representative poems by each author through the Italian sociologist Franco Cassano’s concepts of “moderation” (*misura*), “slowness” (*lentezza*), as well as Albert Camus’s idea of “limit” and Mediterranean culture. This will allow me to outline an alternative modernist genealogy that shifts the focus from the European centers and their canonical modernist figures to the periphery. Pessoa’s, Kosovel’s, and Gloria’s perspectives are particularly relevant today in our deeply divisive times where speed, extremism, and such concepts as “blitzscaling” and “optimization” characterize the tech world and impact our everyday lives. How did technology and industrialization influence the thought and writing of these three poets? What is their contribution to the history of how we relate to technological devices and industrialization in general? What influenced their similar, moderate, attitudes? To shift our attention to their less polarizing attitudes towards technology and industrialization has two implications: on one hand, it allows us to update the place of Southern thought (Cassano’s *pensiero meridiano*) and Southern European writers within contemporary debates on science and technology while enriching the discourse on the latter; on the other hand, it sanctions the creation of alternative Modernist genealogies that bring together regions usually not associated with one another in the context of European Modernism and the Avant-Gardes.

Ana Ilievska

Stanford University

Italian colonialism and religion during fascism: sacred art and the mission of modernity

Celso Costantini (1876-1958), founder and editor of the magazine *Arte Cristiana* in 1913 and secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, became the main promoter of the missionary policies of Pope Pius XII while Mussolini promoted his role as a standard bearer of Islam in Libya and used Catholic missionaries to ensure direct control on religious minorities in Ethiopia. In this role Costantini wrote *L'arte cristiana nelle missioni. Manuale d'arte per i missionari* (1940). The artistic guidelines set out in this manual followed those theorized previously in *Arte sacra e novecentismo* (1935) and were based on the scholastic principle of synthesis between tradition and modernity. Reflecting on Christian art in Ethiopia, Costantini suggested that the artist of churches should be 'Catholic', 'Italian', and 'modern' (1940). This paper explores the concept of modernity in missionary sacred art and positions it within the Fascist colonial civilizing mission in East Africa after 1936. As shown by Fuller, the mission of Italian colonial architects to "solidify the Italian nation" through the modernity of colonial buildings, can be analysed as an example of "solipsism" (2007). This could also be true for missionary sacred art in the colonies, which was inspired by Catholic universalism, but also determined by Fascism's imperialism and laws of social and spatial segregation which Italy introduced in the *Africa Orientale Italiana*. Besides the theory, this paper also aims to take into consideration the materiality of Christian art and to verify if colonial aesthetics excludes any form of hybridization. Missionaries could also be seen as cultural mediators and the Vatican took it also as its task to curate a Missionary Ethnological Museum.

Monica Jansen

Utrecht University

Between the poetic and the plastic: secret experience in Hélio Oiticica's 1960s arts

In 1968, the Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica wrote to fellow neoconcrete artist Lygia Clark about the "participatory relation" in his aesthetic practice (2006). He describes it as a devouring, libidinal fury, where the spectator steps out of their role as passive observer, interacts with the work of art, and experiences sensations that can never be known to the artist. Here, Oiticica subtly references what is perhaps Brazil's most famous modernist metaphor---that of Oswald de Andrade's cannibal. For modernismo and later mid-century midcentury practices of art and poetry, this metaphor signalled a process of consumption and digestion of European cultural influences, in the service of creating new, non-derivative works of Brazilian art. While this metaphor has been exhaustively applied to Brazilian arts, Oiticica's letter to Clark shifts its terms. Rather than working at the scale of the international, Oiticica works at the interpersonal, linking the erotic and the unknowable aspects of sensorial experience.

This paper will take a closer look at the erotic fury of Oiticica's participatory relation, examining a set of intermedially-linked works produced by the artist from 1964-68. It will draw from Oiticica's little known *Secret Poetics*, a series of lyrical poems he wrote in the mid-1960s and which I have translated for the forthcoming *Hélio Oiticica: Secret Poetics*, to be published by Sobercove Books and Winter Editions in 2023. It will examine the material relationships linking his works of "plastic" art and poetry, considering and how each medium fills the experiential gaps of the other. Where participatory art is actually touchable, lyric accounts of touch are not. But, as Oiticica writes in notes accompanying the *Secret Poetics*, the lyrical holds the power of memory which is not a "dead time" following fleeting experience, but the completion of that experience itself.

Rebecca Kosick

University of Bristol

Making muses of men: Dora Maar, Annemarie Schwarzenbach and Gerda Taro - the first female photojournalists

Few visions of modernity are more potent than that of the itinerant interwar camerawoman: clad in trousers, ranging across public squares, valleys and mountains, mixing with militias, and armed with a Leica or Rolleiflex. No longer models but making muses of men, Dora Maar (1907-1997) Annemarie Schwarzenbach (1908-1942) and Gerda Taro (1910-1937) forged a new *métier*: the female photojournalist. Their cameras firstly set them apart, but their materiality is discernable elsewhere as well, as this paper will explore. Maar and Taro's rearranging of gendered career templates began with existential self-reinventions, or baptisms: they broke with tradition by boldly taking on new names, even if both had their legacy subsequently obscured by male partners. Schwarzenbach's personal rebellion was more thorough: she repudiated not only the militant Prussian penchant of her parents, but demolished by example the image of Alpine health and political neutrality of her native Switzerland. Fiercely anti-fascist, lesbian and a hopeless drug addict, Schwarzenbach's personal life is as fascinating as her sprawling photographic oeuvre.

This paper explores together the works and words of Maar, Schwarzenbach and Taro as a uniquely original trio who illuminate the conjuncture of *années trente* modernism, political propaganda, media and technology. Our discussion will be supported by an iconographical analysis not only of photographs, but also key objects that link these three daughters of the new century to the frenzied cultural-ideological struggles of modernity.

Daniel Kowalsky

Queen's University Belfast

From within outward: biomorphic structures and organic expression in Frank Lloyd Wright's work

“Language is a third use which Nature subserves to man. [...] The use of the outer creation [is] to give us language for the beings and changes of the inward creation. Every word which is used to express a moral or intellectual fact, if traced to its root, is found to be borrowed from some material appearance.”, Emerson wrote in the fourth chapter of his seminal 1836 essay *Nature*. Doing so, he delineated a system of thought in which language is an emanation from a metaphorical relation between human spirit and the natural world, making the latter inherently and profusely poetic.

In the wake of Emerson's poetic conflation of materiality and language, Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959) pioneered a multimedial practice of architecture which he named “organic”, in which building, writing and speaking coalesce. The term “organic” designates an aesthetic stance, namely the conception of a building as a natural phenomenon, the inner structure of which being the elemental driving principle of the creation of form. In his perspective, the term “structure” takes on both an architectural and a symbolic meaning, as the former translates formative and underlying structures observed in natural objects and beings. The radicality of Frank Lloyd Wright's interpretation of Emerson's claim that “in the construction of any fabric or organism, any real increase of fitness to its end, is an increase of beauty” is seen through his literal translation of natural organisms into architectural terms. A waterfall-house, a beehive-family home, an ocotillo flower- ephemeral camp and the famous Prairie houses evidence the architect's unfaltering research on the relation between biomorphic structures and architectural form, in a poetic and language-focused perspective.

Inverting Wright's principle of going “from within outward”, I wish to show how the outward manifestations of form in his written and built work inform our understanding of biomorphic structures, and the selective modelizing frame of thought they result from.

Hélène Lesbros

Université Paris Nanterre

The reader as philologist: textual materiality in Augusto Abelaira

The primary objective of my proposal is to reflect on the material dimension of the literary text in Augusto Abelaira's (1926-2003) fictional production. Considered as a representative of so-called "late modernism" in Portugal, Abelaira's work often represents various media interfering with the main narrative voice. Technology itself, as a medium, is often emphasized, so that it becomes the centre of reader's attention, playing an essential role in the understanding of the narration. Furthermore, also communication among characters is mediated by these devices that amplify the distance between addresser and addressee in the fictional context. In the framework of a modernist writing that can't ignore the discourse on the artificial feature of language, the diegetic universe is transfigured by objects that stress the opposition between authenticity and inauthenticity of communication, *physis* and *téchne*. Considering two emblematic novels, *Bolor* (1968) and *O bosque harmonioso* (1982), which focus specifically on hand-written texts, my proposal will underline the importance of this device in Abelaira's literary project and in his creation of a specific implied reader. In *Bolor* the understanding of the plot is strictly linked to the perception of a diary as a material object more than a literary form; in *O bosque harmonioso* the same process is fictionally recreated and represented, being transferred from the reader to the main character. With different strategies, both novels then set a dialogue centred on the reconstruction of a message rather than on its interpretation. For this reason, I will point out how they drive the reader to prioritize a philological approach that establishes the material feature of these texts as the main requisite for their understanding and for a critical position towards them. Starting from this observation, my contribution intends to emphasise this "philological condition" imposed upon the reader as a crucial aspect for Abelaira's poetics.

Eugenio Lucotti

Ca' Foscari University of Venice / University of Lisbon

Interrupted trains of thought: urban transport and modernist Literature – a new phenomenology of travel

“In the twentieth century, said T. S. Eliot, the internal combustion engine altered people’s perception of rhythm; little had been pervasively rhythmic earlier save one’s own heart, one’s lungs, the waves, and horses’ hooves,” wrote Hugh Kenner in *The Mechanic Muse* (1987). Kenner considered that there was a direct connection between literary modernism and what he called the “second machine age” (1880s –1930s) when the wireless, the telephone, or electricity became part of everyday life, and when – for the first time in history – machine transport became a central feature of the modern city. This simple fact had far-reaching and often overlooked consequences in the modernists’ lives and works. As underground trains, electric trams, motorized omnibuses, or motorcars became a normalized feature of city life, the *perception* of the world was radically altered, calling therefore for new means of *representation*.

Yet as technology became more transparent, literature was increasingly perceived as becoming more opaque, more ‘obscure’ or ‘difficult’. But the modernists’ formal experiments were not the sign of a retreat away from embodied experience, quite the contrary. They tried to find new forms through which precisely to render this new sensorium made of partial vision and interruptions, of collisions or unexpected reunions.

In the wake of material and cultural studies, the influence of mechanized transport on modernism has started to be chronicled, enabling fruitful inter-disciplinary readings of ‘canonical’ texts, and the revaluation of less canonical or less orthodoxically ‘modernist’ ones. I wish to show the influence of modern transport on Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster and Ford Madox Ford. Specific examples indeed reveal how the modern technologies of mobility produced new experiences and perceptions of space and a highly embodied phenomenology of travel. A new materiality, which their experimental form sought to capture, thus discovering new facets of the process of signification.

Maud de Luget

Université Paris 3 – Sorbonne Nouvelle (ED MAGIIE 625)

James Joyce and the publication of *Ulysses*: a comic(s) story

It goes without saying that James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) has had an extraordinary impact on literature worldwide, even beyond the *novel* genre. In fact, Joyce's exceptional literary experimentation has become a source of inspiration for many contemporary authors and artists. Comics and graphic novels hold a leading position among the various narrative forms in which it is possible to detect Joyce's presence, either as a direct reference (for instance to his life and works) or as a mimetic reproduction of his style. David Lasky is one of the cartoonists whose work very much conveys this influence; the author himself comments on this aspect in an interview for "The Comics Journal":

James Joyce became a huge influence, though I didn't like his work at first. It grew on me. I think everything he did with themes and metaphors in *Ulysses* informed my earlier comics, and even up to the Carter family book there's a whole lot of Joyce influence.

By considering the creative impact of such peculiar forms of exchange, this paper concentrates on Lasky's *Boom Boom #2* (1994), second issue of a series of four comics. The author picks the 1930s comics style and blends it with his traits, thus echoing Joyce's use of different literary forms, including popular fiction. This 32-pages black and white comic magazine brilliantly illustrates some pivotal events in the life of James Joyce, in the period in which he wrote his masterpiece. Lasky takes Richard Ellman's biography as a major reference and, exploiting the full potentiality of the *comics*, he narrates the "epic" and "comic" facts behind the complex material issuing of *Ulysses*. This analysis exposes Lasky's acquaintance with Joyce and highlights his effort in imitating the author's modernist techniques – mainly those peculiar to *Ulysses* – by combining words and pictures. My aim is to demonstrate how *comics* prove to be an ideal medium through which it is possible to reproduce some of modernism's most compelling stylistic innovations as well as their allure to readers who are not familiar with Joyce and the kind of literature he represents.

Francesco Lupatelli

Università degli Studi di Perugia

Revisiting Sá-Carneiro's archive: "Além" and the genesis of Sá-Carneiro's *Céu em Fogo*

In a letter dated January 21, 1913, Mário de Sá-Carneiro presented to Fernando Pessoa a plan for a volume of short stories, tentatively titled *Além* (Beyond), he intended to publish before the end of the year, and the central piece of which would be a "narrative" of the same title. The author claimed that, once the details were settled, this would be "um trabalho materialmente pequeníssimo." In reality, however, "Além," and the book that would eventually be published as *Céu em Fogo* in April, 1915, had a very convoluted material history.

In a subsequent letter, Sá-Carneiro sent Pessoa some "fragments" of "Além," which the author emphatically presented as a non-text, inasmuch as the meaning that would constitute it as such was not materially realized, but deliberately unsettled, and ultimately deferred—its meaning, like that of the companion piece "Bailado," was, according to the author, perhaps "beyond" its "significação material." An heavily revised form of the "fragmentary" text, which included some changes proposed by Pessoa, was ultimately appended to the tale "Asas," in which it is presented, not as a narrative, but as a loose translation, and only surviving material vestige of a Russian poem by the fictional Zagoriansky, who, it is suggested, was so successful in embodying a wholly *ideal* conception, that the poem vanished as soon as it was completed. Thus, by being subordinated to a narrative structure, Sá-Carneiro's "fragments" are themselves constituted into a text. Meanwhile, "Além" appeared in *Renascença* with a note that contained a summary of Zagoriansky's story.

This paper proposes to reconstruct the genesis of "Além," considering it not only as a document of Sá-Carneiro's creative process and method of composition, but, above all, as a document of his engagement with the problem of the materiality of literature itself.

Ariadne Nunes

NOVA FCSH

Pedro Madeira

Universidade de Lisboa

A dream of transparency vs a desire for opacity: new media art's self-reflexive critique through glassy surfaces

For now we see, through a glass, darkly
King James Bible (Corinthians: 13:12)

Similar to what glass represented for modernist buildings, the current ubiquitous use of glass in digital technological devices, such as tablets and smartphones, now seems to congregate all the potentialities that modern architecture saw as a groundbreaking future. In fact, the so-called Glass Age prospers with renewed promises of transparency, as one can see by a series of videos that Corning, a corporation whose core product is glass, started to release on youtube in 2011 (<https://youtu.be/bbX9KOpDJME>).

Reminiscent of Yevgeny Zamyatin's dystopian novel, *We* (1920-21), whether more or less transparent/opaque, it is not difficult to foresee a near future entirely made of glass. But what we know for sure is that glass can change the way we connect to the world, and above all, the way we *see* the world, which can explain much of its early industrial reputation, but also its uses among early avant-garde artists (from Italian Futurists to Marcel Duchamp's *The Large Glass*).

Based on an argument of dialectic continuity, from the avant-gardes' operations of estrangement to new media art's disruptive tactics of raising awareness through an intended loss of grasp, this paper is intended to analyze the ways in which the latter enable us to question digital interfaces as part of new media art's metareflexive poetics (and aesthetics). Specifically, I will focus on the digital interactive fiction *Opacity* (2012), by Serge Bouchardon, "a journey from a dream of transparency to a desire for opacity," through which readers are invited to unveil in order to reveal, eventually leading to the following question: if we are, in fact, now living in a Glass Age governed by a culture of alleged transparency, to what extent are these transparent touchable glass surfaces paradoxically becoming a black mirror/opaque looking-glass?

Diogo Marques

NOVA FCSH

Sense and signification in dehumanized art. Critical perspectives on the aesthetics of Ortega y Gasset

The focus of my proposal is the relationship between *concept* and *metaphor*, as different ways of signification, in the field of philosophical aesthetics, set in the Spanish context of the Ortega y Gasset works on Spanish novel and painting, as a way of accessing the inaccessible depths of reality.

In *Adán en el Paraíso*, written in 1910, Ortega describes the figure of Adam, a man created in the image of God, a divine "degraded" who is in front of the enigma, in front of the things without being able to grasp its infinite dimensions and connections. According to Ortega, the novel, as well as the painting, are "fiction of totality", with the purpose of filling of sense and signification the emptiness of Adam, pursuing the intent to enable the interaction between different levels of reality, from which he had been exiled. In the painting, in poetry, the objects fade into the background and each element is linked to the others by something that is not even part of the picture but that constitutes it. However, art allows Adam to *intuit*, to enter into a non-spatial or temporal inside, into a purely metaphysical inside.

Therefore, where the concept is a past participle, something conceived and created, made and finished, in Ortega's speculation art represents a function of life that is not expressed through concepts but through metaphor, and metaphor is a movement, an action that carries an instrument of inquiry of the radical structure of things. Since Adam represents the problematic element of the human life, art, as a vital function, needs to dehumanise itself in order to overcome his condition of misknowledge, leading him to the threshold of the mystery of radical reality.

Bianca Melito

University of Naples Federico II

Asynchronous simultaneity of materiality of modernist text: disassembling matters of billboard, bullfight, shadow, and cadaver in Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Lévinas, and Blanchot

Modernism is heterogeneous temporality consisting of timelines whose rhythms and paces are not synchronized. Indeed, modernism(s) underline(s) that modernization is a coexistence of decelerating and accelerating chronologies. This asynchronous simultaneity of the modernizing timelines that coevally toes and froes is reflected in the materiality of modernist writing, which I shall explore by analyzing the use of billboard in F. S. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) and a bullfight in E. Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1926). Billboard and bullfight are recurring and central motives in Fitzgerald's and Hemingway's novels, known as the epitomes of modernity.

While billboard, a type of mass media, belongs to modernist culture, bullfighting has its roots in pre-modern ritual. Both billboards and bullfights have an intoxicating impact on their audience, blurring the distinctions and abolishing polarization between observers and participants. However, Fitzgerald and Hemingway use billboard and bullfight to reconsider the materiality of the modernist text. These matters of modern mass culture and pre-modern spectacles are simultaneously external and internal to the text, and yet they are de-synchronized with it.

This asynchronous simultaneity of materiality is visible in billboard and bullfight ambivalent status. They offer stereotyped images of reality and clichés of modern and pre-modern culture, yet they are far from being transparent. Both billboard and bullfight interpret the text and require interpretation. Hence, they are simultaneous to the text as its interpretation and de-synchronized with it as their interpretation needs to be derived from the text whose part they are.

Aleksandar Mijatović

University of Rijeka

A remote-controlled flâneur: a material reading of Verde, by Ruben A.

Within the Portuguese literary landscape of the 20th century, Ruben Alfred Andresen Leitão certainly holds a prominent position among authors «engaged with a persistent investigation of the process of signification» (Drucker 1994). Through an innovative use of language - in which syntax, semantics and spelling are altered - Ruben A. describes the concerns of a generation in constant search for answers, standing as a witness to a corrupt reality built on false truths. *Cores* (1960), dedicated to his poet friends Noémia de Souza and Alexandre O'Neill, fully reflects the Portuguese modernist spirit. Opening significantly with an epigraph taken from T. S. Eliot's *The Music of Poetry*, the collection is made up of eight short stories, in which surreal, and at times nonsensical, tones are intertwined with countless Portuguese historical, literary and cultural references. This contribution aims to show how the materiality of colour identifying each character in *Cores* conjures up an allegorical image of Portuguese society under dictatorship. In particular, I will examine the short story *Verde*, an explicit tribute to the poet Cesário Verde, in which the protagonist finds himself walking through the streets of Lisbon while being “remotely controlled” by power. In this city, both real and science-fictional, he is accompanied by extravagant individuals and animals in a desperate search for a “green” that no longer exists.

Sofia Morabito

University of Pisa

From the *Inobjetales* towards a "language of action". Clemente Padín and his theoretical-practical critique of the process of dematerialisation of art during the seventies

The Uruguayan artist Clemente Padín is a paradigmatic study case within mail-art. His career followed the typical evolutionary structure of this movement: origin in experimental poetry at the end of the sixties, clear conceptualist tendency in the seventies, decline of the activity in the transition to the eighties. In addition, this artist presented a relevant will to make theory from practice. His four *Inobjetal* proposals, carried out in 1971 by sending them to his extensive international list of contacts, are proof of this. These were small projects, in which the action of the recipient was requested. At the same time, they attempted to undo some of the legacies of the modern-avant-garde art project, such as the question of authorship or the materiality of artistic products.

This presentation deals with Padín's *Inobjetales*, as well as the artist's own critique of them. After the rehearsals, the artist found himself forced to acknowledge that the initial purpose – that is, the "dematerialisation" of art – was not possible. At least a minimum support frame was always necessary to transmit the information. From this realisation, Padín directed his efforts towards what he called as a "language of action": a kind of diffuse grammar in which action could serve to critically analyse reality, communicate it and, perhaps, intervene in it.

With his magazines, publications, exhibitions and mailed proposals, Padín did a huge amount of transnational connective work. His appropriation of the material culture of the postal system served to support critical and self-critical practices, which became politically radicalised as the Uruguayan and Latin American context developed. As the 1970s progressed, dictatorships, repression and violence spread throughout the Latin American region. Padín ended up in prison in 1977. Some of his postal sendings had been detected by the police system of the Uruguayan civil-military dictatorship, and certain artist's publications became evidence for his trial. Curiously, the officialdom, which systematically disregarded experimental artistic practices, on this occasion did pay attention to these artworks, in order to use them against the artist himself.

Pablo Santa Olalla

NOVA FCSH

Edward Gordon Craig, potential stage director of *The Mariner*, by Fernando Pessoa

Although Edward Gordon Craig, on the one hand, was a radical defender of the autonomy of the theater from the other arts (especially literature) and Fernando Pessoa, on the other hand, favored the supremacy of the text over the performance, there are significant points of contact between the propositions of both concerning the art of theater. An example of this is the repulsion to certain aspects of the actor's craft, recurrent in the theoretical notes written by them, as well as their predilection for principles of impersonality in artistic creation.

Despite the stance adopted by Pessoa, his "static drama in one tableau" *The Sailor* (1915) could have been staged in other European countries even then, since the play calls for an alternative scene to those that predominated on Portuguese stages at the time, directed by illusionist principles. In fact, among Pessoa's European contemporaries, Gordon Craig would have been one of the most suitable theater professionals to stage that play, given his predilection for theatrical devices capable of articulating the visible and the invisible. Such focus on scenic materiality, with the intention of suggesting to the spectator what the eyes cannot capture, fits Pessoa's play, whose characters glimpse their own fictional condition and perceive themselves as puppets that speak and gesticulate under the command of a so-called "fifth person".

Thus, the article will seek to demonstrate that, despite their different orientations, the paths taken by the two artists converge in the sense of pointing to the need to reinvent the art of theater in the terms in which it was predominantly practiced in Europe between the end of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th.

Flávio Penteadó

NOVA FCSH

The materiality of typescripts in Pedro Homem de Mello's writing practice

In the last few decades, scholars from different backgrounds have drawn attention to the impact of the typewriter on 20th-century writing practices, especially some literary experiments of modernist authors (Violet, 1996; Kittler, 1999; Sullivan, 2013; Lyons, 2021). Relying on case studies from Germany, France, Belgium, the USA, the UK, and Australia, those critics concluded that “responses to the typewriter were never uniform” and “we must now extend the geographical sphere” of research to promote a broader understanding of the machine’s influence on literary creativity, throughout the 1900s (Lyons, 2021: 89, 15). Accordingly, this presentation will focus on the typewriting habits of Portuguese author Pedro Homem de Mello (1904-1984), who was associated with the modernist counter-revolution (Lourenço, 1974: 165-194; Sena, 1977: 30-31) of *Presença*, 1927-1940, but always followed his path independent of any literary movements.

Based on extensive research into the author’s estate and the archives of fellow contemporary writers, the paper will examine Homem de Mello’s typescripts, produced within several spheres of activity: 1. his personal and professional correspondence; 2. his work as an author and presenter of TV and radio programs; 3. his newspaper collaborations and essays as a folklorist; 4. his vast poetic oeuvre. After associating different uses of the typewriter with specific text genres, it will concentrate on material aspects of extant typescripts, such as page management strategies, the use of coloured ribbons, the occurrence of mechanical errors (Pereira, 2018), and the combination of handwritten corrections and paper stencil duplicators as a favoured revision technique. Finally, it will interrogate how the typewriter may have contributed to the evolution of the poet’s style and whether its progressive use (from a remediation device – for *typing up* – to a primary compositional tool – for *typing onto*) catalysed freer modes of expression in the traditional poetic forms of his choice.

Elsa Pereira FLUL

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The materiality of Fernando Pessoa's "A hora do diabo": towards a new edition

The materiality of the supports of the texts written by Fernando Pessoa is of increasing interest to researchers of the Portuguese writer's archive, whether in discussing the dating of some texts or the organization of certain groupings of texts. This aspect has already played an important role in helping scholars to imagine a topographic map of the places where Pessoa wrote many of his texts and even to clarify the authorial attribution of many of them. Materiality consists of a series of indices that complement the 'data' inferred from the words themselves. Lying at the junction of materiality and meaning, of the historical and the linguistic, these indices serve as a principle of action that commonly guides the best editorial practices. Starting from these premises, we, as editors and critics, are interested in reviewing the existing edition of a short work by Fernando Pessoa, "A Hora do Diabo", and demonstrating how materiality can be decisive for reediting it in the future.

Jerónimo Pizarro

Universidad de los Andes

John Pedro Schwartz

American University of Malta

***The rise of mass advertising: law, enchantment, and the cultural boundaries of British modernity* (Oxford University Press, 2022)**

The Rise of Mass Advertising is a first cultural legal history of advertising in Britain, tracing the rise of mass advertising circa 1840–1914 and its legal shaping. The emergence of this new system of unprecedented geographical and social penetration, its material enveloping of multiple environments, and its routinization, disrupted the perceived foundations of modernity. The idea that culture was organized by identifiable fields of knowledge, experience, and authority came under strain as advertisers claimed to share values with the era's most prominent fields, including news, art, science, and religiously inflected morality. While cultural boundaries grew blurry, the assumption that the world was becoming progressively disenchanted was undermined, as enchanted experiences multiplied with the transformation of everyday environments by advertising. Magical thinking, a dwelling in mysteries, searches for transfiguration, affective connection between humans and things, and powerful fantasy disrupted assumptions that the capitalist economy was a victory of reason.

The Rise of Mass Advertising examines how contemporaries came to terms with the disruptive impact by mobilizing legal processes, powers, and concepts. Law was implicated in performing boundary work that preserved the modern sense of field distinctions. Advertising's cultural meanings and its organization were shaped dialectically vis-à-vis other fields in a process that mainstreamed and

legitimized it with legal means, but also construed it as an inferior simulation of the values of a progressive modernity, exhibiting epistemological shortfalls and aesthetic compromises that marked it apart from adjacent fields. The dual treatment meanwhile disavowed the central role of enchantment, in what amounted to a normative enterprise of disenchantment. One of the ironies of this enterprise was that it ultimately drove professional advertisers to embrace enchantment as their peculiar expertise.

The analysis draws on an extensive archive that bridges disciplinary divides, covering legal and cultural history sources. It offers a novel methodological approach to the study of advertising, which brings together the history of capitalism, the history of knowledge, and the history of modern disenchantment, and yields a new account of advertising's significance for modernity.

Anat Rosenberg

Reichman University

Incandescent ecologies: rare metals and architectural illumination in interwar

Germany

If the early growth of the electronics industry can be attributed to one material, it would be tungsten. Around 1910, German and American researchers discovered that the rare metal was the best material for the filaments of incandescent lights, then the most economically significant product of the electronics industry. Tungsten lamps were dramatically more cost-efficient than their predecessors, like Thomas Edison's carbon-filament lamps. Consequently, more and more people electrified their homes and workplaces, which culminated in electricity's virtual ubiquity in industrialized nations by 1935. This paper concerns the profound yet virtually unstudied effects of tungsten's industrial applications on modern visual culture. My case study is the architecture, print materials, and pedagogical performance of the German lighting manufacturer Osram.

Still a global leader in lighting products, Osram was founded in 1919 as a merger of the lighting divisions of Germany's three biggest electronics companies. While tungsten lamps spread exponentially after World War I, knowledge of how to use them properly was lacking, which led to poor installations. To remedy this problem, Osram sought to establish a grammar of light for every imaginable architectural situation. They built the Osram-Lichthaus, a showroom and lecture hall that demonstrated good and bad applications of electric lighting in shops, offices, industrial workplaces, farms, and other contexts. Similarly, Osram's educational (and promotional) print campaign, comprising illustrated informational pamphlets dedicated to specific lighting situations, advised people on the best way to adapt electric lighting to the buildings they lived and worked in. While Osram's tungsten innovations made electrical illumination a vector of modernization and economic recovery in interwar Germany, they also catalyzed the connection between modern visual culture and the ubiquitous and continuous consumption of electrical energy. I embed Osram's activities within the broader geopolitics of the tungsten industry through referencing writings by early-twentieth-century geologists and metallurgists.

Christian Sancto

University of Rochester

The materiality of free verse in its early days: scoping a new paradigm for poetry

«The novelty meets with neglect; neglect provokes attack; and attack demands a theory» (ELIOT 1991b, 184). With these words, in 1917, T.S. Eliot got rid of the widespread debate on free verse that had proliferated during the avant-garde age on magazines and paratexts. According to Eliot, «vers libre does not exist» (ELIOT 1991a, 183), or may as well exist as simply an empty theoretical conjecture—novelty being the work of talent, whose agency is shaped inside tradition.

Eliot's opinion seems to have at least partially set the modernist view on free verse: this contribution aims to juxtapose it to some of the previous Italian and French critical analyses on the subject. One of the goals will be to show how the debate on free verse was in fact a matter of inventing a tradition that legitimated the new aesthetic within and not in opposition to the acknowledged literary canons, despite the iconoclastic claims of some writers, i.e. Marinetti and his Futurist fellows. Nonetheless, the most relevant and long-lasting novelty of free verse, neglected by Eliot, will also be at stake—namely, the questioning of a metaphysical conception of poetic form in favor of the enhancement of poetic act materiality. Instances such as Mallarmé's *Crise de vers*, Lucini's *Il verso libero* or Kahn's first definition of free verse as the «fragment le plus court possible figurant un arrêt de voix et un arrêt de sens» (KAHN 1912, 22) posits indeed a new epistemic paradigm for poetry, for they convey a renewed necessity for both typography and voice to support and surrogate the old regularities of form. This intervention would then display how and when this new poetic consciousness arose in free verse first theorists' works.

Luca Sanseverino

Scuola Superiore Meridionale of Naples

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Pessoa's presence in journals and newspapers (1912-1935)

Contrary to a widespread idea of an anonymous and unpublished poet, Fernando Pessoa had a remarkable presence in several journals and newspapers throughout his life. Having published only one book of poetry in Portuguese, this permanent collaboration with periodicals was the decisive aspect, within his lifetime, in the publication and promotion of his work.

The *Digital Edition of Fernando Pessoa* (pessoadigital.pt) gathers transcriptions and facsimiles of his publications in journals and newspapers, both of prose and poetry, between 1912 and the year of his death, 1935, including the different published versions of the same work.

Departing from the data collected in this edition, through text encoding (in TEI) and indexation, we propose to analyze the main elements and features of this presence in periodicals, focusing on different time frames. Through charts gathering a broad amount of data regarding these publications, and its interpretation – relating these elements with a social, bibliographic and literary context –, the image of a selective but remarkable presence of the poet in some of the main Portuguese periodicals emerges.

Pedro Sepúlveda

NOVA FCSH

Ulrike Henny-Krahmer

University of Rostock

Jorge Uribe

EAFIT University in Medellín

Inês Rebelo do Carmo

NOVA FCSH

***La Bête noire*: an experiment on the margins of surrealism**

La Bête noire (1935-1936) is a little studied short-lived art and literature newspaper conceived by Michel Leiris, and directed by Maurice Raynal and Tériade, who was at the time the art director of *Minotaure* but would soon abandon it because of its dominance by André Breton. Many contributors to *La Bête noire* were dissidents of surrealism (Antonin Artaud, Jacques Baron, Raymond Queneau, Roger Vitrac, etc.), while the artists whose works illustrated its pages and who published texts in it included those that Raynal and Tériade promoted, such as André Beaudin, Francisco Borès, Marc Chagall, Pablo Gargallo, Fernand Léger, and Suzanne Roger. Featuring texts on art, literature, theater and cinema, often adopting a tone that was both satirical and didactic, *La Bête noire* was critical of fascism, anti-Semitism, Catholicism and conservatism, but also of state policy in the field of art.

Focusing on *La Bête noire*, the paper points out that the ‘little magazines’ of the interwar period were the products of networks of people who shared the same or similar ideas about modernism and the avant-garde rather than of the commercial interests that the established publishing houses represented. Furthermore, these networks were much more close-knit than those built around bigger and more popular publications. Thus, the paper argues that these publications are invaluable sources for the study and contextualization of modernism and the avant-garde. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach based on both texts and illustrations as well as published and unpublished correspondence, the paper will first discuss the selection of format for *La Bête noire*. Then, it will not only analyze the aesthetic, political, moral and social values that the newspaper sought to promote, but will also explore the impact that the intricate interpersonal relations within its network and the interaction with other periodicals and their networks had on it.

Poppy Sfakianaki

Princeton University

Between the material and the ideal: for a modernist reading of *Le vergini delle rocce*

According to an influential critical tradition that has one of its key texts in Fredric Jameson's *Singular Modernity* (2002), modernism can be understood as a response to the process of modernization in a context in which two competing sets of social, cultural, political and economic values, one on the rise and the other on the wane, overlap and are simultaneously accessible. The aim of this paper is to situate D'Annunzio within this framework. Specifically, I will suggest that *Le vergini delle rocce* (1895), arguably D'Annunzio's most ideologically explicit prose work, articulates these overlapping temporalities in the opposition between the modern, materialist Rome of the new Kingdom of Italy and the protagonist's ancestral fiefdom of Rebursa, which appears frozen in a kind of timeless idealization of the feudal past represented by the noble Capece Montaga family. Furthermore, I will argue that in this context it becomes possible to recuperate the fraught category of "decadentism" as an internal articulation of modernism broadly understood.

Luca Somigli

University of Toronto

The aural unconscious: overtones in (and across) modernist aesthetic theory

Hermann von Helmholtz's theory of overtones comprised a major source of innovation for musicians and music theorists working in the early twentieth century. For one, it implied that consonance and dissonance, far from representing stable musical categories, are inflection points in a shifting continuum that changes across cultures, throughout history, and with the habits of listeners. But more importantly, Helmholtz's work revealed that the supposedly simple unit of musical composition—the tone—is in fact complex, consisting in the fundamental frequency that we consciously hear, together with a potentially infinite sequence of overtones that we perceive “unconsciously.” It turns out that consonance, dissonance, and other relations of aural affinity depend on the number and strength of the overtones that are unconsciously perceived *between* any two tones. Overtones, in a rather literal sense, constitute the very medium of musical coherence.

In this talk, I will argue that the new science of overtones had repercussions that extend beyond fin-de-siècle music theory and practice to modernist aesthetics across the arts. I will trace how Helmholtz's theory was passed from modernist composers like Arnold Schönberg and Ferruccio Busoni, who used it as a theoretical justification for exploring strange new harmonies, to artists working in adjacent mediums, including painting (Wassily Kandinsky and Nikolai Kulbin), literature (Alfred Döblin, Ezra Pound, and H.D.), and film (Sergei Eisenstein). I will ask how the concept of the overtone changes as it is translated from one medium to another, and whether this widespread interest in an acoustic phenomenon facilitated interartistic experimentation. I will conclude by reflecting on how the aural unconscious discovered by Helmholtz—an unconscious that predates Freud by almost half a century—challenges us to rethink modernist aesthetic commonplaces concerning medium specificity, tradition, and fragmentation.

Ross Shields

ICI Berlin Institute for Critical Inquiry

Texts of textiles: avant-garde and everyday life in Vkhutemas's experience

Abstract: The institution in the fall of 1920, in the Bolshevic Moscow, of Vkhutemas (*Vysshie Khudozhestvenno-Tekhnicheskie Masterskie*: Higher Art And Technical Studios), marked a capital turn in the global history of pedagogy and practice of arts. In line with the more well-known German Bauhaus, with which relationships were solid and constant – the new school radically broadened the traditional field of art, including in it craft and industrial production. In the decade of its life, till the forced closure by Stalin in 1930, Vkhutemas's teaching organization flanked at a parity level painting, sculpture, and architecture with woodworking, metalworking, ceramics, graphics, and textiles, joining together academic and avant-garde methods, and opening its doors to social groups which formerly could not access to high education. Teachers of Higher Art And Technical Studios such as Wassily Kandinsky, El Lissitsky, Alexander Rodchenko, Vladimir Tatlin, and Nikolay Ladovsky offered their theoretical and creative contributions to a materialistic aesthetics and pedagogy deeply enrolled in the construction of the new socialist society. The civil engagement of Soviet Rationalists and Constructivists is particularly evident in the production destined to everyday life, as Alexey Gan states, “new types of artistic work, based on science, technology, mechanics, and optics”, for example, textile and clothing.

After a short presentation of Vkhutemas's experience, this paper will focus the attention on the production of textiles and clothes resulting from the course on Composition in the Textile Department at Vkhutemas by Varvara Stepanova and Lyubov Popova and the activity of Vladimir Tatlin. We will see how from the project to its diffusion in society the textile product is grounded on a rigorous functionalist perspective, showing the coherence between the material object and the materialistic aesthetics of the time, including the theories of the text proposed by contemporary Russian Formalism.

Stefania Sini

Università del Piemonte Orientale

The hybrid materiality of abstract (animated) films

Modern artists, such as Léopold Survage, Hans Richter, Viking Eggeling, Walter Ruttmann among others, were excited about the technical possibility of endowing painting with motion. Often motivated by discourses that equated live action cinema with naturalism and criticized its dependency on literary adaptations, these artists attempted to combine avant-garde painting with film.

In the context of a symposium commemorating the publication of Malevich's writings on film (*The White Rectangle: Writings on film*, edited by Oksana Bulgakowa, in 2002) the British art historian Timothy J. Clark addressed Malevich and the abstract film, which was championed by the painter. Furthermore, the art historian considered abstract cinema to be disappointing.

According to Clark, abstract painting worked due to the tension between subtle hints of spatiality against a physical surface (the canvas). Without the tension between space and physical surface, the transparent surface of the projected film required more concrete spatial clues to be effective. Clark went on to oppose a 'formalism of manufacture' to a cinematic 'formalism of space' conveyed by intervals between shots, spatial dispositions, and bodies.

In this paper, I will explore the hybrid, impure materiality, i.e., the conflation of a manufactured visual work with photography and film. In so doing, I will depart from Walter Ruttmann's patented animation table, which resonates with other inventions and procedures that accentuated the hybrid nature of the animated film.

Marta Soares

NOVA FCSH

About a new definition of Italian photographic modernism between the 1920s and 1930s: theoretical approaches and material sources

This paper discusses the concept and definition of Modernism in Italian photographic culture between the 1920s and 1930s. Many European and international studies have already debated on this subject extensively, starting from the important role of the avant-gardes to identify the peculiarities of the photographic language in the “new vision” context (Bajac / Cheroux 2012, Witkovsky 2007, Morris Hambourg / Phillips 1989). However, Italian Modernism still needs a systematic re-discussion and redefinition, leading us to consider it – from a sociological perspective – according to its ontological, historical and dialectical specificity (Frisby 1992).

This proposal presents the first outcomes of my in progress PhD research and its possibilities for a wider methodological development. It will discuss some urgent questions – so far broadly disregarded – to reflect on the participation of Italian photographic culture in making a complex definition of Modernism, to be considered as a real cultural tendency rather than an interpretative category. How may we define photographic Modernism in Italy between the 1920s and 1930s in relation to the theoretical debate about this subject and within an international context? Which kind of methodological and historical-cultural tools it is possible to employ for articulating new horizons of meaning? Which kind of sources may we interrogate?

In this research, magazines are among the most privileged heuristic sources to investigate Italian Modernism: they disseminate images and languages, display the aesthetic and literary debate on photography, define the concept of authorship and 'genre'. In an interdisciplinary perspective, not only photographic magazines have been considered, but also architecture, cinema, typography, graphic, advertising, literature and science magazines, which put in place visual strategies and creative processes in the use of image as a cultural and experimental medium. Some examples of Italian magazines will be presented and discussed, considering them – in a original point of view – as theoretical and material laboratories of Italian photographic Modernism.

Cristiana Sorrentino

University of Florence

Historical Modernisms. Time, History and Modernist Aesthetics
Jean-Michel Rabaté , Angeliki Spiropoulou (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021)

This presentation will focus on the publication of the collective volume *Historical Modernisms* co-edited by Jean-Michel Rabaté and myself, published in 2021. It aims to shed new light on the disputed historical-mindedness of modernism and the artistic avant-gardes cutting across Anglophone and European traditions. Drawing on empirical cases of both literary and artistic modernism, it poses fundamental theoretical questions on the subject and symptoms of history revealing the multi-faceted relationship of modernist and avant-garde movements with historical thinking and history making.

The volume's essays reassess modernism's complex relation to history with regard to issues of genre and medium; temporality and context, stretching from modernist autobiography, periodicals and book series to archival work on avant-garde movements focusing on their selected histories transnationally, from the Anglophone and the French paradigms to the less explored traditions of central Europe and the Balkans. Inversely, the volume also engages theoretically with the subject of history and modernist aesthetics, addressing the radical contribution of literary and artistic avant-gardes on twentieth-century historiographical thinking.

Angeliki Spiropoulou

The University of the Peloponnese

Recasting the “Quarrel of the ancients and the moderns” through diagrams: a contribution to the understanding of *Oulipo*’s operative textuality

The diagram (*e.g.*, lists, graphs, charts, maps, logical notations), a figure that results mostly from the operativity that characterises the «cultural techniques» (Siegert, 2015) of writing and imaging, *i.e.*, *Schriftbildlichkeit* (Krämer, 2012), has received newfound centrality in contemporary media theory. The widespread use of diagrams across different epistemologies (*e.g.*, mathematics, physics, computer science, or cartography) is what also allowed them to play a central role in the sphere of art. Duchamp, af Klint, and Mallarmé are exemplary in this regard.

In the present undertaking we will consider the diagram as a particular kind of literary code in three works pertaining to the group *Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle*: 1) Raymond Queneau’s (co-founder of *Oulipo* with François Le Lionnais) seminal *Cent mille milliards de poèmes* (1961), 2) Georges Perec’s novel *La Vie mode d’emploi* (1978), and 3) Italo Calvino’s brief essay *Comment j’ai écrit un de mes livres* (1982).

Analysing the diagrammatic elements that unite the aforementioned texts, several aspects will be addressed: *Cent mille milliards de poèmes*’s algorithmic and combinatorial configuration, pointing to a cybernetic process of writing/reading (anticipating digital textuality) and leading to a reconsideration of the very notion of “the book”, how Perec’s *La Vie mode d’emploi* “cultural techniques of ruling spaces” (Siegert, 2015:97), *i.e.*, lists and grids, subvert the “phonocentric” (Derrida, 1972) understanding of literature, how Calvino’s square diagrams produce a text that simultaneously partakes of poetical and epistemological (as schematism that explains the construction of a novel) values.

Considering that *Oulipo* presents itself as a “new impulse [*poussée*] of the sap” in the “Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns” (Le Lionnais, 1973:19-20), our concluding remarks will address how the analysed works rethink modernity’s epochality (Blumenberg, 1966) by replacing an «aesthetic regime» of art (Rancière, 2011) with a diagrammatical one (Alliez, 2012).

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The influence of materiality on the ideologies of modern art making: acrylic paint and montreal hard-edge painting

Hard-Edge painting, such as that created by the Montreal abstract painters Guido Molinari, Claude Tousignant, and Yves Gaucher has traditionally been considered to be finite, fixed, *already* materialized. However, the notion of matter remaining fixed once it is “made” relies on the theoretical concept of mind over matter and the idea that matter is passive. This outmoded concept evolves from Aristotle’s theory of hylomorphism, a fundamental concept that combines the Greek words matter (*hylê*) and form (*eidos* or *morphê*) and contends that all physical objects are comprised of matter and form wherein matter is the basic, passive, building block and form is the active, organizing principle, (Aristotle, Physics, Book II). With more recent theoretical paradigms presented by new materialist, post humanist and flat ontological philosophers, such as Karen Barad, Jane Bennet, Gilles Deleuze, Tim Ingold, Alva Noë, Mark Rowlands, Erin Manning, and Brian Massumi, we now understand matter (materials, mediums, the environment, time and space) as influential co-creators not passive elements awaiting our creative intervention. Thus, the once finite Hard-Edge paintings are now understood to be *still* in the process of materialization. This paper explores specific articulations of matter during the making process – how material has influenced making and contributed to idea – to explore one *component* of the continuum of materialization. The way material contributions are understood – passive vs. active; finite vs. infinite; stable vs. on-the-move – affects how an artwork is interacted with such as the way that it is curated, conserved, stored, and written about. Closely exploring the material relationships during the making process re-positions material contributions in a contemporary light and will provide a livelier understanding of how Hard-Edge paintings (and other artworks traditionally understood to be finite and stable) are mattering *now*.

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The surrealist object: ambivalence, displacement, emancipation

In March 1935, Breton's Prague lecture on the "situation of the surrealist object" famously opens by identifying as "the greatest danger threatening Surrealism today [...] the fact that because of its spread throughout the world [...] the word found favour much faster than the idea and all sorts of questionable creations tend to pin the Surrealist label on themselves." To avoid misunderstandings of this kind, which stem from a certain fetishisation and a certain cultishness, Breton proposes to "determine the exact situation of the Surrealist object today" in order to "reach perfect agreement on the way in which Surrealism represents the object in general." In addition to the danger for surrealism itself as "object" of theory and practice, "a fundamental crisis of the object is taking place" as the object has "dissolved in objectivity," from which it needs to be rescued by means of exploring the realm of the oneiric, the phantomic, and the dialectically subjective-objective *sur*-real.

The surrealist "situation" is indeed precariously relative. The very possibility of a *sur-realism* demands it: its critical impetus can never be conflated with an *essential* "surrealism" of any kind, because its very contingency leaves it open to precisely the same ambivalent movement by which it initiates itself. What "justifies" the adjective surrealist is not any *kind* of object, and least of all an aesthetic artefact, but its displacement, its "disappearance." The "truth" of Surrealism is to be located, not within a given ideological standpoint, or programme of instruction, but the contrary: *a radical ambivalence* [...] the *ambivalence of thought itself*, in its formation, which would be a mark of its autonomy from ethical preconceptions, or from any system of intellectual coercion. The "unfinished" project of surrealism as envisioned here entails an emancipation of thought, on the basis of which an ethics could be founded.

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Avant-garde *Gesamtkunstwerk* in theory and practice. Case study of Poland and the Low Countries

In this paper I will try to shed some light on how avant-garde interwar periodicals reflected on the Wagnerian concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* (Total Work of Art). This will be exemplified by a look at selected Polish, Dutch and Belgian periodicals, such as *De Stijl*, *Het Overzicht*, *7 Arts*, *Blok*, *Praesens* etc. Representatives of these formations did not only repeatedly postulate that various domains of art be united into a Total Work of Art, but also made several attempts to do so. It is my intention to analyse such theoretical writings and practical attempts, putting particular attention at the unexpected difficulties that artists had to address. For, not rarely the cooperation between painters, architects and writers who jointly tried to create their Total Work of Avant-Garde Art, proved troublesome and led to serious animosities and conflicts, which left tangible traces in their publications.

By looking at collaborative projects that had been undertaken by the pioneers of avant-garde art in Poland and the Low Countries (be it by Van Doesburg and Oud as well as Van Eesteren; Seuphor and Mondriaan; Strzemiński, Syrkus and Stażewski etc.), I intend to explore the ‘practical side’ of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Was it at all possible to put it into practice when it comes to the interwar avant-garde? Could the ‘construction collective’ advocated in *De Stijl*’s fifth manifesto ever come to fruition, given that basically all attempts that its representatives made to implement it failed? Why did *Blok*’s editorial statement emphasising that “art should not be a manifestation of the artist’s individualism, but the result of collective efforts” proved so hollow when they got a chance of working together at a larger scale? Drawing on selected examples of *Gesamtkunstwerk*-driven cooperation, and its aftermath, I will search for answers to these fascinating questions.

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Hermeneutics matters: Gadamer, Moretti and Stevens on interpretation

I will focus on “the material and medial turn” and “the impact of technology in literature”.

Regarding the relationship between “self-referential quest” and “process of signification”, Gadamer’s restatements on knowledge production, revelation and validation remain accurate. In “The relevance of the beautiful”, “Art and imitation” and “On the contribution of poetry to the search for truth”, Gadamer densifies the topic of “modern and contemporary art justification”. Linked is the interplay between “understanding” and “the task for thinking” posed by historicity and self-awareness. Accordingly, “mimetic” stands for a specific “recognition”—recognition “as” something—which, connecting “knowledge” and “memory”, can trigger a modifying experience (“*Erfahrung*”).

Choosing relations over essences, hermeneutics follows the excess stimulated by modernism(s). Since in literature language, as medium, exceeds meanings and mere usefulness, there is a problematic association between language and experience inasmuch literature hinders *a priori* meaning impositions. Thus, literature promotes correlation instead of strict sense of cause—particulars have here a tense relation with universals. This is a hermeneutic core: interpretation is the utmost requisite for human existence (the distinctive conceptualization ability), so medial turn means interpretive turn and interpretation means “making” instead of “discovering” (Richard Rorty). Contrasting, Franco Moretti’s “distant reading” matters since he advocates numeric data as guiding prospect—systematic technological handlings over interpretative hypothesis carried out by reading.

Then, it is important convening Wallace Stevens not to illustrate but as acute modernist displaying—i.e., assumed linguistic push to the edge attitude—in its own on the hermeneutics of self-referentiality and meaningfulness. Stevens sharply debriefs my main topics: materiality has a specific, at times tense, interplay with mental proprieties and processes; digital humanities do not imply the overstepping of interpretation, nor vice-versa, yet their partnership is not merely deductive; interpretation does not necessarily annihilate description; interpretation thwarts the uniformity sought by quantitative statistics.

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