

Bio art before Bio art
The living as cultural expression
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Abstracts and CVs

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Associate Professor at the Sorbonne University, Paris 1 and Artist, STARTS Prize 2020 of the European Commission and Ars Electronica.

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Professor of Comparative European Economic and Social History at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder).

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PhD in "Arts and Art Sciences", Artiste-researcher at the Centre Marc Bloch de Berlin.

ALAN ROSS

Animals and ambiguity: monkey theatre as symbolic performance in pre-Revolutionary Paris

Between the mid-seventeenth and mid-eighteenth century, performances of trained monkeys became a veritable sensation in Paris. While historians have worked extensively on animal symbolism in early modern European art, these live performances of animals have received little attention despite being well documented in contemporary travellers' accounts, theatre announcements and almanacs. This article takes the anthropological study of Japanese monkey theatre as a point of departure to analyze the meaning conveyed by the locations, the trainer-animal relationship, the clothing worn by the animals and the performance routines. Similarly to Japanese monkey theatre, performances of live monkeys in France consisted of routines that were purposefully opaque. Performances could be read as a criticism of the ancien régime society of orders, yet always stopped short at communicating this point unambiguously enough to fall foul of the censors who monitored fairground theatre.

Ass.-Professor (Tenure Track) Professor University of Vienne, D Phil in Modern History, Oxford, Humboldt Graduate School Post-Doc Fellow.

Publications (selection)

- The Animal Body As Medium: Taxidermy And European Expansion, 1775–1865, in: Past and Present 249 (2020) 1, pp. 85-119.
- Early Modern European Empires: The Holy Roman Empire and Poland-Lithuania in Comparison (ed. jointly with T. Gromelski, C. Preusse & D. Tricoire. Wiesbaden (Harrasowitz) 2016.

DAVID KRYCH

From beast to machine: transformations of non-human actors in cultural performances

"On September 1, 1796, the last large animal fighting arena in Europe burned down. The end of the so called Wiener Hetzamphitheater (an animal-fighting-arena in Vienna) not only represents the end of an Europe-wide tradition – that goes beyond Spain or Portugal –, but it seems to be also a turning point or a cesura in dealing with non-human actors. While animals were chased to death all over Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, a dominantly new relation opens up to us at the beginning of the 19th century: in the "Circus gymnasticus" (Vienna) by Christoph de Bach, which opened in 1808, deer were no longer baited by dogs or bears. Instead, trained deer pulled a carriage and performed other "training pieces". This particular change will be discussed and leads us to fundamental transformations in the human-animal-relationship."

MMag. Dr., Studied philosophy, slavic studies and theatre, film and media studies at the University of Vienna; his PhD-thesis ("Theatricality and animality: the Vienna Hetzamphitheater", 2013-2017) was funded by the uni:docs-scholarship; he worked as a post-doc on the comment on Friedrich Nietzsche's "Die fröhliche Wissenschaft" (funded by the FWF, 2017-2018); since 2019 he works at the Research Service at the Danube University Krems; his research is focussing on history of cultural performances and theatre, philosophy of culture and science; currently he is working on the Polish avant-garde.

GABRIELA-MARIANA LUCA et DANIELA ȘILINDEAN

How a Garden Turns into the Emblem of a Cosmopolitan City and How a Rose is Part of the Therapeutic Process

BioArt is a fairly new concept in the Romanian cultural space; it is a topic on which debates have only just begun. Considered by some specialists in the field of visual arts, "an immoral playing God", and by others, a blessed call of nature which is thus restored in paved urban spaces, both literally and metaphorically, such a direction is subject to a constant growth in Romania as well.

In our case, the story / the narration is crucial, as we got closer to a different approach model in narrative medicine. Some rose petals scattered and kept next to a hospital discharge form are the starting point for this study. Following the thread, we went back to 1891, to the Universal Exhibition. On that occasion the *Roses Park* was opened in Timisoara, and it has become an emblem of the *City of Roses*. Such garden of roses embeds the modern history of the city, as it was subject of successive layers of evolution and expression: an imperial garden, a rosarium devoted to the Virgin Mary, a park of the working force – named after a local communist leader, and then brought back to the exuberance of freedom gained in 1989, and turned into a contemporary cultural mixture: a garden with thousands of varieties of roses, the sine qua non scenery of wedding photographs in the city, outdoor auditorium and exhibition site or a set for street food trailers. For some years now, the Roses Park has also been the amphitheater of university graduation ceremonies organized by the Faculty of Medicine within Victor Babes University of Medicine and Pharmacy Timisoara.

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DANIELA ȘILINDEAN, Associate Professor, PhD, Victor Babeș University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Timișoara, Romania.

Les bêtes dehors ! (mais pas leur simulacre)

La mode est au « cabinet des curiosités ». Esthètes, designers, revues d'intérieur, suggèrent l'emploi d'animaux taxidermisés à des fins décoratives. Cela vient de loin et, en même temps, c'est tout à fait nouveau. Dans les sociétés traditionnelles l'introduction d'un reste anatomique à la maison, même sous la forme d'un trophée de chasse, n'allait pas forcément de soi. Elle impliquait un contexte, des précautions. Elle connotait et démarquait socialement. Aujourd'hui, à l'époque de notre réconciliation avec le monde animal, ce n'est plus le cas : si le chasseur est stigmatisé, ses « œuvres » sont partout. Comment expliquer cette évolution ?

Professeur d'ethnologie à l'université de Bretagne-Occidentale, IIAC-LACI (Institut interdisciplinaire d'anthropologie du contemporain - CNRS EHESS).

Publications (selection)

- (Dir.), *L'appel du sauvage. Refaire le monde dans les bois*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2012, 214 p. (collection "Essais").
- *Le retour du prédateur. Mises en scène du sauvage dans la société post-rurale*. Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2011, 132 p. (collection "Essais").
- "Les invasions biologiques sous le regard des sciences de l'homme", dans R. Barbault, M. Atramentowicz (dir.), *Les invasions biologiques, une question de natures et de sociétés*, Paris, Quae/MEDD, 2010, p. 65-108.

ALESSANDRA RUSSO

Vivid Images: Life, Matter, Look

During the sixteenth century, hundreds of « feather paintings » made in Mexico with the magnificent colors and light of birds' plumes, were displayed *in loco* and sent to the four corners of the world. They rapidly became a « contemporaneous art », an art capable of addressing pressing political topics and aesthetic debates, including : the place of the image in the colonization and christianization processes, the presence and the representation of the divine in an art-piece, but also the ingeniousness and invention of the artists vis à vis nature. Thanks to an extremely elaborate artistic process, these novel art pieces also interrogated the beholders in unexpected ways, physically challenging the way to look at them. This symposium is an occasion to reflect on the category of « vividness » : how vividness is related to the material they are composed with, to its artistic relaboration, and to the physical movement they require from who want to fully appreciate their liveliness.

Associate Professor, Department of Latin American and Iberian Cultures, at Columbia University.

Publications (selection)

- "Lights on the Antipodes. Francisco de Holanda and an Art History of the Universal", *The Art Bulletin*, Dec. 2020, Vol.102, Issue 4, 37-65.
- "An artistic humanity. New positions on art and freedom in the context of the Iberian expansion (1500-1600)", *Res, Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 65/66 (2014/2015), pp. 353-363, Harvard University Press.

- *The Untranslatable Image. A Mestizo History of the Arts in New Spain (1500-1600)*, Austin, University of Texas press, 2014
- “*De tlacuillo. Renaissance Artistic Theory in the Wake of the Iberian Global Turn*”, in Jill Casid, Aruna D’Souza, ed., *Art History in the Wake of the Global Turn*. Clark Institute/distributed Yale University Press, 2013, pp. 20-39.
- “Cortés’s objects and the Idea of New Spain : Inventories as Spatial Narratives”, *Journal of the History of Collections* (Lia Markey, Jessica Keating, editors, special issue "Captured Objects: Inventories of Early Modern Collections"), Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 229-252.
- Alessandra Russo, Gerhard Wolf, Diana Fane (editors), *Images Take Flight. Feather Art in Mexico and Europe 1300-1700*, Munich, Hirmer/KHI. MUNAL/The University of Chicago Press, 2015.

JERÔME THOMAS

Artificial Cranial Deformation in the Andes. A Body Language From Aesthetic to Magical Meanings

Introduction : Intentional cranial deformation has been described in human populations belonging to different continents, chronological periods and cultures, from the Upper Paleolithic to the XIXth Century. These procedures have been observed on all areas, and artificial cranial deformation was present in the whole of American continent, from North America to Patagonia, but cranial molding in neonates was most widely practiced in the Andean regions in pre-columbine times. *Methods* : Archaeological data, historical data and ethnographic data provide detailed accounts. In the XVIth Century, the Spaniards wondered strongly and described in detail these practices which seemed to them so strange. *Purpose* : There is no society in which the body is left in the raw state. It carries a strong symbolic burden and occupies a decisive place in the expression of identity and in social communication. Ornament has significance as much as it adorns and all these ways of ornamenting the body are necessary and participate in human expression. But beyond the aesthetic aspect, being the primary role of adornments in building one’s identity and in socialization, the modified body weaves links with the cosmos. Cranial deformations were performed for aesthetic but were also used as a means of ethnic or social identification and mostly magical or religious reasons. *Conclusion* : The act of artificial cranial deformation in newborns in the pre-Columbian Andes participates in a complex and indivisible system whose cosmogonic thought of the pre-Columbian peoples would be a foundation. These practices are part of a global system of ornamentation, codified and underpinned by multiple considerations : cosmogonic, identity, rituals.

Ph. D. in Anthropology, Graduate in History, Lecturer in Anthropology (University Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3), Associate researcher IRIEC (Institut de Recherche Intersite en Etudes Culturelles).

SÉBASTIEN GALLIOT

Building Images on the Living Body. Over and Beyond Representational Art in the Pacific.

Based on the fact that art as an autonomous domain is a quite recent, anecdotal, and culturally rooted modality of figuration, this communication will examine domains of image production in the Pacific that remain inextricably dependent on the interaction of different living and / or animated beings and substances.

In this respect, tattooing practices constitute a great opportunity to address issues of ritual artefacts involving technical skills and vernacular theories of life process as well as cross cultural politics of professional enrolment, transmission and copyright.

We will draw on contemporary cases of tattoo specialists in the Polynesian and Micronesia area to illustrate how the living matter in “art” is taken into account within this field of practice.

Researcher in anthropology at the French National Centre for Research (CNRS). As a member of the CREDO (Centre de Recherche et de Documentation sur l’Océanie), he has conducted extensive fieldworks in Polynesia (Samoa, Tonga and New Zealand) on tattooing expertise among Samoan ritual experts (tufuga tā tatau) in Samoa and in the diaspora.

Since 2019, he has started a new field of researches about betel nut trade and transnational exchange in Western Micronesia.

JANNA MAMBETOVA.

LUGANSAD: Artistic Assemblages of wildflowers and naturalness in landscape configurations.

The LUGANSAD art work made by Olga Kisseleva in the Luxembourg Gardens of Paris includes the wildflowers planted instead of exotic plants. The city park has been transformed into flowering field meadows with plants that we do not notice in our daily life.

By integrating art with nature, we can recreate the sensual appeal of the environment while rebuilding our relationship with it. The LUGANSAD project reflects the multifaceted relationship between creativity and the nature: from the therapeutic nature of the garden to its acceptance as a metaphor for resistance to technological development and total progress; from his portrayal as "heterotopy", where order and disorder poetically coexist, to the unifying symbol of civilization.

PhD candidate (University Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne), founder of Public Fund "Cultural Dialogue" and art-manager. Zhanna worked in the field of public relations and culture.

REGINE RAPP

Living Matter and Non-representationalism in Current Bio Art

A short overview of the theoretical and practical discourses at Art Laboratory Berlin from the last years can emphasize the vast dynamic aesthetic field of making-kin through various artistic methods, embracing **living matter**: Working with the symbiosis of fungi and algae (Fara Peluso), studying through mud the emergence of a microbial landscape over time (Nicole Clouston), working with mycelia and fungal growth (Theresa Schubert), elaborating on the human-fungal relationship with the help of a bio feedback loop (Saša Spačal), reflecting on *Candida albicans* (Tarsh Bates) or letting thale cress embryos grow in a bath of chemicals from the artist’s own body, resulting in a biochemical chimera with the artist as 'co-mother' (Špela Petrič).

Here living organisms are understood as a direct material engagement with the world (Barad). Collaborating with living matter is essential for this kind of artistic research. And with it a *new artistic paradigm* can be seen, that is intentionally *non-representational*. It also proves to have overcome the nature/culture divide by implementing worldly terrains for multispecies encounter. The autonomy of living beings, living entities, and living matter that we can encounter in current bio art works pays tribute on a theoretical level to *intra-action* and performativity in a post-anthropocentric era.

Art historian, curator and co-director of Art Laboratory Berlin. Her research focuses on art in the 20th and 21st century: Installation Art, the Artist Book, and Art & Science Collaborations. As a research associate at Burg Giebichenstein Kunsthochschule Halle she taught art history. As co-founder of Art Laboratory Berlin (2006), she has curated and researched on more than 40 exhibition projects and various series (Time and Technology, Synaesthesia, [macro]biologies & [micro]biologies). In 2011 parallel to the exhibition Sol LeWitt. Artist's Books, she conceived the international Sol LeWitt Symposium at Art Laboratory Berlin.

Publications (selection)

- Rapp/ de Lutz (ed.): *[macro] biologies & [micro] biologies. Art and the Biological Sublime in the 21st Century* (ALB, Berlin 2015);
- Rapp/ de Lutz: *Trans, Post and Beyond. Some Reflections on Machines and the Biological* (Fabrico Publishers, 2018); Regine Rapp: *The concept »Nonhuman Subjectivities«*. *Current Artistic Practices in Posthumanism* (Reimer Publishers, 2019);
- Regine Rapp: *Hybrid Art. Kunst jenseits des Anthropozentrismus*, in: *Kunstchronik*, 73/7, Juli 2020 (Themenheft *KUNST NATUR POLITIK – JETZT!*); [Mind the Fungi](#), ed. by Vera Meyer and Regine Rapp, Berlin 2020 (TU Berlin University Press, December 2020).

EMELINE GOUGEON

Bio-art projects facing the crisis of sensitivity

Among the researchers pointing out that the current biodiversity crisis seems to also be a crisis of our sensitivity, philosopher Baptiste Morizot, in his latest book *Manières d'être vivant* (Actes Sud, 2020), calls for this urgent need to reintroduce meaning to the living, to develop, nay re-invent, different relations to our environments and the other, human and non human.

While sciences approach the world through proof systems and replicable experiments, art is this approach to the real through experience; and more specifically through a sensitive and moving experience.

Considering that we produce and give meaning to things and situations from experience, artistic creation appears to be this vital link to our relations with the living; this, even though art is a concept that needs to be contextualised to be understood. Involving not only all parts of the personality (cognitive, affective and behavioural), but also various environments, other living beings and agents, the other, the other *per se*, contemporary bio-artworks thus create situations where emotions, sensory perceptions and concepts combine in unique ways to structure meaning and enrich our perspectives.

The intervention will explore the way some contemporary crosscutting bio-artworks and projects seem to bring interesting possibilities to this need of re-introduction of meaning to the living, helping building new dialogues between different fields and systems of knowledge.

Ph.D student in Sciences of Art at Pantheon-Sorbonne University, Bachelor's degree in Psychology, a Master's degree in Cultural Engineering applied to art-science projects, and a Research Master's degree related to Images of the Art and the Living. She is a visiting researcher at Lasco IdeaLab (Institut Mines-Télécom Business-School Paris).

Her research work focuses on cross-cutting projects between the arts and sciences and questions interactions of humans with their environments.