



FORART LECTURE 2016

Sianne Ngai - Theory of the Gimmick

Friday, September 09, 6-8 pm
Litteraturhuset, Amalie Skram

FORART SEMINAR 2016

Our Aesthetic Categories: Zany Cute Interesting

Saturday, September 10, 3-5 pm
Litteraturhuset, Kjelleren

FORART LECTURE

In this year's FORART lecture, Sianne Ngai (Stanford University) will present *Theory of the Gimmick* - her new book on the gimmicky artwork as a capitalist aesthetic category.

Theory of the Gimmick: This talk explores the gimmick as a capitalist aesthetic category: a perceptual form linked in a relatively consistent way to an affective judgment or speech act. When we say that a made object is gimmicky we mean we “see through it”; that there is an undesired transparency about how an aspect of it has been produced and why. The contrived or gimmicky artwork thus confronts us with an object that would seem to undermine its own aesthetic power simply by calling attention to the process by which its effects have been devised. Sianne Ngai explores the mix of attraction and repulsion, of contempt and admiration that the gimmick elicits, exploring its implications in forms specific to capitalist culture spanning from the nineteenth century to the present.

Sianne Ngai is Professor at Stanford University and specializes in American literature, literary and cultural theory, and feminist studies. Her books are *Our Aesthetic Categories: Zany, Cute, Interesting* (Harvard University Press, 2012), winner of the MLA James Russell Lowell Prize and the PCA/ACA Ray and Pat Browne award for Best Reference or Best Primary Source Work; and *Ugly Feelings* (Harvard University Press, 2005). Sections of both books have been translated into Swedish, Italian, German, Slovenian, Portugese, and (forthcoming) Japanese. Her new book in process, *Theory of the Gimmick*, explores the “gimmick” as encoding a relation to labor (the gimmicky artwork irritates us because it seems to be working too hard to get our attention, but also not working hard enough), and as the inverted image of the modernist “device” celebrated by Victor Shklovsky.

Ngai was a recipient of a 2007-08 Charles A. Ryskamp Fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies and in 2014-15 was a Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies in Berlin, Germany. In 2015 she was awarded an honorary D. Phil in Humanities from the University of Copenhagen in Copenhagen, Denmark.



FORART SEMINAR

Our Aesthetic Categories: Zany Cute Interesting

Presentation and panel discussion on Sianne Ngai's influential 2012 book. With Stian Gabrielsen, Sara Orning and Gustav Jørgen Pedesen.

Participants:

Stian Gabrielsen is a writer, art critic and artist with an MFA from the Art Academy in Oslo. He is a contributing editor of the Nordic art journal *Kunstkritikk*. Additionally, he helps run the exhibition space Diorama in Oslo. He has also written several shorter works of fiction, among them the novellas *Sstrangling Ffrozen Fflamingo* (Frenetic Happiness, 2014) and *Passasjerene* (Novus forlag, 2014).

Sara Orning is a Senior Lecturer and Researcher at the Centre for Gender Studies, University of Oslo. She works on feminist theory, monsters, affective film theory, disability studies and animal studies. Her work has appeared in *Wuxia*, *Excursions*, and *Føniks*. Her latest work is the chapter "Staging Humanimality: Patricia Piccinini and a Genealogy of Species Intermingling" in the anthology *Animalities: Literary and Cultural Studies Beyond the Human*, edited by Michael Lundblad and forthcoming from Edinburgh University Press.

Gustav Jørgen Pedersen is a Ph.D Research Fellow in art history at the University of Oslo. He is currently completing his dissertation on changes in the modern understanding of death, circling around two paintings by Edvard Munch. The dissertation takes its point of departure in Martin Heidegger's later philosophy. Pedersen holds a masters degree in Aesthetical Studies from UiO from 2013, with the thesis *Empathy, Art, Truth: On The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience* by Mikel Dufrenne.

FORART– Institute for Research within International Contemporary Art is an independent foundation established in 1989 to support research projects within contemporary art. FORART focuses on new phenomena within this genre and is involved in interdisciplinary research that is carried out by prominent experts. Documentation and distribution of research results is an important part of the institute's activity.

Both events are free and open for everyone