

FORART LECTURE 2011

HAL FOSTER
ON POST CRITICISM
Friday, November 4, 6-8 pm
Litteraturhuset, Wergeland

FORART SEMINAR 2011

LE FUTUR DU PASSÉ
ASGER JORN REVISITED
Saturday, November 5, 10 am - 3.30 pm
The National Gallery, Forelesningssalen

FORART LECTURE 2011: HAL FOSTER - ON POST CRITICISM

Critical theory took a serious beating during the culture wars of the 1980s and the 1990s, and the 2000s were only worse. Under Bush the demand for affirmation was all but total, and today there is little space for critique even in the universities and the museums. Bullied by conservative commentators, most academics no longer stress the importance of critical thinking for an engaged citizenry, and, dependent on corporate sponsors, most curators no longer promote the critical debate once deemed essential to the public reception of advanced art. Indeed, the sheer out-of-date-ness of criticism in an art world that couldn't care less seems evident enough. Yet what are the options on offer? Celebrating beauty? Affirming affect? Hoping for a "redistribution of the sensible"? Trusting in "the general intellect"? The post-critical condition is supposed to release us from our straightjackets (historical, theoretical, and political), yet for the most part it has abetted a relativism that has little to do with pluralism.

Hal Foster is Townsend Martin Professor of Art & Architecture at Princeton & co-editor of "October" magazine and books. His most recent books are *The Art-Architecture Complex* (Verso, 2011) and *The First Pop Age: Painting and Subjectivity in the Art of Hamilton, Lichtenstein, Warhol, Richter, and Ruscha*. Previous books by Foster include *The Return of the Real* (MIT Press, 1996) and *Compulsive Beauty* (MIT Press, 1993).

THE FORART SEMINAR 2011: LE FUTUR DU PASSÉ - ASGER JORN REVISITED

Speakers: Hal Foster, Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen, Oda Wildhagen Gjessing, Helle Brøns, Knut Stene-Johansen. The Danish artist Asger Jorn (1914-1973) played an important role in European art during the 1950's and 60's, constructing networks all around the continent. Influenced by Munch and Picasso as well as Kandinsky, Klee and Miró, Jorn insisted on the primordially of painting and the fictional character of artistic creation at a time when avant-garde artists challenged the very concept of art itself. Yet, his interest in old Nordic art and culture shows his desire for an alternative to the classical heritage of southern Europe. One of the last modernists, Jorn was deeply engaged in the politics of his time and preoccupied with the political impact of artistic creation. Through movements such as Helhesten, *CoBrA*, *Mouvement international pour un Bauhaus imaginaire*, *International Situationism and beyond*, Asger Jorn operated on the boundary between art and life. To revisit Asger Jorn today is to discuss the ways in which his works may offer new sensibilities, politics and plateaus for navigating in critical times.

PROGRAM

10.00-11.30 Knut Stene-Johansen: Introduction - *Asger Jorn, The Future of the Past and The Security Entrances*

10.30-11.30 Hal Foster: *Animal Jorn, Creaturely Cobra*

11:30-12.30 Pause

12.30-13.30 Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen: *Critique and Crisis: The Avant-Garde in a Post- Revolutionary Time*

13.45-14.15 Oda Wildhagen Gjessing: *Asger Jorn and Edvard Munch. Regarding the 'transition leading to the liberation of color, to painterly spontaneity'*

14.15-14.45 Helle Brøns: *Masculine Resistance. Art, Gender and Desire in the Production of Asger Jorn*

14.30-15.30 Roundtable

ABSTRACTS AND BIOS

Knut Stene-Johansen: *Introduction - Asger Jorn, The Future of the Past and The Security Entrances*

This short introduction will situate Jorn as the important artist he was (and still is), and reflect upon some of Jorn's titles as key concepts for understanding his art today.

Knut Stene-Johansen is Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Oslo. Among his research interests are French theory, medical humanities, aesthetics and 18th Century studies. His publications include *Illness in Context* (eds. Knut Stene-Johansen and Fredrik Tygstrup), *Rodopi*, 2010 and *Forførelsens historie* (The History of Seduction), Spartacus, 1998. Stene-Johansen is also an experienced translator, among other things of the work of Roland Barthes and Deleuze/Guattari.

Hal Foster: *Animal Jorn, Creaturely Cobra*

In my lecture I discuss the presence of the creaturely in Cobra in general and Jorn in particular as a pointed intervention in postwar debates about humanism. Rather than a belated expressionism or a revived primitivism, I see the creaturely in this art as the expression of a crisis in the political order of the period. To this end I juxtapose Jorn, Constant, and others with Bataille on the prehistoric as well as Derrida and Agamben on the animal.

Hal Foster is Townsend Martin Professor of Art & Architecture at Princeton & co-editor of "October" magazine and books. His most recent books are *The Art-Architecture Complex* (Verso, 2011) and *The First Pop Age: Painting and Subjectivity in the Art of Hamilton, Lichtenstein, Warhol, Richter, and Ruscha*. Previous books by Foster include *The Return of the Real* (MIT Press, 1996) and *Compulsive Beauty* (MIT Press, 1993).

Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen: *Critique and Crisis: The Avant-Garde in a Post-Revolutionary Time*

This presentation will analyze Asger Jorn's attempts to search for a post-war avant- garde context at a time when the avant-garde as the self-proclaimed unifier of art, critique and life was becoming more and more difficult. The inter-war avant-garde project was in a state of permanent crisis already by the late 1940's and Jorn was very aware of this but nonetheless engaged in a number of avant-garde projects from *COBRA to the Scandinavian Institute of Vandalism*.

Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen is an art historian and cultural critic. He is Associate Professor at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen. He is the author of a number of books in Danish on the avant-garde and has published articles about anti-capitalist activism, the revolutionary tradition, and the Situationist International in journals such as *Multitudes*, *Rethinking Marxism*, and *Third Text*.

Recent publications include “*On the Turn to Liberal Racism in Denmark*” in *e flux* journal, no. 22, 2011, and the anthology *Expect Anything Fear Nothing: The Situationist Movement in Scandinavia and Elsewhere* (Nebula & Autonomedia, 2011).

Oda Wildhagen Gjessing: *Asger Jorn and Edvard Munch. Regarding the ‘transition leading to the liberation of colour, to painterly spontaneity’*

Based on the concepts of “the liberation of color” and “painterly spontaneity”, I will attempt to characterize the development Asger Jorn underwent during his formative years as an artist. Of particular importance in this context are two experiences that seem to have had great significance for him, notably his encounter with Edvard Munch’s art in the National Gallery in Oslo in 1937 and 1945 respectively.

Oda Wildhagen Gjessing has an M.A. in Art History from the University of Oslo in 2005. The topic of her thesis was the work of Asger Jorn. Since 2004 she has published articles in periodicals and exhibition catalogues in Norway and Denmark. She has curated several exhibitions and has been employed by the Munch Museum in Oslo and the Bergen Art Museum. Since 2009 she has worked as advisor/curator for the DnB NOR Savings Bank Foundation, with special emphasis on building up the Foundation’s art collection.

Helle Brøns: *Masculine resistance. Art, gender and desire in the production of Asger Jorn*

Gender issues are a recurrent – though not very recognized – theme in Asger Jorn’s painting, writing and group activity. In my paper I will address questions of masculinity, thinking in oppositions and gendered notions of art and creation as it is discussed in the lengthy public dispute between Jorn and Danish writer Elsa Gress in 1964.

Helle Brøns has a Mag. Art in Art History from University of Aarhus (2007) and is currently writing a doctorate on Asger Jorn at the University of Copenhagen, in affiliation with the National Gallery of Denmark and the Museum Jorn, Silkeborg. Brøns has previously worked at Overgaden Institute of Contemporary Art and The Danish Arts Agency. She is the author of: “*The Shock of the Old*” in *Hvad Skovsøen Gemte. Jorn’s Modifications and Kirkeby’s Overpaintings*, (ed. Teresa Østergaard Pedersen) Museum Jorn, 2011, and *Asger Jorn*, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, 2009.