

EAST WINDS: FUTURE COMMUNISMS —

PEI OBERT SEMINAR

2 – 3 March 2018

Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

Directed by Marcelo Expósito and Jaime Vindel, as part of the course 'Political Imagination/Cultural Materialism' at MACBA's Independent Studies Programme (PEI).

PROGRAMME

Friday 2 March

11 am Presentation by **Jaime Vindel and Marcelo Expósito**, directors of the seminar

11.30 am **Jodi Dean**

Theory of the comrade

As the philosophy of the proletariat, Marxism holds out the promise and possibility of new forms of relationship, new ways of being human. In the place of capitalist exploitation and inequality, Marxism dares us to struggle to end hierarchy and domination and begin new relations of comradeship and solidarity. My remarks focus on the comrade as a term of address, figure of political relation and carrier of expectations for action. It presents four theses on the comrade, emphasising the genericity and interchangeability of the comrade. It argues that this genericity, the sameness of those on the same side, provides a way through the impasse of systems and survivors prominent on the contemporary left.

12.45 pm Coffee break

1 pm **Christina Kiaer**

Art of production from Lenin to Stalin

The production art, or Productivism, initiated by the Russian Constructivist avant-garde soon after the Russian Revolution of 1917, has long been celebrated as one of the most radical forms of socialist art. Artists would cease making art in its traditional forms, and instead enter directly into mass production as worker-artists or productivists. This talk will extend the concept of production art beyond the early revolutionary years and into the 1930s, under Stalin and the Five-Year Plans, where

this is less expected. The Constructivist avant-garde was no longer operative, but artists continued to imagine their work as a mass-oriented and collective endeavour in their production of posters, material culture, film and even oil painting.

2.15 pm Lunch break

4.30 pm **Anselm Jappe**

Back to the USSR: Soviet communism as an autonomous route to capitalism

Can one still refer to the term communism? And if this term seems to have been compromised forever because of the Soviet experience, what is the most frightening aspect of this experience? The violence? Definitely. But this was not an exclusive feature of communism. The utopian dimension? Maybe this was its best aspect. Its opposition to the capitalist world, which would be 'natural'? Perhaps this is the problem: state communism never broke the foundations of mercantile society – money and labour – and even implanted them in an 'underdeveloped' society. It was a forced modernisation that, nevertheless, remained a secondary, and minor, development of the global mercantile society. The collapse of the USSR was not a victory for capitalism, but a phase of its global crisis. Later, this crisis was also to affect the main capitalist countries.

5.45 pm **César Rendueles**

Bad news: materialism. Notes for a praxeological reformulation of the materialist programme

Before becoming fossilised as the official philosophy of the Soviet bloc, historical materialism emerged in a very specific intellectual context: the polemics of Marx and Engels with the Hegelian left of the mid-nineteenth century. Is it possible to reformulate the terms of this foundational debate, freed from spurious adhesions, in the light of contemporary social sciences and cultural critique? The materialist proposal seems particularly useful and urgent in a moment of strong neo-idealist reflux in which the centres of hegemonic creation have as their privileged objective the production of sensible policies that increase the unquestioned acceptance of present factuality.

Saturday 3 March

10.30 am **Athena Athanasiou**

Dispossession as an epistemology of criticality

Emerging gestures of collective dissent raise the question of the political as a multivalent question of be-longing and un-belonging, with others and with the world, vis-à-vis the globalised distribution of capital, resources and bodies. They also provide the grounds for a critical re-engagement with, and a reflective re-imagining of, 'democracy' and 'communism' at a moment marked by the neoliberal corporatisation of the public but also the securitisation of national space through migrant disposability. Viewed from this perspective, criticality maps out trails of historical and political response-ability through which alternative imaginaries are potentially put forward. Criticality involves the ex-centric and dispossessed structure of the subject vis-à-vis the conditions of its emergence, which has thoroughgoing implications for situated epistemologies and resistances to come.

11.45 **María Eugenia Rodríguez Palop**

Are we and will we be the same after drinking and living from the commons?

The common, the commons, common goods, the common good, in common, the communal... different and nuanced ways of appealing to an activity and a community management that most people now find very seductive and which has acquired an undoubted political relevance.

But how does it translate today, this secular aspiration that faces both the omnipotence of the State and the savagery of the market? What anthropological and moral presuppositions does the definition and management of the commons require? What kind of political transformations should we adopt to seriously discuss a world in common?

The commons appeals to the need to rebuild the bonds that liberate us, a relational philosophy that internalises both our radical vulnerability and the normality of inter-dependence: the dependence on others and the material basis that gives us sustenance. The classic immune and self-sufficient subject is now a subject that only conceives itself in its relationship with others, in the shared, contextual, affective, dialogical and narrative experience. How does the philosophy of the commons affect the classical discourse of human rights? Are we and will we be the same after drinking and living from the commons?

1 pm Break

1.15 pm **Gerardo Pisarello**

The municipalism and the construction of the commons

2.30 pm Lunch break

4.30 pm **Maurizio Lazzarato**

Wars of race, sex and class after the financial collapse

The collapse of the financial system brought about a double break in the neoliberal model that emerged after the defeat of the strange revolution of '68. The first is the 'crisis' of debt and the emergence of its own subjective figure of the 'indebted man' and the second is that of a radicalisation of the neoliberal policies that produce an even greater concentration of wealth and heritage and the transformation of the indebted man into a neo-fascist, neo-racist, neo-fundamentalist, neo-nationalist man. We will try to analyse this new situation that introduces a new concept of 'war'.

5.45 pm **Franco Berardi, Bifo**

The second coming (of what?)

Presentation and screening of the film *Comunismo futuro*

The film *Comunismo futuro* is a vertiginous journey through the twentieth century, whose trajectory is retraced twice. First it is recounted in retrospect from the point of view of the Russian Revolution of 1917, then it's sketched from the point of view of the spiral of folly into which the twenty-first century is diving headfirst.

Drawing from the Russian Archives and from the Italian Archives of the Workers movement, Istituto Luce-Cinecittà and from multiple sources of the contemporary media-activism, Andrea Gropplero, in collaboration with Paolo Marzoni, has composed a chaos-movie, a dynamic recombinant visual object.

The image of the century pulverised in the media art kaleidoscope is recomposed here through a fluid cut up of visual fragments charged with high emotional content.

Marks of the 1920s' Russian Vanguard, Futurist animation and Cubist imagination intersect with proto-punk visual poetry of the '70s.

This movie is a remix of visual memes captured through the imaginary of the past century, but is also an anticipation of what the Cinema is destined to become now, because of the explosion of the Infosphere. Future cinema will be permanent recombination of fragments proceeding from the data-scape of the cyberspace. Plunder-movie.

The film opens a surprising window of possibility: after the failure of the first century, communism is coming back, because it is the only way out from the hell, the only recomposition of social solidarity and global peace after the trumping age of chaos.

In order to recount the tragedy of the past century, and in order to throw some light over the incumbent darkness, Gropplero has used a daring expedient: the storyteller

is an idiot, a character, a psychically disturbed visionary, an obsessional paranoid indeed, acted by Franco Berardi also known as Bifo.

PREVIOUS WORKSHOPS

28 February and 1 March 1, 4–7 pm

A philosophical and political platform to consider the commons

With María Eugenia Rodríguez Palop

The philosophy of the commons is profoundly transforming, groundbreaking and revolutionary. It requires rethinking the anthropological assumption we have internalised for centuries, overcoming the myth of selfishness as a rational presupposition, and narcissism and competition as the engine of collective well-being. It requires renouncing strategic rationality as an all-encompassing concept of rationality, and to think of ourselves, at last, as communicative, empathic and narrative beings.

The philosophy of the commons is based on an ethic of responsibility and care that starts from our radical vulnerability, from our inter-ecodependence, and that values our shared experience and the moral lessons that we have extracted from it.

Therefore, a political community of the commons cannot be articulated from any moral, philosophical or ideological platform. It has to revolve around democratic deliberation, the distribution of power and wealth, decentralisation and self-governance, sustainability and the feminisation of public space. In a community of the commons, our individual rights would have to be dissociated from the proto-liberal root in which they are anchored to be read from a relational vision, because they would not be eminently defensive instruments, but bridges for dialogue; useful tools in the construction and permanent reconstruction of a common destiny.

Art of production from Lenin to Stalin

With Christina Kiaer

The production art, or Productivism, initiated by the Russian Constructivist avant-garde soon after the Russian Revolution of 1917, has long been celebrated as one of the most radical forms of socialist art. Artists would cease making art in its traditional forms and instead enter directly into mass production as worker-artists or productivists. This workshop will extend the concept of the art of production beyond the early revolutionary years and into the 1930s, under Stalin and the Five-Year Plans, where this is less expected. The Constructivist avant-garde was no longer operative, but artists continued to imagine their work as a mass-oriented and collective endeavour in their production of posters, material culture, film and even oil painting. In the workshop, we will discuss selections from my work on Productivism (*Imagine No Possessions: The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism*); on the

painter Aleksandr Deineka; on the visual culture of Soviet anti-racism; and my most recent work on historical methodology, in the form of the book *Revolution Every Day: A Calendar* (Milan: Mousse, 2017), which combines primary sources, diary entries, manifestoes and critical analysis to emphasise the aspirational project of early Soviet socialism.

BIOGRAPHIES

ATHENA ATHANASIOU

Athena Athanasiou is Professor of Social Anthropology and Gender Theory at Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Greece. Her research interests include gender, feminist and queer theory, biopolitics, technologies of the body, antimilitarist movements, affect, nationalism and memory.

Her publications include *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political* (Polity Press, 2013), co-authored with Judith Butler and *Agonistic Mourning: Political Dissidence and the Women in Black* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017). She has been a fellow at the Center for the Study of Social Difference, Columbia University, and is a member of the editorial advisory board of the journals *Critical Times* and *Feminist Formations*.

FRANCO BERARDI. BIFO

Franco 'Bifo' Berardi is a cultural agitator, media activist and multidisciplinary philosopher. In the 1970s he was involved in the Italian autonomous movements and in historical experiences of alternative communication such as Radio Alice. In the following decade, he advocated the future explosion of the network as a vast social and cultural phenomenon, and since 2005 he has been behind the 'street televisions' movement (tele-streets) in Italy. He is the author of numerous essays on work transformations, innovation and communication processes in capitalism, which have been published in several countries. In Spanish, among others: *La fábrica de la infelicidad: nuevas formas de trabajo y movimiento global* (Traficantes de sueños, 2003); *Máquina imaginativa no homologada* (Ed. de intervención cultural, 2004); *El sabio, el mercader, el guerrero: del rechazo del trabajo al surgimiento del cognitariado* (Acuarela, 2007) and *La sublevación* (Artefakte, 2013).

JODI DEAN

The Donald R. Harter '39 Chair of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York, she is the author or editor of twelve books, including *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies* (Duke University Press), *The Communist Horizon* (Verso) and *Crowds and Party* (Verso), published in Spanish by Ediciones Bellaterra in 2013 and katakrak in 2017. She is interested in contemporary political theory, modern political theory, communism, theories of digital

media, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, feminist theory, political theory and climate change.

MARCELO EXPÓSITO

Marcelo Expósito (1966) (marceloexposito.net) has taught and presented his artistic work in numerous institutions in Europe and Latin America, such as MACBA's Independent Studies Programme (PEI), which he helped found in 2006; Universitat Pompeu Fabra and Escola Elisava, Barcelona; the universities of Buenos Aires and La Plata, Argentina; and the Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC), UNAM, Mexico. He was a co-founder and co-editor of the magazine *Brumaria* and has written and edited, alone and in collaboration, books on critical theory, cultural activism and the history of the avant-garde, including: *Modos de hacer. Arte crítico, esfera pública y acción directa* (2001), *Producción cultural y prácticas instituyentes* (2008), *Los nuevos productivismos* (2010), *Walter Benjamin, productivista* (2013), *Conversación con Manuel Borja Vilel* (2015), and monographs on Pere Portabella, Chris Marker and Tucumán Arde. He is currently a member of the Cortes Generales (Spanish Parliament) and Third Secretary of the Congreso de los Diputados (Chamber of Deputies). marceloexposito.net

ANSELM JAPPE

Anselm Jappe is a theorist of the 'new critique of value' and a specialist in Guy Debord's thinking. He is author of *Guy Debord* (1993, Anagrama 1998), *Las aventuras de la mercancía* (Pepitas de calabaza, 2016), *Crédito a muerte: la descomposición del capitalismo y sus críticos* (Pepitas de calabaza, 2011), *La Société autophage. Capitalisme, démesure et autodestruction* (2017; forthcoming Spanish translation, Pepitas de calabaza). He has contributed to the German journals *Krisis* and *Exit!*, founded by Robert Kurz, which developed the 'critique of value'. He currently teaches at the Fine Art Schools of Sassari (Italy) and has been a visiting lecturer at various European and Latin American universities.

CHRISTINA KIAER

Christina Kiaer was the co-curator, with Robert Bird and Zach Cahill, of the exhibition *Revolution Every Day*, marking the centenary of the October Revolution, at the Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, September 2017 – January 2018, and the co-author of the catalogue, *Revolution Every Day: A Calendar* (Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2017). She teaches modern art at Northwestern University, and is the author of *Imagine No Possessions: The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism* (MIT Press) and the forthcoming *Collective Body: Aleksandr Deineka and the Lyrical Prospects of Socialist Realism* (University of Chicago Press), as well as *Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside* (Indiana University Press), co-edited with Eric Naiman.

MAURIZIO LAZZARATO

Maurizio Lazzarato lives and works in Paris. His research on debt (*La fabrique de l'homme endetté* and *Gouverner par la dette*) led him to question the concept of war (*Guerres et Capital*, co-authored with Eric Alliez), which in turn led him to problematise the concept of 'revolution' (*Révolutions et guerres*, forthcoming). The concept of war and revolution are the two great casualties of critical thinking after 1968.

GERARDO PISARELLO

Doctor of Law and Professor of Constitutional Law at the Universitat de Barcelona, he is currently First Deputy Mayor of Economy and Labour, Digital City and International Relations at the Barcelona City Council. He has written several books on constitutionalism, human rights and the right to the city, among them, *Vivienda para todos. Un derecho en (de) construcción* (2003), *Los derechos sociales y sus garantías* (2007), *La ofensiva del constitucionalismo antidemocrático* (2011) and *Procesos constituyentes. Caminos para la ruptura democrática* (2012). He is also a co-author of *No hay derecho(s). La ilegalidad del poder en tiempos de crisis* (2012) and *La bestia sin bozal*. For more than ten years he has been Vice President of the Observatory of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Observatori DESC).

CÉSAR RENDUELES

César Rendueles (1975) has a PhD in Philosophy and lectures in Sociology at the UCM. He was a founding member of the cultural intervention collective La Dinamo. For eight years he was cultural coordinator of the Círculo de Bellas Artes, Madrid. He has edited classic texts by Karl Marx, Walter Benjamin, Karl Polanyi, Jeremy Bentham and Antonio Gramsci. His published works include *Sociofobia. El cambio político en la era de la utopía digital* (2013), *Capitalismo canalla* (2015), *En bruto. Una reivindicación del materialismo histórico* (2016) and, with Joan Subirats, *Los (bienes) comunes. ¿Oportunidad o espejismo?* His works have been published in several countries. He is a frequent contributor to the *El País* literary supplement, among others.

MARÍA EUGENIA RODRÍGUEZ PALOP

Chair of Philosophy of Law, Political Philosophy and Human Rights at the Universidad Carlos III, Madrid, she is currently the Deputy Director and Head of International Relations of the Human Rights Institute 'Bartolomé de las Casas' at the Universidad Carlos III, where she also occupies the Unesco Chair 'Violence and Human Rights: Government and Governance', the 'Antonio Beristain' Chair of

Studies on Terrorism and its Victims, and the Feminist Studies Group. She is also co-director of the Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation at the Universidad Externado, Colombia.

She has co-authored several books, including the monographs *La nueva generación de derechos humanos. Origen y justificación* (Dykinson, Madrid, 2001 – second ed. revised and extended, 2010) and *Claves para entender los nuevos derechos humanos* (La Catarata, 2011).

JAIME VINDEL

Juan de la Cierva post-doctoral fellowship at the Universidad Complutense, Madrid, and faculty member of MACBA's Independent Studies Programme (PEI). He has developed his work in universities in Argentina, Chile and Spain, allowing him to investigate the intersections between art, activism and politics in those contexts from the 1960s to the present. He is a member of the Southern Conceptualisms Network and was part of the curatorial team of the exhibition *Perder la forma humana. Una imagen sísmica de los años ochenta en América Latina* (MNCARS, 2012). He is the author of *Transparente opacidad. Arte conceptual en los límites del lenguaje y la política* (Madrid: Brumaria, 2015) and *La vida por asalto: arte, política e historia en Argentina entre 1965 y 2001* (Madrid: Brumaria, 2014), as well as co-editor and co-author of *Desacuerdos. Crítica, 8* (Barcelona: MACBA, 2014) and *Desinventario: esquirlas de Tucumán Arde en el Archivo Graciela Carnevale* (Santiago de Chile: Ocholibros, 2015).

