



**Association of Art Historians New Voices
25 November 2011
University of Edinburgh**

Madness and Revolt



Robert Powell
2011

Timetable**Friday 25 November 2011**

9.30 - 9.50	REGISTRATION	
9.50 - 10.00	Organisers' Introduction	Jenny Gypaki (University of Edinburgh)
	Session I. Madness as Knowledge	Chair: Mary Jane Boland (University of Nottingham)
10.00 - 10.20		Katy Barrett (Ph.D Candidate, University of Cambridge and National Maritime Museum) <i>'This Iridescent Bubble of Knowledge': Hogarth's Longitude Lunatic Between Madness and Revolt</i>
10.20 - 10.40		Ben Zweig (Ph.D Candidate, Boston University) <i>Madness and Knowledge: The Hermeneutics of Suicide in Medieval Art</i>
10.40 - 11.00	Q&A	
11.00 - 11.30	COFFEE	
	Session II. The Faces of Madness & Criminality	Chair: Jenny Gypaki (University of Edinburgh)
11.30 - 11.50		Hazel Murray (MA Student, National University of Ireland) <i>'Through the Looking Glass: The work of Cesare Lombroso, considered through the wider lens of Italian psychiatry during the nineteenth century'</i>
11.50 - 12.10		Agata Gomolka (MA Student, University of Warwick) <i>The Faces of</i>

		<i>Madness: Disease and Revolt in Architectural Sculpture</i>
12.10 - 12.30		Alexandra Tommasini (Ph.D Candidate, Courtauld Institute of Art) <i>Morire di Classe: The Role of the Photobook in Changing Perceptions of Mental Illness</i>
12.30 - 13.00	Q&A	
13.00 - 14.00	LUNCH	
	Session III. Revisiting Surrealist Irrationalities	Chair: Catriona McAra (University of Huddersfield)
14.00 - 14.20		Lucy Form (MLitt Candidate, University of Glasgow) <i>You Don't Have to Be a Medium But it Helps: Mouvement Flou or Mouvement Fou?</i>
14.20 - 14.40		Allison O'Sullivan (Ph.D Candidate, University of New South Wales) <i>Les Belles Dames Sans Raison: Claude Cahun, Lise Deharme and 'Hysterical' Objects.</i>
14.40 - 15.00	Q&A	
15.00 - 15.30	COFFEE	
	Session IV. Body Politics in Revolt	Chair: Mary Jane Borland (University of Nottingham)
15.30 - 15.50		Amy Robson (MRes Candidate, Plymouth University), <i>The Dog Days: Canine Class Contagions and Political Parodies in Victorian Visual Culture</i>
15.50 - 16.10		Monika Winiarczyk (Ph.D Candidate, University of Glasgow), <i>Jewish Melancholia: An Examination of the Interrelationship</i>

		<i>Between Medieval Notions of Melancholy and the Jewish Body</i>
16.10 - 16.30	Q&A	
16.30 - 17.30	Keynote	Dr Sabine Wieber (University of Glasgow) Title tbc
17.30 - 18.55	DRINKS RECEPTION	
19.00	DINNER (<i>optional*</i>)	

*Optional conference dinner at **Spoon Café Bistro** (<http://spooncafebistro.co.uk/contact-us.html>) - payment for the dinner will be collected on the day from those wishing to attend.

Keynote Speaker

Dr Sabine Wieber (University of Glasgow, sabine.wieber@glasgow.ac.uk)

Biography

Dr Sabine Wieber has been a Lecturer in the History of Art at the University of Glasgow since 2010. She received her PhD in 2004 from the University of Chicago with a dissertation on late nineteenth-century German design culture. Her post-doctoral research was conducted at Birkbeck College (2004-2007), then she worked at the University of London on the AHRC-funded project 'Madness & Modernity: Mental Illness and the Visual Arts in the Habsburg Empire 1890-1914.' Wieber has published several essays, an anthology on the topic and co-curated an international loan exhibition on the topic in 2010 in Vienna. Her interest in institutional architecture continues, and she is beginning to work on a project on European slaughterhouses and the politics and representation of meat around 1900. She is also keen to keep working on design history and has just completed an essay for publication on Jugendstil tapestries. Wieber is becoming very interested in the relationship and artistic exchanges between Scotland and continental Europe around 1900.

Katy Barrett (University of Cambridge, NMM, kleb2@cam.ac.uk)

'This Iridescent Bubble of Knowledge: Hogarth's Longitude Lunatic Between Madness and Revolt'

Plate 8 of Hogarth's *The Rake's Progress* shows a company of madmen in Bedlam. Each focused on their own mental concerns, they represent an earlier version of Michael Fried's 'absorptivity.' Fried has also noted, but not elaborated on, the frequency of a differently absorbed character in the French genre paintings of the 1750s on which he focuses. Tucked in the shadows of Bedlam stands one such figure. Withdrawn, introspective, he is trying to solve the problem of longitude on the gallery wall. Among a generic set of madmen used to invoke the chaos and insanity of contemporary society, the 'longitude lunatic' references a very specific scientific problem. Why is he here? This paper seeks to answer this question in reference to the ideas around madness and knowledge which Hogarth drew on, and the representation of longitude as a problem which emerged in both his painting and engraving of Bedlam.

Essentially, longitude posed a mental problem for eighteenth-century society. It was negotiated on the line between scientific knowledge and projecting, between madness and genius. 'Projectors' in the eighteenth-century signified those who tried to foist naïve, impossible or indeed malicious schemes onto the unsuspecting public. Their 'bubbles' were critiqued in political, religious, scientific and financial contexts, as Hogarth regularly represented. Longitude was one such 'bubble,' but so also, for Hogarth, was the whole connoisseurial apparatus of old master painting. Foucault has also discussed madness as a 'bubble' of knowledge, precariously separated from reason, unreason, and by extension, I argue, from genius. Longitude 'projectors' existed on the edge of this bubble, their visionary schemes both necessary to solve the problem, but also antithetical to much in contemporary science. Thus, the lunatic's diagram of longitude floats like an 'iridescent bubble' in Hogarth's painting, symbolic of both madness and knowledge in revolt. It shows the English antecedents to Fried's attitude to absorption and genius.

Biography

Katy Barrett is a PhD Student on the AHRC funded project, hosted by the University of Cambridge and the National Maritime Museum, 'The Board of Longitude 1714-1828: Science, Innovation and Empire in the Georgian World.' She works on the visual and verbal iconography of the longitude problem.

She previously studied History at Oxford and History of Art at Birkbeck, and has worked in a range of museums including the British Museum, National Gallery and Natural History Museum. Her interests focus on eighteenth-century iconography, material culture and history of collecting. She is co-convenor of a new seminar programme in Cambridge, 'Things: Material Cultures of the long Eighteenth Century.'

Benjamin Zweig (Boston University, bzweig@bu.edu)

'Madness and Knowledge: The Hermeneutics of Suicide in Medieval Art'

This paper examines the complex issues embedded in representations of suicide in medieval art. Perhaps surprisingly, and in contrast to widely held assumptions that suicide either did not happen or was simply an unspoken phenomenon in the Middle Ages, there exists an extraordinarily large corpus of medieval depictions of suicide. Yet historians of medieval art have been generally reluctant to see images of suicide as anything beyond simply symbolic. The sheer number of these images and their locations, however, require more attention. Focusing on the suicides of Judas, Saul, and the vice Wrath, this paper examines the relationship between depictions of self-killing and their status as interpreters of madness. Judas was the best-known figure of suicide in the Middle Ages, and images of his suicide frequently represent his death as a consequence of despair, which was a madness brought on by his disbelief in God's mercy, and contrasted against Christ's sacrifice. Images of Saul's suicide are found in many illuminated Psalters and connect to Psalms 52 and 53, both of which speak of the madness of unbelief. They frequently show Saul in the grip of the devil or under the spell of a fool. Taken from Prudentius' poem the *Psychomachia*, representations of the Wrath show the vice in the throes of absolute madness as she plunges a sword into her breast, unable to defeat her logical and virtuous opponent Patience. The paper argues that not only did these figures symbolize madness, but that they actively produced and constructed knowledge about suicide and the madness behind it. This paper ultimately posits that the above figures of suicide in medieval art were the product of a complex hermeneutic process that tested the limits of representation, interpretation, and made epistemological claims about self-killing and the roots of madness in medieval culture.

Biography

Ben Zweig is a PhD candidate and at Boston University in Boston, Massachusetts. He holds a BFA in painting and art history from Massachusetts College of Art and Design, and an MA in medieval art history from Tufts University. He was a Fulbright Fellow at Uppsala University, Sweden from 2007-2008. His dissertation *Unforgivable Sin: Depicting Suicide in Medieval Art, 1100-1400* examines depictions of suicide in Romanesque and Gothic art. His current research interests include the role of art in the history of emotions in pre-modern Europe and the intersection of art history and neuroscience.

Hazel Murray (National University of Ireland, HAZEL.MURRAY@nuim.ie)

'Through the Looking Glass, The Work of Cesare Lombroso, Considered Through the Wider Lens of Italian Psychiatry During the Nineteenth Century'

Beginning in the eighteenth century, attempts were made to dismantle both traditional values and institutions of Italy. A series of political and military revolts began, after national consciousness was aroused during the Risorgimento, liberal ideas from England and France, had transcended Italian borders. In 1861, a united Italy was finally formed after years of violent unrest. Following an era of savagery, post-unification Italy, particularly in the South, a radically dichotomised Italian North and South emerged. Thus; a national consciousness and the struggle for 'creating Italians', began.

Within this specific historical context, Cesare Lombroso's pioneering research and theories on the definition of the female criminal emerged. Their influence on social and penal response to female madness will be considered. Not only remembered as the founder of the Positivist School of Criminology, Lombroso first conducted extensive research on female deviants. With a rise in psychiatry during the nineteenth century, an increasing role within the penal system, subsequently, crime came to be associated with mental illness. It became commonplace to assume that female criminals were 'mad' instead of 'bad', such beliefs were reflected in penal responses to female crime. During the nineteenth century, women were judged not just for breaking the law, but for breaking the mould of the feminine ideal. Female criminality also associated with degeneracy, was thought to emanate from a biological source. Lombroso's most prominent theory, he applied to both male and female patients, was that of atavism. Degenerate 'throw-backs', were assessed under the 'science' of physiognomy. With his theory, a 'born criminal' could be distinguished by their aesthetic 'abnormalities', ranging from facial features to their genitals which in turn drove them to their acts of madness. This paper hopes to engage with Lombroso's psychological analysis of insane criminals, while also reflecting on his 'damning' physiognomic data.

Biography

Hazel Murray obtained her undergraduate degree from NUI Maynooth, studying History and Geography. She is currently studying for an MA in European History, and is scheduled to graduate in 2012. She has strong interests in the history of medicine, psychiatry, human rights and gender. One of her main aspirations is to continue on to PhD level. She has also established an online European Historical Journal, providing a platform for students of NUI Maynooth to have a piece of published work and practise their writing skills.

Agata Gomolka (University of Warwick, agata.a.gomolka@gmail.com)

'The Faces of Madness: Disease and Revolt in Architectural Sculpture'

In 1887, the famous French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot published a work entitled *Les Démoniaques dans l'art*, in which he examined the contortions of the pathological body in action in artistic depictions of the possessed, saints in ecstasy, exorcisms and madness. In old master paintings, Charcot sought various distorted bodily expressions and analysed them in relation to his neurological concept of hysteria. He wanted to prove that the clinical neurological cases he encountered at the Salpêtrière hospital were not his own modern invention, but existed among medieval and Renaissance societies, and were readily utilised in art. In his later study, *Les difformes et les maladies dans l'art*, Charcot paid special attention to the carved keystone of Santa Maria Formosa in Venice, claiming that its features were 'so grotesque and so hideous' that they could be 'in no way the result of a simple artistic fantasy'. Charcot compared the features of the sculpture to the spastic seizures of the patients at his hospital and proposed a theory that the sculpture depicted a man affected with the ailment commonly observed in patients suffering from hysteria.

The alarming qualities of mental disease offered the artist a unique opportunity to create a challenging and rebellious work with great dramatic effect. The moods, feelings and expressions visible in the face of the insane were a stimulus for the artist's imagination and his artistic freedom was encouraged by the inaccessibility of the medieval sculptures, often placed high above the spectator. According to Michael Camille, this 'side show of abnormality and ugliness' had the ability to mock the church authorities and the pious. Images of the insane went beyond the bounds of grotesque, creating a spectacle on the verge between society, politics and religion.

This paper will discuss some of the carved human heads on medieval and renaissance buildings (mostly churches) as unprecedented depictions of mental disease. The interdisciplinary approach will be informed by medical, anthropological and art historical discourse and will produce some theories concerned with the revolutionary form and function of the sculptures.

Biography

Agata Gomolka graduated with an honours degree in History with History of Art at the University of Hull. Last year, she started the MA degree in History of Art at the University of Warwick. The course, focusing on Renaissance Venice and its legacy, allowed her to spend ten weeks of extensive study and research *in situ* in Venice. She recently completed her MA thesis which offered an interdisciplinary investigation of the grotesque sculpted heads of Venice. After receiving her results she hopes to pursue the topic of disease in sculpture further, during her doctorate studies.

Alexandra Tommasini (Courtauld Institute of Art, Alexandra.Tommasini@courtauld.ac.uk)

'Morire di classe: The Role of the Photobook in Changing Perceptions of Mental Illness'

This paper investigates how the documentary photo book *Morire di classe. La condizione manicomiale fotografata da Carla Cerati e Gianni Berengo Gardin* (To Die of Class. The Conditions in Asylums Photographed by Carla Cerati and Gianni Berengo Gardin), was used to communicate, question and transform perceptions of mental illness during a crucial period in the history of Italian mental health reform.

Published in 1969, the work provided visual testimony for the alarming conditions of Italian mental health hospitals and served as a manifesto for the revolution in science at the time led by Italian psychiatrist Franco Basaglia. *Morire di classe* represents a shared ideology between psychiatry and photography oriented towards socio-cultural change. The paper will discuss how the photo book recalls the clinical psychiatric tradition of employing the photograph for classification purposes, yet at the same time subverts this convention by applying the logic of the book and narrative. Issues surrounding the reception of this photo book and its impact on Italian cultural memory, especially considering the book's re-publication in 2009, will be explored. The paper will conclude by considering to what extent the photo book can be understood as a site of political action by investigating the role and impact of *Morire di classe* on the passing of Law 180 in 1978 in the Italian Parliament which abolished mental hospitals in Italy.

Biography

Alexandra Tommasini is completing her PhD thesis on the work of contemporary photographer Gabriele Basilico at the Courtauld Institute of Art. Her project investigates Basilico's visual language, photobook production, and display practices and offers new perspectives on his work by evaluating them through the lens of cultural memory theory. The project represents the first English full-length scholarly examination of the Italian photographer's work. Alexandra has previously held the positions of Operations and Exhibitions Office Intern at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Editorial Assistant in the J. Paul Getty Museum Publications Department, and Gallery Educator at the UCLA Hammer Museum. She also previously worked in the financial information sector for Thomson Reuters. She holds a BA from UCLA and MA from the University of Exeter.

Lucy Form (University of Glasgow, gladioladeprez@yahoo.com)

'You don't have to be mad to be a medium but it helps: *Mouvement Flou* or *Mouvement Fou*?'

Somewhere between the last days of Parisian Dada and the official birth of Surrealism in 1924, lies the *Mouvement Flou*. A group of predominantly literary intelligentsia headed by André Breton experimenting with automatist technique in order to push their work in to new and uncharted territory. By 1922, they had essentially raided the modern religion of Spiritism for methods to push this even further.

As the burgeoning profession of psychiatry flourished around the *fin de siècle*, two men working in the field of psychical research began a rigorous study of the spiritist medium. As Charcot before them had taken the hysteric out of the realms of demonic dogma and into that of modern medicine, Pierre Janet and FHW Myers began to understand the many voices of the medium are not necessarily those of the discarnate, but that consciousness, something the Spiritists believed monadic is essentially split into a sub and supraliminal and that the medium is an adept at communicating not with the dead, but between these levels. These two researchers would however disagree on one point- for Janet communication with inner selves was always psychopathological, and for Myers the medium was in fact the key to a new stage in human evolution.

For the *Mouvement Flou*, this second self that the medium could summon from the depths of their subconscious was a much more fecund source of creativity than the conventional ego. During what was known as the *Epoch de Sommeils*, these proto-Surrealists would take on the role of the medium. What they found was like Myers had suggested on a higher level to their previous work, but like Janet's conclusion their mental states were severely affected. The purpose of this paper will be to weave the tale of the *Sommeils* into relevant psychological theory to assess the impact of both on a surrealist aesthetic, and to question the nature of madness something that can be seen by one man as a disease in need of a cure and another as the vanguard of human progress.

Biography

Lucy Form graduated with a BA in Fashion Photography from the University of the Arts London in 2005. Her work in photography often had a Surrealist aesthetic. After some work in commercial photography and graphic design among many other jobs, she decided that art history was the path she wanted to take and it was the interwar avant-garde in particular which she wished to focus on. She enrolled on the MLitt program in Art: Politics: Transgression at the University of Glasgow in 2010 where she completed a dissertation with the title 'A Séance with My Self: Madmen, Mediums and Voyants in the *Mouvement Flou* and Early Surrealism.'

Allison O'Sullivan (University of New South Wales, allison.osullivan@unsw.edu.au)

'Les belles dames sans raison: Claude Cahun, Lise Deharme and "Hysterical" Objects'

In the 1930s the surrealists came to champion the cause of the most notorious murderers of the decade, in a case that had shocked the nation: that of the sisters Christine and Léa Papin, who had brutally killed and mutilated their bourgeois employers. Decried in the popular press as insanely murderous proletariat monsters, the surrealists strove to defend the sisters, who had been brutalized by a mentally unstable, alcoholic father and a ruthlessly mercenary mother, and had been forced to work 14 hour days by their employers.

Following this case, in 1936 the writer Claude Cahun embarked on the theorization and manufacture of a series of objects with two members of the surrealist group, André Breton and Lise Deharme. These collaborations examined the notions of insanity, violence, fantasy and the marvelous in relation to the conditions of the working class, with particular reference to women, and the glorification of the irrationality of the childhood imagination: the period described by Breton as that of the marvelous, and often linked in surrealist theory with the 'innocence' and 'purity' of the creativity of the insane. Cahun in particular was fascinated by the link between the social stigma of madness, poverty and gender.

Deharme and Cahun's 1937 collaboration on the poetry anthology *Le cœur de pic* is a further exploration of the link between 'marvelous' childhoods, creativity, violence and insanity, in an attempt to reconnect with the unconscious truth which the surrealists believed inherent to the creativity of both children and the mentally ill. Through often bleak and savage imagery, Cahun and Deharme seek to glorify the macabre and, in doing so, reawaken the creative imagination of the reader, be they adult or child.

Biography

Allison O'Sullivan is currently a PhD candidate and sessional academic at the UNSW College of Fine Arts, in the field of Art History and Theory. Her current area of research centres on re-examining the contributions of several women associated with the surrealist group in the 1930s, with particular emphasis on their political, rather than artistic, motivation for participation in exhibitions and publications, and how (and how much) gender played a role in their interactions with the group in relation to their political activities. This paper represents the culmination of her first year of research.

Amy Robson (Plymouth University, samuraigirl21@hotmail.com)

'The Dog Days: Canine Class Contagions and Political Parodies in Victorian Visual Culture'

"The pattern of public response to rabies outbreaks demonstrated the extent to which the disease existed in the realm of rhetoric. The first alert was ordinarily sounded by the press, rather than by medical authorities or government officials, and it was often couched in terms that seemed calculated to inspire and exasperate fear"

-Ritvo, Harriet, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987, 171.

In Victorian Britain rabies and hydrophobia, its then human counterpart, provoked a myriad of reactions in both academic fields and the public sphere.

Amidst these reactions grew a sense of magnitude to the disease which vastly surpassed the objective realities- a growth constructed and propagated through representations of dogs parodied in the popular media of the time, as highlighted in the above quote.

This paper aims to explore this sensation of Victorian visual parodies of canine madness through an exploration of the press's representations of mad dogs- Proposing that the conceptual construction of the rabid dog became used as a conduit for social and political commentary.

This shall include a heavy focus on class anxieties; exploring middle class fears that rabies had the ability to infect and corrupt, not only the body, but also the integrity and class of society, demonstrating representations of this in visual media.

The paper shall then progress to look at the mad dog's representation, and prompting of, criticisms of the legal system- through the visual analysis of encounters between dogs and mockingly inept and overwhelmed Police Officers turned Dog Catchers.

The paper will end on the exploration of why rabies and the madness of dogs prompted such swift interaction and embellishment from the Press, and such a public unrest, proposing media parody as a form of revolt.

Biography

Amy Robson recently graduated from Plymouth University, achieving a first class BA (hons) degree in Art History. Her dissertation focused on the representation of dogs in the art of Victorian Britain, titled 'Negotiating the Dog in Victorian Visual Culture.' Amy continues to explore this field of research as an MRes Candidate at Plymouth University. Her main area of interests is the depiction of animals in 19th century British art, with particular attention being given to visual observations of domestic animals in the Victorian period. She previously worked with BBC South West and the Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery.

Monika Winiarczyk (University of Glasgow, m.winiarczyk.1@research.gla.ac.uk)

'Jewish Melancholia: An Examination of the Interrelationship between Medieval Notions of Melancholy and the Jewish Body'

Through the adoption of classical sources, medieval physiognomy was based on the notion that the universe and the human body were made up of the same four elements: fire, water, air and earth. These four elements were the fundamental components of the four bodily fluids: blood, which shared its qualities with air, phlegm, which resembled water, and yellow and black bile that mirrored the features of fire and earth respectively. It was believed that the relative proportion of these fluids in the body affected the appearance and character of each human being. The amount of each fluid was believed to be determined by natural construction, diet, lifestyle and celestial movement. A predominance of any one of these fluids, known as humours, led to a particular type of temperament. Excess amounts of blood caused an individual to become sanguine; too much phlegm led to a phlegmatic disposition; an excess of black bile resulted in melancholia and too much yellow bile produced a choleric character.

In the Middle Ages melancholia was often viewed as the lowliest of the four humours. Sharing in the cold nature of the female body, the Melancholic was associated with the least desirable members of society; from the old and infirm to the mentally unstable and, perhaps most strikingly, the Jews. According to medieval physiognomy the Jewish body was naturally predisposed towards the melancholy humour. Cold and dry, the Jewish tendency towards melancholia created a natural affinity with the inferior members of medieval society.

Through an examination of medieval ideas about melancholia and the Jews, this paper aims to examine why medieval physiognomy would present the Jews as naturally melancholic and the implications of this association.

Biography

Monika Winiarczyk is a second year PhD student in the department of History of Art at the University of Glasgow. Her current research focuses on medieval Christian representations of women and Jews in relation to medieval physiognomy. Her main interest lies in the figure of Synagoga; the medieval Christian personification of Judaism. She is currently working on her thesis entitled "'Blind, weak, sick and impotent.'" – Representations of Synagoga and the relationship between medieval notions of the female and Jewish body.'

Conference Venue



**History of Art, University of Edinburgh,
Lecture Theatre 1, Minto House, 20 Chambers Street, Edinburgh**



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25 November 2011
University of Edinburgh**

Madness and Revolt



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Symposium Organisers

Mary Jane Borland (University of Nottingham, maryjaneboland@gmail.com)

Jenny Gypaki (University of Edinburgh, e.gypaki@sms.ed.ac.uk)

Catriona McAra (University of Glasgow, c.mcara.1@research.gla.ac.uk)