AAH New Voices 2011

Madness and Revolt

25 November 2011
University of Edinburgh

'Quite apart from stressing the perfectly inspired nature of the expressions of certain madmen, to the extent that we are able to appreciate them, we affirm the absolute legitimacy of their conception of reality, and of any action resulting from it.'

--Letter to the Head Doctors of Insane Asylums,
La Révolution surréaliste. No.3. April 1925

Keynote Speaker: Dr Sabine Wieber, University of Glasgow

To what extent has madness emerged as an aesthetic strategy and as a site for political action across different historical periods, geographies, interpretative frameworks and within changing cultural, political and social conditions? Why have specific aspects of madness been photographed, performed, filmed, parodied, attacked, reclaimed or otherwise deployed in the visual arts? How, and how successfully, have artists subverted, reinforced or questioned stereotypical notions about the forms, metaphors and the timeworn (yet deeply ingrained) gendered myths of madness? Can the historically evolving link between madness and creativity open up spaces of resistance against the logic and oppression imposed by capital, patriarchy and racial ideologies? Can artistic 'treatments' of madness disclose social and political truths that the regime of reason conceals?

Madness has gone by many names and associated with diverse symptoms and cures in its centuries-old and multi-faceted history. In art and discourse, madness has served a variety of subversive aesthetic and political purposes. These include: the surrealists' contested celebration of madness and hysteria; feminist artists' and scholars' diverse attempts to reclaim the latter as an emblem of women's oppression or a transgressive 'feminine language'; cultural and political theorists' recurrent explorations of the lineages between madness and power and the invocation of schizophrenia in attempts to renew utopian thinking and open up spaces of resistance against capital's rule.

We welcome contributions that address the issues and questions outlined above or propose new critical positions. Topics may include, but are not limited to madness as it relates to:

- representation, spectacle, display
- economy, culture, biopolitics
- institutions/power
- psychoanalysis/anti-psychoanalysis
- the body, gender/sexual/queer politics
- performance, performativity
- religion, ecstasy
- metaphor, myth, truth
- love, desire
- violence, death
- the aesthetics/politics of irrationality & unreason
- social movements

Papers should be 20 minutes in length. Abstracts of no more than 300 words should be submitted along with a CV to: **aahnewvoices2011@gmail.com** by **14 October 2011.**

Submissions are open to AAH student members only

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