

Form has Potential

This year's Poetics and Theory conference addresses the status and relevance of the concept of form at a time when its obsolescence has been taken for granted. Formalism is now a dirty word. In the history of Western thinking, however, form has been a central and persistent category. There have been many different ways of understanding form, from Plato's transcendent ideal forms to Aristotle's concrete poetic and biological forms. This concept has played a vital role in art history, psychology, the study of law, biology, politics, literary criticism as well as other fields, but has now been supplanted by notions of difference, singularity, and irreducibility. The conference asks the extent to which form has been unknowingly preserved within discourses that claim to have supplanted it, whether it continues to have any legitimacy, and what sorts of problems arise from the ostensible elimination of the category from current critical discourse. We hope that the interdisciplinary nature of this topic will attract a wide variety of papers.

March 4: Deutsches Haus

7:30

Introduction: Mikhail Iampolski (NYU)

Keynote speaker: Rodolphe Gasché (SUNY Buffalo)

"Schematization without Concept: Imagination and Beautiful Form"

March 5: Deutsches Haus

10am

Benjamin Buchloh (Columbia)

"What (and how) would Form mean now?"

Eva Geulen (Bonn/NYU)

"Education - Formality or Form of Life? (Agamben)"

Isabelle Graw (Frankfurt an der Oder)

1:30pm

Joel Christensen (NYU)

"Meeting by Plato's Statue: Cicero's Reception of Platonic Form"

Katerina Harvati (NYU)

"Form and Species Concepts in Biology"

Michèle Lowrie (NYU)

4pm

Marianne Schuller (Hamburg)

"Fool's Gold. The Crisis of Form in Stifter's late Writings"

Barbara Vinken (Zürich)

"Simple forms - great complications: Flaubert's St. Julien l'Hospitalier"

Paul Fleming (NYU)

March 6:

10am

Vera Beyer (Frankfurt/O)

"Formalities of Power: Goya's Royal Portraiture"

Anselm Haverkamp (NYU, Frankfurt/O)

"Form vs Structure: in Light of Painting"

Birgit Kaiser (NYU)

1:30pm

John Hamilton (Harvard)

"Musical Form in E.T.A. Hoffmann's Rat Krespel"

Dmitry Nikulin (New School)

"What is the Matter with Form? Loss and Gain in Plurivocal Speech"
Lydia Goehr (Columbia)

4pm

Virginia Jackson (NYU)

"The Lyric as Norm"

Emily Apter (NYU)

"Singularity and Literary Comparatism: Badiou's Poetic Universalism"

Barbara Vinken (Zürich)