

CALL FOR PAPERS

Uses of Art and Culture

Sandbjergseminar

June 4-8, 2018

How do we use works of art and culture? What do art and cultural artefacts do to individual users? How do they affect and move us? Why does it matter?

Recent years have seen an increased interest in thinking about the societal ‘usability’ and ‘impact’ of the phenomena studied by the humanities and, by implication, the societal ‘relevance’ of the humanities themselves and the methodologies of the humanities. This interest has given new impetus to previously understudied questions, such as: Do art and culture function more at a cognitive or an affective level, or can these not be separated analytically? What about the social, political and economic functions of art and culture, and how are these linked to their affective and cognitive functions? Is it OK for an academic critic to enthusiastically identify with aspects of a work or a performance and take this attachment as the object of analysis, or is the point of criticism indeed to be critically detached and at a distance from oneself and the work? In other words, in what mood should we engage with art and culture? And how much should one’s subjective and situated political and ethical outlook be allowed to filter through to and shape one’s scholarly work?

Literature and art have always played an important role in society. How were art and culture used outside of academia in earlier centuries and how are they used today: in reading clubs and groups, in nursing homes, in museums and other cultural institutions, in theatre and art and cultural performances within and without institutions, in libraries, in the rehabilitation of terminally ill patients, in the news, in cultural tourism and as forms of entertainment in all kinds of media? How have theories and practices of art and culture been affected, even transformed, by the strong emphasis on the ‘user’ in the encompassing ‘participatory turn’ – for instance, in the arts themselves, on media platforms and in non-formal education spaces and institutions such as

museums? What do all these various uses signify? What changes have they brought about? And how can we approach and understand them methodologically?

At the annual Sandbjerg graduate seminar, we will meet to probe these and other questions across disciplines, including but not limited to literature, art history, museum studies, theatre and performance studies, media studies, musicology, creative writing studies, visual studies and cultural studies. This Call for Papers thus invites interested scholars to discuss how the concept of use is productive for their research in terms of either object of study or method of study.

Ideally, participants may also relate these issues to the bigger question of how their own research is of use, to whom, where and when both inside and outside of academia, perhaps ultimately gaining a more nuanced common understanding of how we can talk about ‘use’ and ‘relevance’ in relation to the humanities.

Possible topics and concerns include but are not limited to:

- The conditioning of users and uses of art and culture: regimes of representation and knowledge
- Mechanisms of identification and issues of inclusion and exclusion
- Affect studies and what art does to us
- Technologies of attachment
- The uses of art and culture in the construction of a common heritage, identity, memory or community (local, national, transnational, diasporic)
- The responsibility of the arts and the humanities for the planet’s future: studies in the anthropocene
- Health or medical humanities and the use of art, literature, philosophy, religion
- The uses of art and culture in cultural, national and international policies, including cultural diplomacy and democratic processes
- Law and literature
- Intersections of art and human rights
- Participatory art and culture, including theories and practices of relational and interventionist art
- Museum studies and user perspectives in museum education
- Gender, queer and minorities perspectives on the uses of art and culture
- Digital media and user perspectives
- The uses of storytelling - oral, visual and in theatre
- Open forum theatre
- Soundscapes, performance, the use of rhythm, and environmental music
- Economic and market perspectives on literature, art and culture
- New sociology of literature

Confirmed Keynotes:

Rita Felski, Niels Bohr Professor, Department for the Study of Culture, University of Southern Denmark, 2016-, William R Kenan, Jr. Professor of English, University of Virginia
Editor, *New Literary History*: https://www.sdu.dk/en/om_sdu/institutter_centre/c_uol/rita+felski

Helen Small, Professor of English Literature, Pembroke College:
<http://www.english.ox.ac.uk/people/professor-helen-small>

Kirsten Drotner, Professor, Department for the Study of Culture, University of Southern Denmark, founding director of a national R&D programme Our Museum, and of DREAM (Danish Research Centre on Advanced Media Materials) [http://findresearcher.sdu.dk/portal/en/persons/kirsten-drotner\(b0d73222-74a5-417c-b313-0bccaaf812fa\).html](http://findresearcher.sdu.dk/portal/en/persons/kirsten-drotner(b0d73222-74a5-417c-b313-0bccaaf812fa).html)

Falk Heinrich, Professor MSO, Department of Communication and Psychology, Head of Research at RELATE (Research Laboratory for Art and Technology), both at Aalborg University, [http://vbn.aau.dk/da/persons/falk-heinrich\(cd4fa6ec-4b1d-42cc-a251-1c1e52d4bb8f\).html](http://vbn.aau.dk/da/persons/falk-heinrich(cd4fa6ec-4b1d-42cc-a251-1c1e52d4bb8f).html)

Abstracts (200-300 words) should be sent before February 15, 2018 to Anne Ring Petersen (annering@hum.ku.dk), Peter Simonsen (petsim@sdu.dk) and Karen-Margrethe Simonsen (litkms@cc.au.dk)

VENUE

The Ph.d. conference will take place at the beautiful Sandbjerg Estate: <http://www.sandbjerg.dk/en/>

ETCS: 5 points

This Ph.D. Conference is co-organized by

*The Doctoral Programme in Literature, Aesthetics and Culture, University of Southern Denmark,
Copenhagen Doctoral School of Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen
The Ph.d. Programme for Art, Literature and Cultural Studies, Aarhus University*