

Sunday 14 May 2017

Open Access - in and through Desire and Touch

Kungl. Konsthögskolan/Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm presents artistic research projects providing entries into wider notions of open access. Writer and researcher Mara Lee elaborates on ways to imagine agency and accountability through the inscription of desire. PhD candidate Emanuel Almborg screens *Talking Hands*, a film about pedagogy at the Zagorsk school for deaf-blind children, and PhD candidate Maria Chehonadskih lectures on communist individuation in Soviet Marxism and beyond.

12.00-13.00

Mara Lee - “Dark situatedness and feminist imaginaries” - performance lecture

We are not epistemologically equal. Those of us who embody otherness, know that situatedness matters. This presentation is a poetic performance-lecture that will present agency as embodied *beyond* the neo-liberal individual and independent subject. Instead, it aims to provide alternative ways to imagine agency in terms of accountability through the inscription of desire.

Mara Lee is a Swedish poet, writer and scholar, living in Stockholm. Her most recent works include the novel, *Future Perfect* (Albert Bonniers, 2014) and her PhD thesis *The Writing of Others: Writing conceived as Resistance, Responsibility and Time* (2014). She currently runs the senior level research project, *Loving Others, Othering Love: A Toolbox for Postcolonial and Feminist Artistic Practices*, funded by the Swedish Research Council, 2017-2019, and hosted by the Royal Institute of Art.

15.00-17.30

Emanuel Almborg & Maria Chehonadskih “Talking Hands” - film screening and talks

This event is organized in the framework of Emanuel Almborgs PhD project, *The Utopian Image* at the Royal Institute of Art, and will comprise of two parts. The first part is a screening of the film *Talking Hands/Говорящие руки* and a presentation of the research and work behind it. The second part will

be a talk by Maria Chehonadskih, a PhD candidate at CRMEP, Kingston University London, on related historical and philosophical concepts. Almborg's project takes its starting point in the theory and practice of cultural-historical psychology and Marxist philosophy in 1960's Soviet Union, while Chehonadskih traces related concepts back to Soviet literature and psychology of the 1920's, an inquiry that creates a dialogue between the two research projects and raises questions for art philosophy and politics today.

Emanuel Almborg "Talking Hands"

A presentation by Emanuel Almborg, followed by a screening of: *Talking Hands/Говорящие руки*, (2016, 48 min), a film about the 1960's Zagorsk school for deaf-blind children outside Moscow and its pedagogy, established together with Soviet philosopher Evald Ilyenkov and based on a social and cultural-historical understanding of consciousness and development. Inspired by Spinoza and Vygotsky, in theory and practice Ilyenkov began developing ideas of how human consciousness emerges. The school was successful in educating deaf-blind children and in 1977, four of its students graduated from university, one of them Alexander Suvorov with a PhD in psychology. The film is based on two main components. One is a staged conversation between Suvorov who now lives outside Moscow and Almborg, a dialogue that was scripted together with Suvorov. The other part is a 16 mm film recovered by Almborg. The archive film documents teaching and activities around the Zagorsk school sometime in the late 1960's - early 1970's but filmmaker and exact date is unknown, the only information attached to the film was a title; "Talking Hands".

Emanuel Almborg is an artist based in Stockholm. He is currently a PhD candidate at the Royal Institute of Art, with the research topic, *The Utopian Image, Absolute and Incomplete - The Conditions of a Utopian Function in Art and Artist-Film*. Other works also include photography and publications.

Maria Chehonadskih "Mediating Poor Life: communist individuation in Soviet Marxism and Beyond"

This talk will address Soviet writer Andrey Platonov's concept of "poor life" and psychologist Lev Vygotsky's theories of "mediation" in subject formation developed in the 1920's. Chehonadskih will argue that Vygotsky overcomes stultifying conceptions of the social and collective, and outlines a political theory of communization as an "adequate form" of individuation. By doing so, she brings him in contact with the philosophy of Gilbert Simondon, Etienne Balibar and Paolo Virno.

Maria Chehonadskih is a writer and philosopher who lives and works in London and Moscow. She is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, Kingston University London. Her research is

focused on the problem of Soviet epistemologies across philosophy, Marxism and art of the 1920's.

The session concludes with a Q&A with Emanuel Almborg and Maria Chehonadskih.

The Royal Institute of Art, in collaboration with Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy (CRMEP), Kingston University London. Between 2014-2017, RIA and CRMEP ran the course *Philosophy in the Context of Art* in conjunction with Visiting Professors Peter Osborne and Catherine Malabou, as well as jointly holding two international conferences and a series of PhD seminars.

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Bildtext: Emanuel Almborg, *Talking Hands/Говорящие руки*, 2016

Bildtext porträtt av Mara: Photo: R. Thord