in keeping with the international character of the event, some papers will be delivered in English, others in German

In postmodernism, a return to authenticity is neither feasible nor desirable because it never existed in the first place. The inevitability of ‘repetition’ has been the topic of great concern in cultural theory (Baudrillard, Eco). On the contrary, critics like Genette have indicated that ‘second degree’ artefacts resulting from postmodern strategies of production are not debased copies, but produce their own reality. What deserves attention is not their secondary nature, but their inherent constructedness. The reproduction of the Renaissance imagery of Italian architecture will be discussed by looking at hotel and resort architecture in Las Vegas that references Italian town- and cityscapes (The Venetian, Caesars Palace, Bellagio). The paper will argue that these ‘replications’ do not intend to substitute the ‘authentic’ with the artificial. Rather, the mechanisms of such scenographic displays may be compared with what film and literary theory call the ‘suspension of disbelief’.

The 300.000.000 USD building decorated with Italian baroque architecture and interior decoration epitomize European aesthetic culture of socialist modernity. The reference to the Renaissance model was most obvious in architecture. Renaissance forms were characterized by a particularly strong revolutionary impetus. Consequently, it was seen as a significant part of the ‘progressive traditions’ that were to form the base for the establishment of socialist culture. The reference to the Renaissance model was most obvious in architecture. Renaissance forms were even used for new mass housing complexes. The construction of these ‘Palaces for the Working Class’ was accompanied by enormous multi-media propaganda campaigns in newspapers, books, posters, cinema newsreels and even popular films. In this way, Renaissance forms were granted an afterlife not only in housing sites of the working class but also in the visual mass culture of socialist modernity. This paper focuses both on the adaptation of Renaissance forms in Stalinist architecture and their dissemination through mass-media propaganda.

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This conference is made possible through an international collaboration between Dartmouth College (USA) and the University of Zurich, and with the support of our sponsors.
EUROT RASH?
modern simulacra of renaissance art

March 18, 2011 | Cabaret Voltaire | Zurich

An international conference presented by Dartmouth College and the University of Zurich

Program

SESSION TWO
Chair: Julia Gelshorn University of Vienna

11:00 Melissa Renn Harvard Art Museums
Even Better than the Real Thing? Life Magazine's Illuminations

This paper is a case study of Illuminations, an exhibition that 'Life', with the assistance of the American Federation of Arts, organized in 1956. Part of the larger educational mission of "Life", Illuminations consisted of full-color size photographic reproductions of what "Life" considered the fifty greatest works of art, from Giotto to Mondrian, and included a scale replica of the Sistine Chapel, which "Life" installed on the ceiling as part of the show. Opening at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Illuminations' traveled throughout the United States before it was exported abroad. The exhibition promised to take the visitor on a virtual 15,000-mile journey, emphasizing that it was an opportunity for many to see these works, all together in one place, for the first time. Drawing on the writings of Barthes, Baudrillard, and Benjamin, the paper examines how, through technological innovations in mechanical reproduction, 'Life' brought works of art from all over the world to new audiences and further examines the implications of the appropriation, reproduction, and dissemination of the art of the Western canon.

11:30 Jeanette Kohl University of California Riverside
He-Man and It-Girl. The Afterlife of the Machiavellian Prince in Contemporary Political Imagery

Putini, Schwarzegger, Berlusconi, Sarkozy: at the beginning of the 21st century, a new generation of political rulers create images of contemporary leadership, largely inspired by modern popular culture and fashion. Yet on a closer look, their "self-fashioning" draws heavily on Renaissance iconography – for good reasons. This paper will discuss the "simulacrum" and "totemism" as terms that both connote two different but constitutive processes in the fabrication of sexual prowess with antique cliches of military command and intellectual authority, as reflected in the images of equestrian statues and bust portraits. In post-modern times, one would suspect that such traditional image concepts had moved to the realm of kitsh and conservative shelf decoration. This paper, however, will investigate the serious afterlife of Renaissance concepts of heroism in recent contemporary political representation, asking three central questions: How do political leaders and public figures create an image related to Renaissance ideals? In what ways is this reflected in their public commissions? And what is female politicians' public persona?

12:00 Beat Wyss Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design
Vasari's Chimaira and Totemism in Modern Art

The icon of the ‘Lupa Capitolina’, mass reproduced in every size, on squares, desks, and letterheads, during the Amminetra represented the ‘Romanita’ of the Mussolini regime. Since 2006, we know the bronze to be a medieval simulacrum. Nevertheless, it still works as a totem of cultural identity. The paper will discuss the ‘simulacrum’ and ‘totemism’ as terms that both connote two different but constitutive processes in the fabrication of cultural identity. Giorgio Vasari emphasized the totemistic value of Etruscan culture. The discovery of the ‘Chimiera’ in Arezzo plays a crucial role in his concept of ‘rinascita’. There are primarily subjects of extinguished cultures that are fit for totemization in the strict Freudian sense. Transatlantic Modernism follows Vasari’s ‘rinascita’ pattern by cannibalizing the cultural heritage of colonized natives, harvested in ethnological museums, as models of contemporary art.

13:00 Break

SESSION THREE
Chair: Stefan Neuner University of Basel

14:00 Jörg Scheller Swiss Institute for Art Research, Zurich
Oration on the Dignity of Muscle. The Afterlife of Humanist Thought in Bodybuilding and Fitness

At first glance, the fitness and bodybuilding movement is a genuine modern invention. The paper presents some heuristic hypotheses in which Renaissance humanist thought and the today's body 'craze' are interpreted as two distinct yet genealogically interconnected phenomena – not in terms of direct, deliberate transfers, but rather by applying a poststructuralist approach to the afterlife of meanings and episteme in varying 'historical a priori' (Michel Foucault). The basic assumption is that seminal motives of Pico della Mirandola's 'Oration on the Dignity of Man' have resurfaced in the manifestos and image policies of bodybuilding and fitness promoters. The humanist ideal of constant quest for knowledge and increased human capacities in general translates into the constant quest for somatic ascension and somatic self-transgression. Hence bodybuilding is here considered as an attempt to transcend flesh precisely through flesh with a view to accomplishing an ideal form of the self, finally resulting in the sublime postmodern aestheticization of the body.

14:30 Valentin Nussbaum National Taiwan Normal University
Renaissance 'de façade'. Treacherous Survival in Brian de Palma's Obsession

Haunted by the idea of the recreation of the same, Brian de Palma's 'Obsession' questions the issue of the simulacra. It is not by chance that Florence and the façade of San Miniato al Monte are both the stage and décor of the pivotal scene of the movie: the 'resurrection' of Michael Courtland. The paper will return to the film's specific setting, as well as Sandra's profession, to fit perfectly with Amy Wayburg's concept of survival and rebirth commonly related to the city as the cradle of the Renaissance. This first layer of interpretation has also to be discussed in terms of fiction and simulation. The artistic background related to Florence is a perfect pretext to address the issue of the artificial creation, and the treacherous machination, which has been staged to deceive Courtland.

SESSION FOUR
Chair: Wolfgang Brückle University of Bern

15:00 Douglas N. Dow Kansas State University
History and the Hyperreal: Assassin's Creed II, Simulation, and the Historical Act

The video game 'Assassin's Creed II' unfolds in expansive environments that represent the countryside and cities of late fourteenth-century Italy. This paper examines the game's 'Florence', which contains many recognizable monuments, oments others and modifies the city's plan. In light of Baudrillard's logic, this 'Florence' is a simulation that colonizes the gamer's experience of the 'real'. Furthermore, the detailed environments of the game fit Baudrillard's definition of hyperrealism. This hyperreal 'Florence' 'rejuvenates the fiction' of the 'real' Florence, which, dotted with replicas and neo-Gothic facades, is itself a simulation (Baudrillard's Disneyland). Finally, the game is a mise en abyme. Its 'Florence' is constructed in the mind of the game's character who explores the memories of a dead ancestor to uncover ancient wisdom. Thus, the gamer assumes the role of the historian, both of whom resurrect the lost people, places and events of the Renaissance in the pursuit of knowledge.

10:00 Joseph Imorde University of Siegen
Michelangelo's David Globalized

Probably no other work of the Italian Renaissance left stronger traces in our daily popular culture than Michelangelo's 'David'. In our contribution we have offered for almost everyone a heroic form of beauty, strength and wellness. This may be one of the reasons that we can find reproduction of the sculpture almost everywhere in the world. His presence in camp and trash places and events of the Renaissance in the pursuit of knowledge.

10:30 Break

11:00 Johannes Endres University of California Riverside
Freuds Renaissance

Freud's reception of Renaissance art and the Renaissance artist had a major effect on the popularization of the era and some of its central figures. His essays on Leonardo and Michelangelo have not only attracted the interest of scholars in the fields of psychoanalysis and critical theory, they also created a standard in how to approach the Renaissance era as such. The reason for the pervasiveness and success of Freud's model lies in a radical change of perspective: one that for the first time combined the admiration of the Renaissance with the idea of its psychological commensurability. The contribution will on the one hand focus on Freud's strategies of 'reading' the Renaissance, while it will on the other hand focus on Freud's relevance for the intellectual proliferation of Renaissance's 'animus'.

11:30 Tristan Weddigen University of Zurich
Forest Lawn, Glendale: Californian Simulacra of Renaissance Art

12:00 Introductory Remarks

13:00 Break

14:00 Session One
Chair: Beate Fricke University of California, Berkeley

14:30 Session Two
Chair: Julia Gelshorn University of Vienna

15:00 Session Three
Chair: Stefan Neuner University of Basel