

Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM

**XXXVIII Coloquio Internacional de Historia del Arte
Animalistics**

November 10–14, 2014
Mérida, Yucatán, México

Fauna and its visual, acoustic and literary representations are certainly a recurring theme in of Art History. In very diverse times, cultures and artistic trends, animals have been present in multiple senses and—what most concerns us here—as an inexhaustible subject of expression and reflection. Its study is in itself not only an interesting crossroads where art of all times and any culture converge, but it is also a unique link common to our studies and those of many other disciplines.

In this Colloquium, the reading proposed on this topic affects not only the role of animals as autonomous entities, but also seeks to establish integrative interpretations to contextualize their presence from multiple points of view, namely, to explore the various discursive offers of our discipline. We shall not forget the significance of animals as an iconographic symbol in most cultures and times, and the values, ideas and principles embodied by them. The concepts of exoticism, of uniqueness, of what is own and idiosyncratic to each region, of the assets that have been attributed to each species at a given time, or the attraction exerted by their physical and conductive qualities can be added also.

In addition to its painted, sculpted and photographic representations, we must not forget its role in literature in general, especially in fables, myths, rituals, music, dance and theater, among others. We should claim the role of animalistics as a representative gender that may be independent or dependent, but in any case able to configure meanings within the most varied cultural traditions.

Thus, the idea and approach of this colloquium is to provide the necessary space for academic reflection on a subject that demands effective and plural advancement in the field of Art History studies. We want to discuss the multiple views and analysis that characterize our discipline, always delimited by the scope of the investigations that concern us, and in which animals and their representation, i.e. animalistics, have been inserted.

The panels will be the following:

1. Animals as iconographic conventions. This panel will discuss those representations in which animals appear as articulators of meanings; especially, but not exclusively, based on visual mechanisms. Examples that would influence this idea include animal Apocalypses, sacred gardens, constellations, the dance of the deer, their metamorphosis, their participation in the creations and destructions of the world, the zoo, the signs of political power, masks and costumes, imaginary animal societies.

2. Emblems: heraldry and writing. This panel proposes cross studies between image and text. It must accommodate the relationship of animals in anthroponomy, oronymy, theonymy and toponymy, as image and text come and go in these cases, especially in pictographic traditions (of a conceptual order) and hieroglyphic writings, as well as ways of complementarity between text and image, and rhetorical traditions and devices.

The very theme of the scriptures can not only be tackled from grammatological traditional perspectives, but also from the formal, calligraphic, palaeographic, typographic and stylistic approaches, as part of the visual culture of a given society.

3. Classification. The study of the issue that concerns us—animals—requires a complex methodological reflection. For this, it is important to make use of the analytical-descriptive tools of natural sciences, biology, zoology, ethology, etc. Namely, what interests us in the field of Art History is to provide space to the representations that arise from classifications, collecting and the Enlightenment, or scientific knowledge, without excluding other cultural classifications: bestiaries, natural histories, cabinets of curiosities, scientific illustrations, evolutionary trees, collections of fossils, photographs...

4. Hybrids. The theme of symbiosis, mixture, conjunction or metamorphosis is a complex phenomenon that has a long tradition in the studies that concern us. Within this *range* of images there is a special and broad body of work in which animals are present in search of a meaning. This can range from simple formulas to complex reformulations outside the natural order, and, therefore, fantastic or monstrous, but perceived and explained as part of their disparate contexts, to which Art History is sensitive and here aims to assess. What is wanted in this section is to reveal that gaze as far as possible in terms of the historical moment that gave meaning to them, i.e., understanding those depictions as a product of a certain moment and concern. Feathered serpents, mermaids, centaurs, dragons, evolutive and involutive processes, genetic manipulation: ethics and aesthetics of the genome. “The sleep of reason produces monsters.”

Guidelines

1. Proposals must be submitted in either English or Spanish including references and methodological approach, have a tentative title and must include a summary, not exceeding 300 words, on the paper to be developed. Only one proposal per author will be accepted.
2. Proposals must briefly explain why you wish to participate on a given panel. Please attach a résumé of not more than two pages, highlighting your main academic work and your academic affiliation.
3. The deadline for submitting proposals is May 23, 2014.
4. Proposals will be evaluated by a Committee made up of members of the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, who will select the proposals based on criteria of quality and thematic relevance.
5. The Committee's decision will be announced no later than June 20 and will be final.
6. The definite version of the paper to be presented should be delivered before October 3, 2014.
7. The papers accepted and presented at the Colloquium will be submitted for arbitration for the digital publication of the Colloquium memories.

Ciudad Universitaria, D.F., February, 2014.

Please send your proposal to the following address:

Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM
Circuito Mario de la Cueva s/n
Zona Cultural, Ciudad Universitaria
Coyoacán, 04510, México, D.F.
Phones (52 55) 5665 2465, (52 55) 5665 7641

E-mails: arrona@unam.mx
 lupitaarrona@gmail.com