

Ergon and Parergon – Decorative Arts, Applied Arts, Industrial Arts: Fine Arts and the others

International Conference - February 1-2 2017- University of Nice (France)

Convener : Carole Talon-Hugon (Carole.TALON-HUGON@unice.fr)

Keynote speakers: Noel Carroll (Temple University - US), Haruhiko Fujita (Osaka University - Japan), Nathalie Heinich (EHESS - France), Zhongyi Shi (Beijing University - China)

Ornament largely disappeared from the contemporary world, and even more from the Panthéon of its values. Adolf Loos's well known title maintains that it is a crime (*Ornament and crime*, 1908), and Le Corbusier judges that decorative objects are bulky, ridiculous and dishonest "moth-eaten old rags" (*L'Art décoratif aujourd'hui*, 1925). From several aspects, ornament is at variance with the modern idea of art: ornament is additional while art work claims to be necessary; ornament has a function while art work refuse to be ancillary; ornament is designed to serve, while art work should not; ornament aim for beauty, while beauty is no longer the highest value of art.

Yet, what do we have to think about these oppositions? Was not art firstly ornament, as Godfried Semper put it? Ornament is, by its very nature, subject to the objet it decorates; but does this subordination mean that ornament is insignificant and trifling? Ornament is not necessary, but for all that, is it useless? Yes, if we think that the object is self-sufficient, and that ornament is a gratuitous and irrelevant finery. No, if there is among ornament and the thing it decorates a mutual affinity, a *convenience*, which transforms both of them : then, the ornament which highlights an object, far from being negligible, has the power to confer to it an additional being; and the decorated object acquires by its embellishment an increased power.

Architecture reveals that the separation between "genuine art work" and "pure and simple ornament" is not so easy to establish. Architecture is an art which includes many arts and crafts (a cathedral, for instance, requires the participation of stonemasons, carpenters, sculptors, goldsmiths, glaziers, painters, etc.); ergon and parergon are linked and forms an indivisible whole. For the Renaissance or baroque architect, ornament was not a supererogatory element. Although he is considered an functionalist, Viollet le Duc gave a great importance to building decoration, and he himself designed the wall painting and panellings of Pierrefond Castle, the stained-glass window of Dreux Chapel, and the high altar of Clermont-Ferrand cathedral. Architecture has inspired Ruskin when he maintained against modernity that the best art is decorative and in return, that art for art sake is a degraded art.

This conference intends to analyse the nature, the place and the meaning or ornament in the field of art. These questions which concern several academic approaches (aesthetics, history of art and of its institutions, philosophy of art, anthropology...) will be developed according to 4 lines:

- 1) Genesis of the category of "Decorative Arts", "Applied Arts", and "Industrial Arts". From an historical and conceptual point of view, will be analysed the appearance of these categories, their naming, their development, and their institutes - from the *Arts and Crafts* and *Bauhaus* movments, and also their interdependances with others categories (medieval division between mechanical arts and liberal arts, arrival of the new idea of fine arts in the european eighteen century, evolution of the cratfs through contact with the nintheen century

development of industry, current increase of Design, etc.)

- 2) "Decorative Arts", "Applied Arts", and "Industrial Arts" faced with modern avant-garde. This line concerns the complex relationships between painting - especially abstract painting - and ornament: sworn opposition, inconfessed derivation, defended relatedness (Kandinsky, Puvis de Chavannes, Lothe, Bazaine, etc.).

- 3) Architecture and ornaments. This line concerns the very specific links between architecture and decoration (from Villard de Honnecourt, Alberti ou Palladio, to Gropius, Le Corbusier, Jencks ou Venturi, via Ruskin, Morris, Pugin, Viollet le duc, or Semper).

- 4) Non-western categories. Through a comparative perspective, this (chapter) will consist of studying the way in which practices attributed to the western categories of Fine Art, Applied Arts and the Decorative and industrial Arts, are distributed outside of western culture.

Submission Guidelines

Paper proposals must include:

-the main topic (see 1/2/3)

-the name of the author(s)

-a short biography (100 words max.)

-a title

-a 300-words abstract

-a list of key-words (5 max.)

-a short bibliography

-a statement ensuring payment of the 50€ fees in case the proposal is accepted. The registration fees cover the participation in the conference, coffee breaks and lunch programs.

Abstracts can be submitted in English or French and must be send in pdf format to Carole.TALON-HUGON@unice.fr and Alexandre.BIES@unice.fr

The deadline for submissions is **October 30th 2016**.

Presentations (in English or French) will be scheduled for 30 minutes. No translation services will be provided. Accommodation and transportation costs are at the contributor's expense.

Academic committee:

Alexandre Bies (University Nice Sophia Antipolis), Ondine Breaud (Monaco Fine Arts School), Carole Talon-Hugon (University Nice Sophia Antipolis), Jean-Jacques Wunenburger (University Lyon III)

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