

Interactions – The Bulletin of I.A.W.I.S. No. 29, November 2002

Contents

- Report on the Hamburg Conference (Michèle Hannoosh)
- President's Report (Charlotte Schoell-Glass)
- Book Review: Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux and Neil Fraistat (eds.). *Reimagining Textuality: Textual Studies in the Late Age of Print*. (Maria Scott)

Report on the Hamburg Conference

The sixth triennial conference of the Association took place at the University of Hamburg from 21st to 27th July 2002. 190 participants from 22 countries attended the conference, 40 of them were younger colleagues or graduate students. Masterfully organized by Charlotte Schoell-Glass and held in the superb surroundings of the Kunstgeschichtliches Seminar, it was devoted to the theme of 'Orientations', explored broadly over the course of 5 days of papers, discussion panels, workshops and plenary sessions. As Charlotte Schoell-Glass explained, the theme of 'Orientations', understood in the Kantian sense of "using a given direction [...] in order to find the others", seemed to provide an especially pertinent area for Word & Image studies: bringing different, often highly separated, branches of knowledge into contact with one another; orientating ourselves differently so as to grasp the unfamiliar or unknown; expanding our 'horizons' and seeing our own subjects from a fresh perspective.

Each day focused on one or two questions, ensuring an intellectual coherence to the nine sessions which each encompassed: Word & Image in History and Historiography (Monday); The Politics of Media (Tuesday); Contemporary Art (Thursday); Mapping & Visualisation (Friday); Orientations (Saturday). These covered a wide range or more specialized subjects, from graffiti to cultural memory, photojournalism to tableaux vivants, comic strips to consumerism, materiality to metaphor. Cinema figured prominently and, as a particular interest of this conference, word and image in the physical sciences: scientific photography, microscopy, cartography, etc., along with, conversely, the uses of these in art and literature.

Outside the sessions devoted to papers were two outstanding keynote lectures: Georges Didi-Huberman spoke on 'Words, Winds, Image: Aby Warburg and the "Imaginary Breeze" in the Quattrocento' (a session also centered on Warburg and conference participants were invited to visit the nearby Warburg House); Daniel Dayan addressed the role of the media after the events of September 11th, in 'Rituals of Consensus, Rituals of Dissent: Visual Media and their Public.'

An entire day (Wednesday) was spent at the Kassel Documenta 11, visiting the many exhibitions of contemporary art. A plenary panel featuring Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, Wolfgang Kemp, Monika Wagner and John Welchman was held the following morning, to assess this Documenta in the context not only of the contemporary art-world but also of issues relevant to word and image. The conference itself included a

prominent art-component: a dance performance at the Markthalle 'Spinstren' composed by Jools Gilson-Ellis and Richard Povall; a video installation by Sophia Lycouris, entitled 'Bodysight' about orientation in the city. These also figured in a session in which the artists discussed their work.

As a new feature of the conference, a highly successful and well-attended workshop was offered on 'Teaching Word & Image.' Following the interest generated by this, another such workshop is being planned for summer 2003 at the University of Utrecht.

The Association was exceedingly well-served by a supremely competent staff, who met every need and ensured that everything ran smoothly. Members of the Kunstgeschichtliches Seminar themselves played a major role in the sessions and panels, and were particularly helpful in guiding us through the Documenta. The resources of Hamburg were not the least factor in making this a highly stimulating and thoroughly enjoyable conference.

Michèle Hannoosh



Spinstren: During the conference in Hamburg, a dance performance by half / angel (Jools Gilson-Ellis & Richard Povall) combined dance, words and remarkable images. Photographs: Moritz Vahlenkamp, for Kunsthaus Hamburg

President's Report

At the end of the Hamburg Conference, Board and Membership Meetings were held, where a number of changes and plans for the future were agreed on. New members of the Board and of the Advisory Board were elected.

Among the changes that we agreed to implement, the most important is a modification of our conference schedule. While we will hold on to the customary three-year interval between conferences of one week's duration, there will be the new possibility of holding smaller and locally based symposia with IAWIS's support of up to 500 euro. During the intervals between our main conferences, up to three symposia in the field of Word & Image Studies can be held and hosted by members of IAWIS at any university or similar institution.

The first such symposium will be held in Utrecht. Following up on the great success of Claus Clüver's and Peter de Voogd's workshop on 'Teaching Word & Image Studies', Peter de Voogd agreed to organize a two-day symposium in 2003 concerning questions of teaching W & I studies. All members interested in this conference should contact Peter de Voogd (email: peter.devoogd@let.uu.nl (<mailto:peter.devoogd@let.uu.nl>)). Members who are interested in collaborating with IAWIS on workshops and symposia on topics of their interest in Word & Image Studies should contact Charlotte Schoell-Glass (schglass@uni-hamburg.de (<mailto:schglass@uni-hamburg.de>)). IAWIS intends to be as informal as possible in furthering its members' activities. Procedures and news on the new scheme will be published on our website.

As an organization affiliated to the College Art Association, IAWIS/ AIERTI has its own slot at the annual conferences of CAA, held in a different American city in February. Michèle Hannoosh (Secretary) proposed a session for the 2004 CAA Conference to be held in New York City on 'Walter Benjamin and the Visual Arts.' Members who are interested in this session are invited to contact Michèle Hannoosh (hannoosh@umich.edu). As soon as a definitive approval of the College Art Association is received, a Call for Papers will be published on the IAWIS website.

Sessions for CAA conferences must be proposed two years in advance. Members who are interested in proposing a session for 2005 should contact Michèle Hannoosh or Charlotte Schoell-Glass by June 2003.

At the Hamburg meeting we also discussed whether Interactions should in future be published in electronic form. I would like to encourage all members to comment on the possibility of this new form of 'Interactions.' If we do not receive a clear vote for the continuance of the paper-version of 'Interactions' we plan to go ahead with an E-interactions next year.

In order to facilitate communication among members and the Board, I should be very interested in collecting email addresses of members. If you have not yet done so, please contact the president, secretary or treasurer of IAWIS/ AIERTI via email. As we all know, postage is slow, inefficient and expensive, and we would like to serve our members efficiently and to the best of our abilities.

The next, the 7th International Conference for Word & Image Studies under the general theme Elective Affinities will be held in

Philadelphia, PA, September 24 to 29, 2005.

The conference will be organized by Catriona MacLeod, University of Pennsylvania.

Charlotte Schoell-Glass

***Reimagining Textuality: Textual Studies in the Late Age of Print*, edited by Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux and Neil Fraistat (University of Wisconsin Press, 2002)**

Reimagining Textuality assembles a collection of meditations on the possibilities and limitations of new publishing technologies and of alternative modes and theories of textuality. It explores new ways of imagining text at a time when ‘electracy’ (Gregory Ulmer) is gaining the upper hand over alphabetic literacy and when ‘monstropomorphism’ (Joseph Grigely) is replacing humanist values. The collection is presented as a dialogue, across a range of disciplines, between conventional textual scholarship and postmodernism. While the word ‘dialogue’ seems far too orderly a term for this eclectic production, an attempt at a synthesis and response is made after every three essays, that is, in the concluding piece of each of the book’s three sections. Subsequent to an introduction and prologue, the first four texts tackle the theme of textual reproduction, running the gamut between genetic engineering and genetic criticism. The second set of four pieces deals with interferences between verbal texts and visual images (see below). In the final part of the volume, intersections between textuality and culture are examined from a number of perspectives, including postcoloniality and the history of jazz.

The relevance of the questions posed by the collection is underlined by the great sense of energy conveyed by the various distinguished contributors. The sheer breadth of reference produces the kind of dizziness associated with a ‘surf’ on the net. The section entitled ‘Textuality and the Visual’ is typical in its scope and diversity. It begins with a piece by Morris Eaves which takes in a brief overview of three hundred years of word-and-image publishing technologies before concentrating on the editorial history of William Blake’s daringly interdisciplinary *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, finishing with a reflection on the continuing difficulties posed by the publication of pictures. The section continues with a philosophical contribution by Mary Ann Caws on the subject of the peculiar temporality involved in the reading of texts that incorporate visual elements. Caws draws here on the interesting work of Shusaku Arakawa and Madeleine Gins, numerous examples of which are reproduced in the essay, including the one that features on the cover of the volume. The third piece of the section, by Johanna Drucker, is the most demanding in terms of readerly elasticity, focusing as it does on the technical, pragmatic, and philosophical ramifications of the supposed loss of textual materiality occasioned by the transition from paper to screen. Charles Bernstein’s response to these three contributions is an appropriate conclusion to the section, managing to be both casual and erudite, illuminating and perplexing.

The reader is repeatedly confronted with the suggestion that our entry into an electronic age of publishing is as revolutionary as the transition from a manuscript to a print culture. Nevertheless, as various contributors wryly point out, the reader of the volume is of course holding a book in his or her hands, and a book whose production was subject to the same material limitations as those that it historicizes; one contributor, for example, laments the financial constraints that led to the University of Wisconsin Press printing his colour images in black and white.

Art, theory, and information technology conspire to make this is a challenging but ultimately very rewarding volume for the non-specialist, and essential reading for anyone with a particular interest in textual studies.

Maria Scott

Blog at WordPress.com.