

# Critical Theory, Film and Media:

## Where Is Frankfurt Now?

A Conference

August 20–23, 2014      Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main

When Theory Becomes Critical

Siegfried Kracauer and the Transformations of Film Studies

Between History and Obstinacy: The Labor of Film and Media

Critical Theory and Media Studies

How Writing Is Written: Criticism and Critical Theory

Film as Critique, Critical Films

Cultural Industries and Critical Temporalities

Disruptions in the Arts

Saving the Law of Images

Critical Affectivities

Critical Theory and Film Theory: Historical Perspectives

Kluge, or The Continuation of Critical Theory by Cinematic Means

Critical Theory and Gesture as Interruption

Critical Theory, Feminist Film Theory and the Politics of Desire

Kracauer and his Non/readers

Gestural Awareness

Cultural Industries and the Creative Economy

Cinema and Experience from Modernity to Digitality

Critical Perspectives on Creative Economies

History, Media, Power

Critical Feminism, Critical Queerness

Critical Theory, Philosophy and Film

Critical Theory and Modes of Spectatorship

The Question of Technology

Negative Dialectics at Prime Time – The Simpsons and the Creative Culture Industries or Much A'D'oh About Nothing

Campus Westend



# Critical Theory, Film and Media:

## Where Is Frankfurt Now?

### A Conference

In 2010, Alexander Kluge joined forces with Adorno once again. Revisiting an unfinished joint project on the theme of coldness from 1967 Kluge and 12 more artists, scholars and experts from various disciplinary backgrounds, two of them fictional characters, released a DVD with a media mix of 31 different types of short films and 41 written texts in a booklet. Reading theory has become a collaborative effort, involving various disciplines on different platforms, dealing with unfinished projects. Kluge's project is a sequel to another DVD of his, a follow-up to Eisenstein's attempt to film Marx' *Das Kapital*. Kluge introduces this project the following way:

"The possibility of a revolution in Europe has disappeared, and with it the confidence in a historical process that can be directly shaped by people's consciousness. With this confidence, a certain unrest and urgency have disappeared.... As if in a quiet garden we can now study strange thoughts from [x] and weird projects from [y], because they are like messages from an ideological antiquity.... One can see this as a goodbye, or as a beginning." He goes on to say "... The analytical instruments ... are not outdated ... sifting through the rubble of history we find useful tools."

Now, in 2014, at a time, when the generational project of 1968, the march through the institutions under the assumption that a revolution in Europe is possible, has largely run its course, it seems about time to sift through the rubble of history, collect the tools, pick up on unfinished projects and think about new beginnings on the terrain of film and media studies as a critical discipline that have been opened up by the Frankfurt school and their kindred spirits Benjamin and Kraucauer.

What, then, are the analytical instruments that the Frankfurt school provided that will be useful going forward? How did the Frankfurt School of critical theory shape the course of film and media theory in the 20th century, and how will its tools continue to shape the study and critical analysis of media and culture?

"Critical Theory, Film and Media: Where Is Frankfurt Now?" is a conference organized by the Institut für Sozialforschung and the Institut für Theater, Film- und Medienwissenschaft in cooperation with the Permanent Seminar on Histories of Film Theories (filmtheories.org).

Wednesday, August 20, 2014

4 – 6 p.m. Conference Registration @Foyer, Casino

6 – 6:15 p.m. Conference Opening @Casino

6:15 – 7:45 p.m. **Conference Dinner** @ Casino  
Gertfried Koch (Berlin)  
**When Theory Becomes Critical**

7:45 p.m. Opening reception

Saturday, August 23, 2014

8:30 a.m. – Conference registration @HZ, third floor

9 – 10:45 a.m. **Session 5.1** @HZ 8

**Cinema and Experience from Modernity to Digitality**  
Oliver Gayoyes (University of Maryland)  
From the Mass Ornament to MASSIVE: Materiality and Contingency in an Era of Digital Technics  
Johannes Geng (Mainz)  
The Culture Industry and Fabrication of Sensorial Perception(in) and for Modernity  
Christoph Hesse (Berlin)  
Shooting-booth and Merry-go-round: Adorno's Experience of Cinema  
Chair: Verena Mund

**Session 5.2** @HZ 10

**Critical Theory and Creative Economies**  
Jyotsna Kapur (Cardonada)  
Free Time: The University in the Eye of the "Creative Economy"  
Mathias Kusznerz (Paris)  
The Dream: Team Parker Tyler and Siegfried Kraucauer, from the 1940s to the 1970s  
Chair: Gerd Geminien

**Session 5.3** @HZ 11

**History, Media, and Cinema**  
Zachary Furst (Harvard)  
Painting and Pointing up: Kraucauer's "Photography" beyond Photography  
Nicholas Baer (Berkeley)  
Film, Critical Theory and the Crisis of Historicism  
Drehli Robnik (Vienna)  
Reading/Reclaiming/Recovering Siegfried Kraucauer's Film Thinking of Nonsolutions with Postfoundationalist Political Theory  
Chair: Lutz Koepnick

11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

**Session 5.4** @HZ 6

**Critical Feminism, Critical Queerness**  
Jonathan Hatley (Wayne State University)  
Reading for Mood  
Amy Villarzo (Cornell University)  
Eros and Digitalization: On the Futures of Queer Television  
Heide Schlipmann (Frankfurt)  
The Unsettled Radicality of Adorno's "Kulturindustrie"  
Convenor: Marc Siegel

1 – 2 p.m. Lunch Break

Thursday, August 21, 2014

8:30 a.m. – Conference registration @HZ, third floor

9 – 10:45 a.m. **Session 1.1** @HZ 8

**Critical Theory and the Transformations of Film Studies**  
Kathaniel Brennan (New York)  
From Critical Theory to Process Research: Siegfried Kraucauer's Initial Studies of Propaganda Film at the Museum of Modern Art, 1941-1943  
Johannes von Moltke (Ann Arbor)  
Siegfried Kraucauer and the Invention of Film Studies  
Ray Grundmann (Boston)  
One Shot, Two Mediums, Three Centuries: Reading Kraucauer through Lumiere and Froock  
Chair: Johannes von Moltke

**Session 1.2** @HZ 10

**Richard Langston and Ossipow: The Labor of Film and Media**  
Richard Langston (Chapel Hill)  
The Re/Mediation of Historical Experience as Catastrophe  
Matthew D. Miller (Colgate University)  
Eugenism and Political Imaginaries: On Christian Petzold's Barbara  
Christopher Pavsek (Vancouver)  
Geschichte und Eugenism and a Theory of the Labor in Film  
Chair: Richard Langston

**Session 1.3** @HZ 11

**Critical Theory and Media Studies**  
Andre Wender (Worms)  
Adorno's Materialism and Media (studies)  
Nils Piller (Heddesberg/Frankfurt)  
"Aura Revolted": A Rereading of Walter Benjamin's Concept in Reflection of Contemporary Mixed Reality Artwork Practices  
Ben Cook (Melbourne)  
Nicht mitmachen: Thomas Hesse's Material and Adorno's Aesthetics: Kluge's Construction Sites and Benjamin's Allegorist  
Chair: Marc Siegel

11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

**Session 2.1** @HZ 6

**Critical Theory, Critical Cinema and Critical Theory**  
Ute Holl (Bassé)  
Tudor and Harris, Moses and Aton  
John Mowitz (Leeds)  
On Trying the Music: Essay  
Walter Penzberg (Worms)  
Essayism and its Discontents  
Convenor: Rembert Hüser

1 – 2:30 p.m. Lunch break

2 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

**Session 6.1** @HZ 8

**Critical Theory and Modes of Spectatorship**  
Lutz Koepnick (Nashville)  
After Nature and Mediation? Critical Theory and Mobile Spectatorship Today  
Jihon Kim (Seoul)  
The Post-cinematic Diagnostics of Invention: Walter Benjamin, Harun Farocki's Installations on 'Operational Images', and a Political Art  
Chair: Roy Grundmann

**Session 6.2** @HZ 10

**The Question of Technology**  
Christiane Kettler (Baltimore)  
Futural Technologies  
Cyril Miksch (Basel)  
Digital Cinema, Neoliberalism, and Adorno's Concept of "Technik"  
Jane Gaines (New York)  
The Threat of Technological Reproducibility  
Chair: Florian Hoff

**Session 6.3** @HZ 11

**Negative Dialectics at Prime Time: The Simpsons and the Creative Culture Industries of Moon TV's About Nothing**  
The Simpsons in the Context of Media Industry Studies  
Andreas Raupacher (Mainz)  
Shark Jumping or The Dialectics of Postmodern Enlightenment  
Henry Krausz (Heddesberg)  
"The carrying out of contradictions": Art in The Simpsons' Imagination  
Chair: Henry Krausz

4 – 6 p.m.

**Session 6.4** @HZ 6

**Critical Theory, Spectatorship and Film**  
Martin Sauer (Frankfurt)  
On the Potentials of Film and Other Media  
Sudrop Dasgupta (Wrexham)  
The Aesthetics of Moving Culture in Adorno and Rancière  
Thomas Dassemer (New York)  
Between Autonomy and Social Fact: Cinema as Thought Experiment  
Convenor: Vinzenz Hediger

6 – 6:15 p.m. Closing Remarks

9 p.m., open end **Conference Party** @Orange Peel, Kaiserstraße 9, 60329 Frankfurt

2:30 – 4:30 p.m. **Session 2.1** @HZ 8

**Film as Critique**  
Gady Kresen (Berlin/Wien)  
Film as Critique  
Chris Tsakoumiana (Berlin)  
"Organizing Pessimism": Films as New Aesthetic Counter-Publics  
Surbhi Goel (Chandigarh)  
Emergence of the Paradigm of Aural/Visual/Oral: Multimedia Essay as a Transgressive Thought Process  
Martin Brady (London)  
Von heute auf morgen: Straub-Huillet, Serialism, and the Philosophy of New Cinema  
Chair: Adrian Martin

**Session 2.2** @HZ 10

**Critical Theory and Critical Temporality**  
Sally Lee (Berlin)  
Death Driven: Refraction and Repetition in Contemporary Hollywood Cinema  
Pengyi Tai (Taipei)  
Boredom and the Endless Running Games: The Perception Economy of Temple Run  
Seung-hoon Jeong (New York/Abu Dhabi)  
Cinematic Agents of Divine Violence: Benjamin, Revolution or Catastrophe  
Catherine Liu (Winnipeg)  
"Unfinished": Adorno's "From the Stars Down to Earth" or What the 1950s Los Angeles Times Astrology Column Might Have to Tell Us About Social Media  
Chair: Katarin Michell

**Session 2.3** @HZ 11

**Disruption in the Age of the Critic**  
Moritz Muter (Dresden)  
Critical and Anti-critical Theories of Art: Adorno, Marcus and Lullin  
Lars Koch (Dresden)  
"To Disturb the Existing Image ...": Strategies of Aesthetic Disruption in Post-dramatic Theatre  
Anna Schürmer (Dresden)  
Interference – Critical Perspectives on Early Loudspeaker Music  
Tobias Nanz (Dresden)  
Cold War Movies and the Collapse of Reason  
Christoph Kleinschmidt (Frankfurt)  
"Perturbing the Reader: Adorno's "Rätselcharakter" of Art and the Dialectical Impact of Contemporary Literature"  
Chair: Lars Koch

4:45 – 6:15 p.m.

**Session 2.4** @HZ 6

**Saving the Law of Images**  
Ralf Schöler (Frankfurt)

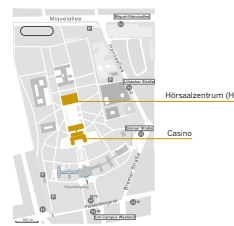
7:30 p.m. – 10 p.m.

**Session 2.5** @HZ 5

Michaels Merlan  
"The Sounds of Frankfurt School:  
Kluge, Retz and Riedl at the 1965 International Transport Fair"  
+ Film screening:  
Impuls unserer Zeit, D 1959, Otto Martini

Conference locations:

- Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Campus Westend, Grüneburgplatz 1, Casino and Horsaalzentrum (HZ) Auditoriums 8-11
- Filmmuseum Frankfurt, Schaumainkai 41
- "Orange Peel", Kaiserstraße 9



Friday, August 22, 2014

8:30 a.m. – Conference registration @HZ, third floor

9 – 11 a.m. **Session 3.1** @HZ 8

**Critical Aesthetics**  
Anu Kovereni (Gothenburg)  
Affective Legacies: Critical Theory and the Turn to Emotion  
Felicity J. Colman (Manchester)  
Digital Feminism and Materialist Mindfulness  
Peter Rehberg (Austin)  
"We Always Try to Make a Connection between Sexuality and for Instance Doing Dishes and Psychotherapy": Affective Sexualities in the Queer Fanzone Butt  
Armette Baker-Dotlich (Stuttgart)  
On Failure: Queer Readings of the Frankfurt School  
Chair: Jane Gaines

**Session 3.2** @HZ 10

**Critical Theory and Film Theory: Historical Perspectives**  
Daniel Mourenza (Leeds)  
Walter Benjamin's Film Aesthetics: From Charlie Chaplin to Mickey Mouse (and Beyond)  
Henriette Reiser (Munich)  
"Give Us a Soviet Mickey Mouse!" The Critical Contribution of the Frankfurt School to the Study of Soviet Animation  
Hermann Godwin (Berkeley)  
Bending Time: Kraucauer's Backward Glance and Einstein's Relativity  
Inga Polmann (Chapel Hill)  
"From Sea Urchin to God" – Kraucauer's Cinematic Vitalism  
Chair: Johannes von Moltke

**Session 3.3** @HZ 11

**Critical Theory and Cinema – Critical Theory by Cinematic Means**  
Christian Schulte (Vienna)  
Redemptive Critique – Counter-Production – Kairo  
Alexander Kluge's Contribution to Critical Theory Exemplified by News from Ideological Antiquity  
Gregory Curran, Jeremy Harris (Lige)  
Adorno-as-memory: Interling, Resurfacing and Replaying  
Continuing in Kluge's Late Work  
The Political Economy of the Image  
Nils Plath (Erfurt)  
"Writing Events" and the Critique of Actuality: Alexander Kluge's Readings of Stalingrad and 9/11  
Tara Forrest (Sydney)  
The Art-Realism of Feelings: Kluge's Political Realist Aesthetic  
Chair: Rembert Hüser

11:15 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.

**Session 3.4** @HZ 6

**Critical Theory and Gesture as Intentionality**  
Reinhold Göring (Düsseldorf)  
Onto-epistemology: on Gesture and Time  
Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky (Bochum)  
Gesture and the Stream of Life in Benjamin and Lacan  
Antonia Birnbaum (Paris)  
Gaston Foveur  
Convenor: Nikolaus Müller-Schöll

1:15 – 2:30 p.m. Lunch Break

2:30 – 4:15 p.m.

**Session 4.1** @HZ 8  
**Critical Theory, Feminist Film Theory and the Politics of Desire**  
Ulrich Plass (Wesleyan University)  
Framing the Subject: Film Now and the Dialectic of Enlightenment  
Matthew Garrett (Wesleyan University)  
Everything's Fine: Commitment, Critique, and the Erotics of the Image  
Dorothea Walzer (Berlin)  
Eingetrennt, unenandergrenzt, begriffen: Meditation as Detour in Alexander Kluge's Work  
Chair: Eva Geulen

**Session 4.2** @HZ 10

**Adorno's Critical Theory**  
Maria Tortajada (Lausanne)  
Kraucauer/Bazin: Two Ontological Realisms Faced with the World and History  
Marco Grassli (Cantebury)  
Intersecting the Parallel Lines: André Bazin and Siegfried Kraucauer  
Adrian Martin (Frankfurt)  
The Dream: Team Parker Tyler and Siegfried Kraucauer, from the 1940s to the 1970s  
Chair: Gerd Geminien

**Session 4.3** @HZ 11

**Critical Aesthetics**  
Lutz Rusprecht (Cambridge)  
Gestural Crisis, Gestural Recovery? An Enquiry into Heightened Gestural Awareness, c. 1924  
Ezter Palonyi (New York)  
Gesture as Practice of Theory in Balázs and Benjamin  
Josh Aizuw (New Haven)  
The Soviet Prehistory of Gesture & Montage  
Chair: Nikolaus Müller-Schöll

4:30 – 6 p.m.

**Session 4.4** @HZ 6

**Critical Aesthetics and the Creative Economy**  
John Roberts (Wolverhampton)  
The Political Economy of the Image  
Andreas Reckwitz (Frankfurt/Oder)  
The Dispositif of Creativity: Structures and Critique  
Convenor: Juliane Rebentisch

7:30 p.m., open end

**Conference Dinner** @ Filmmuseum Frankfurt, Schaumainkai 41, 60594 Frankfurt