

The Positive Negative Cinema and Comedy

'The Odd One in': In her book on comedy, Alenka Zupan i quotes the following joke from Ernst Lubitsch's film Ninotchka: 'A man goes into a cafe and asks the waiter for a cup of coffee, without cream. The waiter goes away, but returns again within a couple of minutes. "I'm so sorry sir" he says. "We don't have any cream. We have milk though. Would you like your coffee without milk instead?"'

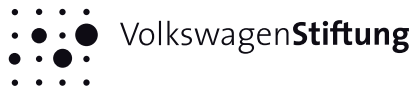
The conference assumes that the insistence of such equally negative and positive, absent and excessive objects is constitutive for the aesthetics of comedy. In the world of comedy, things, bodies, and words develop a stubborn obstinacy: Inanimate things come to life, individual limbs turn against the organic whole of the body, words have quite literal effects. Especially film comedy – from the 'quasi-bodies' (Rancière) of slapstick to the odd semantics of screwball comedy, up to the new mutations of comical audio vision in digital media – is an inexhaustible laboratory of such a strange surplus negativity – a 'disjunctive synthesis' (Deleuze) of plus and minus, excess and lack. Film comedy adheres to a logic of nonsense in which coffee without cream is precisely non-identical to coffee without milk: the positive negative.

The conference aims to address these paradoxes of film comedy's positive negativity from a variety of theoretical angles.

With:

Lisa Åkervall (Dublin), Alexander García Düttmann (Berlin),
Daniel Eschkötter (Dresden/Wien), Paul Flaig (Aberdeen), Ute Holl (Basel),
Gertrud Koch (Berlin), Sulgi Lie (Vienna/Basel), Eyal Peretz (Bloomington),
Drehli Robnik (Vienna), Garrett Stewart (Iowa), Christiane Voss (Weimar),
Damon Young (Berkeley)

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KULTURLABOR
BERLIN INSTITUTE FOR CULTURAL INQUIRY

Conference

5 – 6 May 2017, ICI Berlin

in English



The Positive Negative Cinema and Comedy

Organized by: **Sulgi Lie** (Research Fellow, IFK Vienna),
with generous support of the **Volkswagen Foundation**

PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 5 MAY 2017

Moderation:
Drehli Robnik

- 10:00 Sulgi Lie
INTRODUCTION
- 10:30 Paul Flaig
BERGSON'S BOFFO LAUGH
- 11:45 Coffee Break
- 12:00 Garrett Stewart
SYNTACTIC SHORT CIRCUITS, COMIC DISJUNCTURES:
Dickens, Bergson, Keaton – and Beyond
- 13:15 Lunch Break
- 15:00 Sulgi Lie
THE JOYS OF ALIENATION.
CHARLIE CHAPLIN'S CITY LIGHTS
- 16:15 Coffee Break
- 16:30 Alexander García Düttmann
MELODRAMA AND LAUGHTER. On Visconti
- 17:45 Coffee Break
- 18:15 Gertrud Koch
THE COMICAL CONDITION:
Visual Strategies in Chris Marker
- 19:30 RECEPTION

SATURDAY 6 MAY 2017

Moderation:
Daniel Eschkötter

- 11:00 Christiane Voss
PRE-CINEMATOGRAPHIC OBJECTIVITY OR:
Dioramatic Oddity
- 12:15 Coffee Break
- 12:30 Ute Holl
WHAT'S SO FUNNY ABOUT DOORS?
Towards a Theory of Structural Jokes
- 13:45 Lunch Break
- 15:30 Lisa Åkervall
THE HUMOR OF AUTO-TUNE:
Voice Modulations in Digital Media Ecologies
- 16:45 Coffee Break
- 17:00 Damon Young
ZANY, SEXY, FUNNY?
Ironic Indeterminacy in
Contemporary Media Aesthetics
- 18:15 CONCLUDING REMARKS