

Forms

Affect at the Limits of the Political

Affective attachments can be regarded as fostering a kind of complementarity, yet without negating the tense nature of mixed and sometimes contradicting feelings. We would like to investigate this aspect in more detail by posing the following questions: How do affective attachments function as structures of relationality that organize lived experiences of the present? What role do sensory registers play in the accretion of habits, histories, and rhythms of living into forms of sociality? What forms of life are made possible and available, disavowed and denied by ambivalent investments in objects of promise and nostalgia that appear increasingly frayed, including neoliberal good-life fantasies and images of sovereign and imperial nation-states? How are these investments sustained and how do they circulate in what Kathleen Stewart describes as the “charged atmosphere” of ordinary living?

PROGRAMME

I. Discussion | 9 July 2012 | 19:30

Lauren Berlant (University of Chicago)
Kathleen Stewart (University of Texas, Austin)

Interrogating forms of attachment means thinking about how material and affective structures give shape to subjectivities, publics, nations, and worlds. It demands looking closely at how forms of life are organized and disorganized at the very moment of their emergence and at the openings, possibilities, foreclosures, and enclosures enabled by the bindings and unbindings at work in the historical present. Lauren Berlant has suggested that thinking the political differently requires a “lateral exploration of an elsewhere that is first perceptible as an atmosphere.” Under what conditions do alternative routes for living take form and unfold? How are they registered by aesthetic renditions of affective experience? How do they inform the politics of precarity and vulnerability? And in what ways are they able to disrupt the fantasies that structure the late modern world and the normativities they engender?

19:30 Welcome
19:40 Opening Remarks From Each Speaker
20:00 Moderated Discussion
20:45 Audience Q&A

II. Workshop | 10 July 2012 | 10:00 – 16:00

Lauren Berlant (University of Chicago)
Kathleen Stewart (University of Texas, Austin)

This workshop offers a space for conversation around the ambivalent, paradoxical, and ordinary forms of attachment that sustain and preclude modes of living. It asks how we can suggest ways to think about a shared present that is neither presentist nor teleological. To think of the specificities of the contemporary moment is to critique with awareness of historical contingency, of the meaning of the substance of existence and worlds, and of fantasies that both shape and are troubled by shared affective responses, languages, and atmospheres.

10.00 – 12.00 Part 1 with Kathleen Stewart
12.00 – 14.00 Lunch break
14.00 – 16.00 Part 2 with Lauren Berlant

For the workshop the number of participants is limited.
Please contact info@ici-berlin.org for further information.

Organized by
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Attachment