



Morphomata Lectures Cologne, June 8th 2015

Martin Schulz (Karlsruhe):

(Un)Masking the Image. The Anachronism of Television-Faces

My paper aims to link several phenomena in a history of the image that spans several contexts, or at least to juxtapose and compare them; these are phenomena that are particularly inherent in the close relations between image, face, portrait, mask and media – and especially the relation between presence and representation. The starting point of my investigation will be some telling examples of the best-known TV faces, as compiled in the film “Fahrenheit 9/11” by Michael Moore. My concern will be partly to detach this venture somewhat from the well-known caesurae of media history, which are predominantly negotiated in analyses of discourse and technique, and instead to illustrate how the image has at least something like a kind of pre-condition and on-going history that thus spans different cultures and media, and with which every present is in contact, despite all the fundamental technical, political and social changes, which are of course still decisive in this respect. Yet there also exists a complementary history to this, which does not dissipate into the histories of technique, of discourses, of power, of ideology and of the many local differences, but which bears older modes of representation and is thus in itself a kind of chronic anachronism, a term which I adopt from the German art historian Aby Warburg and, after him, from the French philosopher Georges Didi-Huberman. This concept does not assume the existence of universal, ahistorical constants, but allows the presence of historical phenomena, which vary to a high degree and are of course always dependent on their respective contexts. The title of my lecture could also have been “The staging of faces”, yet I decided on a different one that puts the emphasis, as I will point out, on the different media-related layers. Therefore, the title of my paper is “The (Un)Masking of images” – and this in an entirely literal sense.

Der Vortrag wird auf deutsch gehalten.