

Since its inception in 2009, the Internationales Kolleg Morphomata at the University of Cologne has melded the visual with the literary while seeking out and elaborating persistent and far-reaching units of cultural transmission and intermedial transcription. Its generosity has brought together a truly global ensemble of scholars and students—and initiated a well-established cooperation with Yale. This collaboration is ongoing as it hosts, at Yale, an interdisciplinary meditation on the broader prospects for critique today, inspired by the resonant Frankfurt School inventions, but by no means limited to them.

Walter Benjamin, both in his autobiographical writings and in his later critical writings and exposés, is well-remembered for a critical discourse inventively fusing a rich visual sensibility into an unremitting critical scrutiny. His Denkbilder (literally, thought-images, perhaps even better, “thinking images”) were not only unforgettable sites of reminiscence; they were moments of inscription at which his discourse exercised its full palette of descriptive, analytical, allegorical, and performative potential.

As a writing-technique, Denkbilder and the dialectical image, as most fully elaborated in *The Arcades Project*, works do much to facilitate a theoretical practice more oriented to ambient trends and phenomena than to a fixed canon of conceptual works and terms. In this sense, these visual/discursive “switches” furnished the procedural as well as conceptual basis for a theory in more senses than one “on the fly”—as cryptic, truncated, and shocking as the circumstances prompting it. This modality of intellectual work is in strong evidence to the present day, in sites of intellectual production all over the globe and throughout an astonishing array of media. Benjamin’s improvisation on the interstice between textual and visual processing is but one particularly vibrant instance of what the “Thinking Images/Critical Eye” conference is all about.

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An Interdisciplinary Conference with

Yale University

under the Auspices of
the **Whitney Humanities Center** and the
Department of German

Organisation
Henry Sussman, Carol Jacobs (Yale)
Günter Blamberger, Martin Roussel (Cologne)

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Yale University



Denkbilder

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Thinking Images

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Critical Eye

September 20–22, 2012

Yale

Thursday, 9/20

- 5:30 SESSION # 1
Dietrich Boschung Co-Director
Morphomata, Cologne
Greetings
Peter Eisenman, Architecture, Yale
Archaeology Squared: The Istanbul
Quadrille
Günter Blamberger, Co-Director
Morphomata, Cologne
Speaking of the Unspeakable: Death
Images after the Death of God
Chris Wood, Art History, Yale
Exhibition Value 2012

Venue **Whitney Humanities Center (WHC 208)**

Friday, 9/21

- 9:30 SESSION # 2
Francesco Casetti, Media Studies and
Humanities, Yale
The Face of Things
Beatrice Primus, Linguistics and German
Studies, Cologne
Thinking in Linguistic Images:
Iconism in Alphabetic Writing
Ryosuke Ohashi, Philosophy, Kyoto/Cologne
Hegel's Logic as Thought-Image

12:00 Lunch Break

- 1:30- SESSION # 3
3:30 **Rüdiger Campe**, German, Yale
Not a King's Portrait: The Emblem in
Benjamin's *Trauerspiel* Book
Martin Roussel, German, Associate Director
Morphomata, Cologne
Of Microgrammatology
Jan Söffner, Romance Studies, Cologne
Thinking Images, Enactively

Venue **Whitney Humanities Center (WHC 208)**

Saturday, 9/22

- 10:00 SESSION # 4
Brigitte Peucker, German and Film Studies, Yale
The Spectator in the Text: Aesthetic Space
in Greenaway
Adriana Bontea, English, Sussex/Cologne
Benjamin and Klee: Word-Building and
Image-Making
Frank Wascheck, Archaeology, Assistant Director
Morphomata, Cologne
Fluid Bodies: Dialectical Images in Ancient
Art

12:00 Lunch Break

- 1:30- YOUNG ACADEMICS SESSION (I)
3:15 Joshua Alvizu (Yale), Ines Barner (Cologne), Marta
Dopieralski (Cologne), Florian Fuchs (Yale), Pa-
trick Hohlweck (Cologne/Princeton)
- 3:15 Coffee Break
- 3:45- YOUNG ACADEMICS SESSION (II)
5:30 Ivanka Klein (Cologne), Marc Petersdorff (Yale),
Christine Thewes (Cologne), Eva-Maria Tönnies
(Cologne), Jan van Treeck (Yale)

Venue **Second Floor, Phelps Hall, College Street**