

Research themes 2018-2023

The making of the work; Visual culture; Geopolitics of art; Memories and heritages.

Theme 1: The making of the work

"Making" here is to be understood not only in its literal, material sense but also as a way of studying the artist at work, and examining the relations between the technical conditions of artistic production and the poetic reading of that production. One of HiCSA's strongest points is that we bring together historians of images and visual arts, historians of architecture and heritage and specialists in matters of conservation and restoration. And their common point is exactly the primacy they give to the "work", to those who produce it, the processes they employ and the effects caused by this "making".

This theme consequently covers programmes concerned with technical or even technological considerations:

- Knowledge of objects: headed by the CRPBC team (conservation, preservation and restoration of cultural goods). This means taking a technological approach to the tools, practices, materials and processing used in making the works.
- Technology of Asian paper: Claude Laroque in partnership with Anna-Grethe Rischel, National Museum of Denmark, Agnieszka Helman-Wazny, University of Hamburg, Michela Bussotti, EFEO, and Jean-Pierre Drège, EHESS.
- The making of public architecture (1960-1990): headed by Éléonore Marantz.

There are also case-studies more monographical in nature concerning the processes of creation and genesis of the work:

- Giovanni di Paolo: composition and publication of a monograph on the 15th-century Sieneese painter, by Anne-Laure Imbert.
- Retrospective of the work of the film-maker Michelle Porte, held jointly with INA and BnF, together with research into her archives and a collection of interviews, headed by Sylvie Lindeperg.

Studies of the "figure" of the creator, with an emphasis on redefining genre categories:

- The figure of the painter-photographer, a project headed by Michel Poivert.
- Margins for manoeuvre: a project headed by Emmanuel Pernoud on the place of heteronomy among painters who had started in illustration, during the avant-garde period.

Studies of the poetics of the work:

- The language of decoration in the Renaissance: analysis of decorative systems (wall decoration, stucco, miniature). Planned edited volume comprising historians of modern art, including Philippe Morel.
- Background in representation: a project headed by Étienne Jollet to continue the study one of the basic components of any representation, the background against which the motif and particularly the figure stand out.

Theme 2: Visual culture

The question of the image, its status, its uses, became during the previous five-year period a major theme for our team, concerned as it is with the cultural and social study of art. HiCSA is a pioneering research centre for photographic studies, the only art history host team to have a major component devoted to the cinema and a historiographical approach to it, and a centre where the history of contemporary art is sufficiently versed in recent historiographical developments to draw parallels between history of art, analysis of media beyond their technical features (mediology) and anthropology of images. This decompartmentalised approach, with its focus on channels of mediation and more broadly the location of images, now covers all the periods and fields studied by our members. It deserved greater visibility, the result of years of work that have raised the question of "critical iconology". Note that this research theme is intended as a continuation of the courses given in our UFR; we have recently introduced a historiography course given by Sophie Cras that specifically covers the image.

- Imago-Eikon programme: Anne-Orange Poilpré with Sulamith Brodbeck (UMR Orient / Méditerranée / Resmed). This project moved on to its second thematic section in November 2017 (until end 2018). Title: Christian stories in pictures: space, time and structure of narration. Byzantium and Western Middle Ages, headed by Sulamith Brodbeck, Anne-Orange Poilpré, Ioanna Rapti (EPHE) and Isabelle Marchesin (INHA).
- International conference: "Monumental biblical and hagiographical cycles in the Medieval West (5th-15th centuries): ordering sacred history in space", Anne-Orange Poilpré, Anne-Laure Imbert (planned for 2019).
- Publication of conference proceedings for "The figure and its place in Trecento-Quattrocento painting, mnemonics and poetics", by Anne-Laure Imbert (Paris, Galerie Colbert, 16-17 March 2017).
- "Images of the Régence", a project headed by Étienne Jollet, with Valentine Toutain-Quittelier.
- "The economy in museums". This two-year research project headed by Sophie Cras aims to bring together international, multidisciplinary scholars to produce the first global history of the economy as a museum exhibit.
- "The visual imaginary of May 1968", headed by Michel Poivert, mainly based on the archives of the reporter Gilles Caron.
- The Renaissance of origins: beginnings, genesis and creation in 15th- and 16th-century art. Conference held jointly by University of Paris 1 and Tel Aviv University in June 2018.

- “Egyptian Renaissances”, a study of the Egyptian revival that marks the four centuries called the “modern age” (Luisa Capodiecici and Étienne Jollet).
- Phantasmatic Asia: reconsidering Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism in the practice, theory and writing of art history in the 19th and 20th centuries. Academic committee: Judith Delfiner (Université Grenoble Alpes, LARHRA), Gregory Levine (University of California, Berkeley, History of Art Department), Julie Ramos (University of Paris 1, HiCSA). Dates: June 2018 – June 2020.
- “Art and systems of influence. The hypnotic paradigm for art from Mesmer to the present day”. This programme, headed by Pascal Rousseau, combines visual culture and media archaeology following on from the work of Jonathan Crary and Horst Bredekamp, aiming to produce a situation report on art and a historiography of the salient stages in this hypnotic reassessment of contemporary art (19th/20th centuries).

Theme 3: Geopolitics of art

All of us are by now aware that the field of current art overlaps almost entirely with the planet itself. This extension has occurred while the international scene is marked both by the emergence or re-emergence of identity-based demands and politics and conflicts of extreme violence that transcend borders, as do information and propaganda. We at HiCSA believe that current creative art, whatever its forms of invention and distribution, cannot be understood outside this state of affairs. When the heritage of so many regions has become the prize and victim of so much confrontation, this is only the most visible sign of the importance of the past in the conflicts of the present.

Some examples of the diversity of approach and concern for interdisciplinarity that underlie our research projects:

Primitivism

- Project for a joint conference of University of Paris 1/ Fondation Le Corbusier/Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac on “Le Corbusier and the so-called primitive arts”, designed by Christine Mengin, planned for spring 2018.
- Philippe Dagen continues long-standing research in this area by taking part in exhibitions—Los Modernos at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Lyon (December 2017-March 2018), Dada Africa at the Musée de l’Orangerie, Paris, (October 2017-February 2018) and completing a work on all the various “primitivisms” for Gallimard (2018).

Globalisation

- “Heritage and tourism in Tianjin”, Christine Mengin works with ANR Patrimondi (concerned with patrimonialisation, a neologism meaning the fabrication of cultural heritage for global tourism: general patterns, recomposed identities, hybridisation), headed by Maria Gravari-Barbas.
- “Globalisation and emergence of new scenes of creation in Africa”. Academic organiser: Maureen Murphy (University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne). Partners: INHA, Musée du Quai Branly, Université d’Abomey-Calavi (Bénin), Columbia University (New York City, Alliance Program Paris 1 – Columbia). Dates: 2016-2021.

- “Art and economics”, a programme started in 2015 by Sophie Cras in partnership with Maggie Cao (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) and Alex J. Taylor (University of Pittsburgh).

Geopolitics of images

- Dokest89: continuation of a project dedicated to the memory of communism in the documentary films of the former communist bloc. Academic organiser: Ania Szczepanska, together with Nadège Ragaru for Bulgaria (Sciences Po, Paris), Mila Turajlić for ex-Yugoslavia (University of Belgrade), Monika Talarczyk-Gubała for Poland (National Film School in Łódź).
- Filming war in the Middle East: from differing visual cultures to the signalling of new community representations, both political and symbolic. This research project comprises researchers working on the images produced in Syria and Iraq (Agnès Devictor, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, HiCSA and Cécile Boex, EHESS, CéSor), Shi'ite mobilisation (Chiara Calabrese, IREMAM), and Shi'ite religious and devotional practices (Sepideh Parsapajouh, CNRS, CéSor). This project is partnered among others with IFRI in Teheran.
- Images of Justice: Nazis and collaborators on trial in liberated Europe, a project headed by Sylvie Lindeperg, within Labex CAP, together with BnF, EHESS and support from the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah.
- “Justice in the image”: Sylvie Lindeperg is also running a personal research project devoted to the filming of selected major trials for crimes against humanity and genocide.

Territories of art

- Transnational history of heritage: multi-author volume to be produced by Michela Passini (CNRS-IHMC) together with Arnaud Bertinet.
- “Monument and ground in modern times. The geodetic points of the Paris meridian”, project headed by Étienne Jollet.

Theme 4: Memories and heritages

Writing the history of art is not merely a matter of focusing on the study of artworks, but also on what might be called the processes of heritagisation. The institutional construction of discourse on artworks by museums, art critics and also art history as a discipline have become major fields of research for our team. The topics addressed cover both institutional history, education in art and its transmission, and also the authorities for the heritagisation and even the “artification” of practices that did not originally belong to the world of the fine arts. As part of our role within Labex CAP, HiCSA has become a research unit particularly dedicated to the study of the relationships between education and research bodies and heritage authorities in analysing, publicising and conserving works of art.

Institutional history

- Museums in 19th-century France: Arnaud Bertinet together with Girodet museum in Montargis, the various museums in Orléans and Angers.

Transmission

- Conference “The various 19th centuries and their –isms” (30 November-1 December 2017), jointly held by Pierre Wat, Catherine Meneux, François-René Martin, Bertrand Tillier, Sébastien Allard, Danièle Cohn.
- Teaching architecture–development and revolution (1958-1978). This research project, headed by Éléonore Marantz together with Guy Lambert (ENSA Paris-Belleville), Caroline Maniaque (ENSA Rouen) and Jean-Louis Violeau (ENSA Nantes), was part of the preparation for an exhibition on “May 68. Architecture too!” held at the Cité de l’Architecture et du Patrimoine (Paris) from May to September 2018).
- The research group “Theatres of memory” (Sylvie Lindeperg) will continue its work in the form of an annual (or biannual) workshop. For 2017-2018 its theme will be “Filmed confession”.
- A major endeavour is being launched to produce a historiography of photography in France over the last 50 years, based on the French State’s national collections (CNAP, BnF, etc.); it is headed by Michel Poivert and will be a collective enterprise over the next four years with these collections, their staff and the Textuel publishing house.
- Knowledge of the ideas and practices for preserving cultural goods: our CRPBC component seeks to understand to what extent the transmission of heritage is an act of criticism. In other words, how are the means of transmission–restoration, conservation, reconstruction–in a particular time and place determined by the people involved and the object itself, both in its materiality and its values? This approach necessarily examines the memory dimension of heritage.

Processes of legitimisation and heritagisation

- Art critics: quantitative and prosopographical approaches. Academic organisers: Marie Gispert, Catherine Méneux.
- Gastronomy criticism in France: texts, images, networks and formats. Frédérique Desbuissons, with Julia Csergo (Université du Québec à Montréal/Université Lyon II). International conference “Food porn: representations of food, aesthetics and ideology”.

To conclude, we would emphasise the strategic nature of these themes not only as a way of presenting our research but also in terms of governance and leadership of research within HiCSA. The people who head these themes were carefully chosen, took part in drafting this project and will be monitoring our results and syllabus in order to enable us at our annual general meetings to accurately analyse the progress of our research strategy and regularly adjust it as the need arises.