MEDIA AESTHETICS: A WORKSHOP
FRIDAY, MAY 17, 2019
10AM TO 5PM
HAGSTRUM ROOM—University Hall 201

SCHEDULE
10–10.30AM
Coffee and Opening Remarks

10.30AM–12PM
MARTIN SHUSTER
“THE AESTHETICS AND POLITICS OF NEW TELEVISION”
This talk will explore the aesthetic and political significance of what might be termed “new television” (a term used to denote the abundance of serialized television, starting roughly with Twin Peaks, continuing with shows like The Wire, Mad Men, The Sopranos, and many others, until the present moment). Shuster’s argument will revolve around connecting the aesthetic and political significance of new television to broader debates in aesthetic modernism. He will conclude by asking about the future possibilities of new television.

12–12.30PM
Lunch

12.30PM–3PM
CAROLYN KANE
“COLOR AS SIGNAL/NOISE”
American video artist Ryan Trecartin (b.1981–) is undeniably a “grinder and mixer of multicolor drugs,” as Plato put it in reference to artists in general. Trecartin’s fashionable use of digital media, fast-paced editing, belligerent makeup and broken dialogue all echo his unforgiving color juxtapositions. This presentation theorizes how “color as noise” in Trecartin’s work corresponds with a broader paradigm of aesthetic failure, marked by glitch, noise and cognitive dissonance.

3–3.15PM
Coffee

3.15–4.45PM
TUNG-HUI HU
“FEEL NORMAL”
Algorithms hijack the idea of authenticity (“be true to yourself”) to better target users as individuals, while branding other forms of selfhood fake or even fraudulent. This presentation takes up digital artists that work against this idea of individuation, for example by performing using an iPhone’s autocorrect feature. These case studies show that the feel of a “mass” audience even if seemingly obsolete in the age of digital personalization, maintains a considerable affective charge on us today—potentially explaining why we identify with subject positions online that harm us.

BIOS

TUNG-HUI HU is Associate Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Michigan. He is the author of three books of poetry, The Book of Motion (2003), Mine (2007), and Greenhouses, Lighthouses (2013), as well as a study of digital culture, A Prehistory of the Cloud (2015). Hu is currently working on a new book on lethargy.

CAROLYN L. KANE is Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Communication and Design at Ryerson University in Toronto. She is the author of the award-winning book, Chromatic Algorithms: Synthetic Color, Computer Art, and Aesthetics after Code (2014). Kane is working on two book projects: 1. Precarious Beauty: Glitch, Noise, and Aesthetic Failure, analyzing the popularity of glitch and failure in the historical present; and 2. Electrographic Architecture, a study of color in the development of urban aesthetics.

MARTIN SHUSTER is Assistant Professor with the Center for Geographies of Justice and the Director of Judaic Studies at Goucher College. He is the author of New Television: The Aesthetics and Politics of a Genre (2018). Shuster’s interests are in European philosophy, Jewish philosophy, political philosophy, ethics, philosophy of religion, and aesthetics. He is particularly interested in philosophers writing in the wake of the Nazi genocide (Adorno, Levinas, Arendt), in earlier German philosophy (Kant and German Idealism), in the connections between Anglophone and European philosophy, and in how philosophy intersects with religion and the arts.

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