

TROUBLESOME MODERNISMS

British Association for Modernist Studies International Conference 2019

Institute of English Studies, Senate House, University of London

20–22 June 2019

Confirmed keynote speaker: Douglas Mao (Johns Hopkins)

Second keynote speaker to be confirmed

‘What effects of synergy or friction result when the many, sometimes contradictory, criteria of high modernism are tested against less evidently experimental texts by principal figures; against principal works by less well known or non-European artists; against texts that seem neither to be art or about art?’

— Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz

In troubled times, the BAMS International Conference 2019 proposes the theme of ‘Troublesome Modernisms’. The conference aims to take a fresh look at modernism’s capacity to, and for, trouble, to examine anew the multiple modes of modernist argumentation, contestation and dissent. What can we draw for the present from modernism’s troubled relationship with its own pasts, presents and futures, and how might we address our troubles with those aspects of the modernist project that sit uncomfortably with us today?

Inevitably this will include the troubling or scrutiny of the field of modernism from within. In particular, the conference is eager to mark and reflect on the reverberations of Douglas Mao’s and Rebecca Walkowitz’s groundbreaking *Bad Modernisms* (2006), a volume that questioned the limits of modernist studies, illuminating new avenues of critique by pressuring us to consider what and when

we believe modernity to be, and whose creative and critical disruption continues to energise our field.

'Troublesome Modernisms' is interested in the notion of disorder, so central to our conceptions of modernity, but also in art that troubles our idea of modernism itself. The conference seeks to spark debate about how modernisms might have troubled contemporary writers, political thinkers, philosophers, artists and consumers; about how modernisms might not fit with themes or ideals prescribed by modernist studies; and about how works not immediately identifiable as modernist might afford new analyses of the relationship between art, culture and modernity. In all, 'Troublesome Modernisms' invites discussion of the ways in which modernisms might embody negativity, disorder, commotion, interruption, intrusion, insurgency and difficulty. How does modernism, in and through the lens of modernist studies, continue both to address trouble and to behave badly?

How to submit

Proposals are invited for individual 20-minute papers, panels (3–4 speakers), roundtables, dialogues or other discussions on the broad theme of 'Troublesome Modernisms'. These will be drawn from a range of disciplinary fields and may or may not include the following kinds of emphasis:

- Misrepresentation, manipulation and unreliability
- Noise, distortion and warping
- Weak and strong modernisms
- War and peace
- Anachronism
- Pedagogical difficulties
- Perversion and deviance
- Heretics and the unorthodox
- Conflicting feelings, emotions and affects
- Violence, abuse and power
- The inhuman and the posthuman
- Revolution, rebellion and revolt
- Critique and deconstruction
- Awkwardness, boredom, obsolescence and the inane
- Illogical, unreasonable and irrational approaches
- Disobedience, resistance and subversion
- Outrage, prejudice and intolerance
- Injustice and lawlessness

- Modernism and the culture wars
- Activist modernisms
- Decorative modernisms
- Markets and modernism
- Modernism and fundamentalism
- Temporal and spatial disruption

Abstracts for individual papers should be no more than 250 words. Abstracts for other proposed formats should be no more than 500 words, and should include abstracts of proposed contributions and brief details of their organisers and contributors. We aim to showcase the work not only of individuals but of groups, societies, institutions and research projects, so strongly encourage proposals from, for example, author societies, research projects and departmental research centres. All proposals should be sent to **troublesomemodernisms@bams.ac.uk** by:

Deadline for individual paper proposals: 31 January 2019

Deadline for other format proposals: 28 February 2019

Decisions on proposals will be communicated within 4 weeks of the later deadline (28 February).

Attendance and fees

The conference is open to anyone, in any discipline, working on modernism. Prices for the conference, and details of how to pay, will appear shortly.

There is a reduced registration rate for BAMS members.

Current annual membership rates, which include a subscription to *Modernist Cultures*, are £50 standard; £40 student and unwaged; online-only standard £35; online-only student and unwaged £30.

For more information about BAMS membership, see:

<https://bams.ac.uk/membership/>

We will be offering some bursaries to enable postgraduate members of BAMS to attend the conference.