

The Art of Ugliness

Keynote address: “The Use Value of Ugliness” by Dr. Andrei Pop, Associate Professor, Committee on Social Thought, Art History, and the College, The University of Chicago and Dr. Mechtild Widrich, Assistant Professor, Art History, Theory and Criticism, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

April 13, 2019

Call for Papers: Abstracts Due January 10th, 2019

David Horvath and Sun-Min Kim,
UGLYDOLL, 2001.



Is ugliness diametrically opposed to beauty? Or is ugliness simply another aspect of the same coin systematically constructed and cultivated over centuries? While beauty has been fruitfully examined in fields ranging from philosophy to aesthetics and art history, less attention has been given to discourses concerning ugliness. We consider it imperative to reconsider ugliness at this moment to flesh out the ways in which discourses surrounding the “ugly” shape ideas surrounding acceptability. Why do we define, name, or think of something or someone as “ugly”? Is it a psychological reaction to what we perceive as gross or disgusting? Does it violate morality? The Art of Ugliness will explore the complex social, cultural, and political aspects embedded within notions of ugliness as well as the aesthetic and philosophical implications of “the ugly”.

Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- Changing perceptions of the nude
- The geography of decay- the ruinous landscape
- Disease and the body
- Xenophobia
- Class and the representation of the profane and abject
- Ugliness and (pseudo)scientific visual culture: phrenology, physiognomy
- Technology and the body
- Evolutionary Theories and Aesthetics
- Relationships to the “exotic”/ “other”
- The Grotesque; the monstrous; the strange

We invite papers that address ideas of ugliness and aesthetics and greatly encourage the submission of papers engaging objects from a broad variety of periods, geographies, and social groups. Paper sessions, followed by a panel response and discussion, will occur on **Saturday, April 13th** followed by the keynote address.

Current graduate students in art history and related disciplines are invited to submit an abstract (maximum 300 words) for a twenty-minute presentation and CV to ahasympo@gmail.com by January 10th, 2019.

Honoraria will be awarded to all presenters who attend from outside Bloomington, IN