

**MEDIATING MODERNITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY:
RETHINKING AND REMEMBERING
A FESTIVAL FOR ACADEMICS, ARTISTS, ACTIVISTS AND PRACTITIONERS**

AT: BANGALORE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, DOMLUR, BANGALORE, INDIA

ON: 24TH & 25TH JANUARY 2013

HOSTED BY:

SRISHTI SCHOOL OF ART, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY, BANGALORE, INDIA

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SCHOOL OF ARTS AND COMMUNICATION, UNIVERSITY OF MALMO, SWEDEN

This festival brings together artists, academics, activists and practitioners to consider how modernity is mediated in the 21st century via a trans-disciplinary framework. For much of the 20th century, modernity was associated with industrialization and capitalism, with the triumph of rationality and individualism until the 1980s, when modernity was (prematurely) declared dead by post modernist philosophers. In the 21st century however, there is an increasing understanding that what we experience today is not post-modernity but hyper-modernity on a global scale.

Modernizing and globalizing processes create complex realities that require a looking back and a looking forward, remembering the past and rethinking the present. Processes such as digitization, urbanization, mediatisation and migration strengthen traditional identities and structures in some cases while undermining them in others. They support reactionary tendencies and reinforce established structures as much as they foster social change. The intensification of modernizing forces on the one hand and resistance to them on the other, creates new challenges for understanding how nations, cultures and individuals mediate modernity in the 21st century. Moreover, multiple links between cultures and societies across the globe require us to consider how the political, social, economic and cultural realities of one culture or nation state influence those of another. This is a multi-directional process wherein nations and cultures engage in various interactions, influencing each other's engagement with modernity.

While we engage with a globalizing world, we need to account for the continuing impact of colonialism. While modernity in the 21st century cannot be understood outside of the historical frame of imperialism, colonialism and the cultural and political subjugation of indigenous people, we need to account for various resistances to the impact of colonialism. These historical circumstances have shaped very different modernities in different parts of the globe. Even within a given culture, aspirations towards more universalist or individualist values, may be counteracted by fears that such

values threaten national culture, social identity and religious sentiment. The resurgence of traditional loyalties and parochial tendencies in the face of such fears might in themselves be seen as a consequence of modernity. Within a society, individual groups may be charged with (or may take upon themselves) the responsibility of preserving national, regional, religious or linguistic culture. Their experience of modernity may differ considerably from others in the same culture.

Thus one may speak of plural, poly-centric modernities (modernities in the plural) across the globe. The idea of pluralisation invokes differences in the modernities of individual nations and cultures and of diverse and sometimes competing modernities within a single nation or culture. Perhaps the one conclusion to be drawn from this vastly contested area of interdisciplinary debate is that modernity is mediated in a variety of ways and is influenced not only by geography and national culture but also by the specificities of race, gender, class, ethnicity and political or cultural contexts.

At this festival our goal is to rethink established perspectives of modernity whilst also remembering the processes that shaped contemporary modernity. We aim to do so along three distinct but potentially related axes which are not all encompassing but represent some important arenas where modernities might be contested: memories, memorialisation, cities and the public sphere and gender and sexuality. By bringing together artists, academics, activists and practitioners we hope to cross-pollinate diverse perspectives. In order to incorporate these diverse perspectives we invite presentations of artistic work, papers or short films under one of the following panels:

- * Gendering Modernities
- * Memories of Modernities
- * Modernities, Cities and the Public Sphere

We welcome 4 types of presentations: papers, audio visual presentations of artistic work (artist talks), short films and performances. Papers and artists' presentations need to be not more than 20 minutes in length while films and performances need to be less than 30 minutes in order to allow for discussion and deliberation afterwards. Please send a 250 -300 word abstract of your paper/talk/film/ performance to mediating.modernity@gmail.com by the 20th of November 2012, specifying in the subject line which of the above three themes you intend to present under.

Notification of acceptance of abstracts: 30th November 2012 Registration fees for Indian delegates: Rs.1000/- for working professionals & Rs.500/- for students/retired professionals. Registration fees for international delegates: Rs. 2000/- Deadline for registration: 10th December 2012. To register, send an email to mediating.modernity@gmail.com with the words 'conference registration' in the subject line. We will get back to you with details of how to pay the fees.