

Questioning Urban Modernity

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Keynote Speaker: Prof. Jennifer Robinson (Department of Geography, University College London)

It is widely accepted that our understanding of contemporary city life is based primarily on the tradition of western conceptualizations of modernity, dating back to the turn of the twentieth century. The ways in which Western thinkers have articulated city spaces in relation to urban subjectivities have formed the pillars upon which many new directions in urban studies have been built.

Now that post-, late, neocapital-, cyber- and global modernity have all entered and altered the urban experience, it is time for a reconsideration of the concept of modernity in relation to urban space, culture, and theory. How has our understanding of modernity been influenced by different thinkers, theories, and aesthetics of modernity? Are various modernities in conflict? How to rethink and reconfigure the notion of urban modernity, especially in the context of recent thinking about postcoloniality, globalization and new media? How to break with contemporary hierarchizations of modern cities, which frequently seek to distinguish between Western urban originals and non-Western imitations/fakes? What are the mediating forces that compel certain aesthetics of modern cities? And to what extent can we understand these aesthetics as modern? And, finally, how might we develop more inclusive theories of the city in the context of early twenty-first century globalization?

Please submit abstracts (max. 250 words, for 20 min. papers) together with a short academic CV to J.A.Naeff@uva.nl by February 10, 2012.

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