

THE AMERICAN WEST: A FRENCH APPROPRIATION

“Western: To a European, nothing is more exotic than this term, which evokes the landscapes of the American West, complete with roaming cowboys and Indians.” – Jacques Portes, *Fascination and Misgivings: The United States in French Opinion, 1870-1914*, trans. Elbourn Forster (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 87.

When Buffalo Bill’s Wild West traveled to Paris in 1889, *The New York Times* reported that the display was going to be “managed to suit French ideas.” What constituted “French ideas” of and investments in the cultures of the American West? This two-day symposium will explore the reception of ideas and images of the American West as they circulated and were appropriated in France in history, writing, art, visual culture, philosophy, ethnographic displays, and film. While the German and British fascination with the American West have been the subject of multiple books, there has been no parallel study of the artistic and historical role of the American West in France. This symposium begins to redress that scholarly lacuna.

Appropriations of the American West in France might be understood as examples of “cultural politics.” As the art historian Martin Powers has defined it in his essay on “The Cultural Politics of the Brush-stroke,” published in *Art Bulletin* in June 2013, the lens of “cultural politics” can offer a structure through which to consider how national identities and mythologies have been constructed through transnational competition. Powers writes, “Cultural politics is by nature dialectical; it arises when an intellectual from one tradition interprets, or re-interprets another tradition.”

This symposium asks how the American West in the French imagination has been defined dialectically to serve various cultural constituents. How and why have ideas of the West changed over time? Papers consider both the construction and reception of ideas of the American West in France and contextualize representations of various aspects of the West—such as landscape, indigenous populations, the railroad and the cowboy—within their historical moment and their trajectories. The panels consider the personages of the American West in France, the depictions of the West in art and popular culture (including film, comics, and novels), and questions of display.

The symposium is organized by the Institut national d’histoire de l’art in partnership with the research groups LARCA (Laboratoire de recherches sur les cultures Anglophones UMR 8225, Université Paris Diderot), HAR (Histoire des arts et représentations EA 4414, Université Paris-Ouest Nanterre la Défense) InTRu (Interactions, transferts, ruptures artistiques et culturels EA 6301, Université François-Rabelais de Tours), and the Terra Foundation for American Art, with additional support from Institut Universitaire de France.

The papers will be presented in French and English.

Contact

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Organized by

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Institut national d’histoire de l’art

Salle Giorgio Vasari
2 rue Vivienne, 75002 Paris
Métro : Bourse ou Palais Royal-musée du
Louvre
www.inha.fr

Free admission subject to availability.

Symposium

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Charles Belden, *Paris Trick Roper*, circa 1950. MS 003, Charles Belden Collection, McCracken Research Library, Buffalo Bill Center of the West, Cody, Wyoming, Gift of Verna Belden.

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Paris Ouest
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LARCA
Laboratoire de Recherches sur les Cultures Anglophones - CNRS UMR 8225



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Interactions, transferts, ruptures artistiques et culturels

MARCH 22-23, 2016

Salle Giorgio Vasari
Institut national d’histoire de l’art

Tuesday, March 22, 2016-INHA, Salle Giorgio Vasari

09:30 Welcome: **Antoinette Le Normand-Romain**, Director, INHA

09:45 Introduction: **Emily C. Burns** INHA/Terra Foundation for American Art

PERSONAGES

Chair: **Marie-Claude Strigler**, maître de conférences honoraire,
Université Paris 3-Sorbonne Nouvelle

10:00 **Peggy Davis**, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM),
"Les Osages à Paris ou les vicissitudes de l'exotisme américain"

10:40 **Luca Di Gregorio**, Université de Liège,
"Images et histoires du trappeur dix-neuviémiste (1850-1880). Un contre-héroïsme français dans l'Ouest américain"

11:20 **Joyce Carol Polistena**, Pratt Institute,
"Culture Coding and 'Contact Zones': Eugène Delacroix's Moroccans and A. J. Miller's Amerindians"

12:00 Discussion

12:30 **Break for lunch**

POPULAR CULTURE

Chair: **Pierre Lagayette**, professeur émérite de civilisation américaine,
Université Paris-Sorbonne

14:00 **Daryl Lee**, Brigham Young University,
"Mormonism as Polygamist *Secte Rouge* in Albert Robida's Third Republic France"

14:40 **Matt Hauske**, University of Chicago,
"Shoot-Out at the Ciné-Club: Hollywood Westerns and French Film Theory"

15:20 Coffee break

15:50 **Timothy Scheie**, University of Rochester,
"Brigitte Bardot on the American Frontier: The 'French Western' *sous-rature*"

16:30 **Tangi Villerbu**, Université de La Rochelle,
"Borderlands en guerres, nations en gestation dans la bande dessinée western franco-belge des années 1950 aux années 1980"

17:10 Discussion

17:45 **Cocktail salle Warburg**

Wednesday, March 23, 2016-INHA, Salle Giorgio Vasari

TRAVELING STEREOTYPES: ART

Chair: **Katherine Bourguignon**, curator, Terra Foundation for American Art

10:00 **Agathe Cabau**, Université Paris 1-Panthéon Sorbonne,
"Danse, performance, résistance ? Le corps amérindien en représentation dans les œuvres exposées à Paris au tournant du XXème siècle"

10:40 **Samantha Kavky**, Pennsylvania State University-Berks,
"Displacements/Dépaysement: the Surrealists in the American West"

11:20 **Jonathan Frederick Walz**, Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska-Lincoln,
"Aix-en-Provence, New Mexico: Paul Cézanne, Andrew Dasburg, and the 'Cultural Politics' of Painting the Desert Southwest"

12:00 Discussion

12:30 **Break for lunch**

DISPLAYS

Chair: **Christine Barthe**, responsable de l'Unité patrimoniale des collections photographiques, Musée du Quai Branly

14:00 **François Brunet, Clémence Guy, Jessica Talley**, Larca-Université Paris Diderot,
"Aesthetics and Economics of the American West at the 1867 Paris World Fair"

14:40 **Claire Bellet**, École Nationale Supérieure du Paysage de Versailles,
"Paysage et révolution industrielle: Saint-Étienne, le sauvage comme modèle"

15:20 Coffee break

15:50 **Emily Voelker**, Boston University,
"Anthropological Appropriations: Prince Roland Bonaparte's Photographic Encounters with Buffalo Bill's Wild West in Paris, 1889"

16:30 **Mathilde Schneider**,
Musée National Franco-Américain du Château de Blérancourt,
"Mettre le Nouveau Monde en vitrine ou comment la France a muséographié les Nord-Amérindiens au XIXème siècle"

17:10 Discussion

17:45 **Conclusion of symposium**