

AT RISK: ART MATTERS
SATURDAY 5 DECEMBER 2015
TURNER CONTEMPORARY, MARGATE

Born from the encounter between danger and opportunity, the modern understanding of risk has introduced human choice into the territory that once belonged to chance. Equally, the making and viewing of art has increasingly been seen as a voyage into the unknown, in which the artist may have little idea how a work will end up and sees as productive the possibility that something may go wrong. The spectator too is invited to embrace risk, potentially drawn into unfamiliar, perhaps uncomfortable, sensations and thought processes. What, then, can art reveal about the strategies we adopt towards risk and its constant assessment and management in the wider contemporary world? The event will bring together perspectives from creative practice, art history, curating, philosophy of art and sociology.

Organised by the History of Art department at the University of Kent with Francesca Laura Cavallo, associate curator of *Risk*.

Schedule

Morning session: chair Martin Hammer

11am

FRANCESCA LAURA CAVALLO, Associate Curator, *Risk*: Introduction

In her introduction, Francesca discusses the modern understanding of risk in relation to chance and danger and what art can reveal about risk (and what risk can reveal about art).

11.15am

MICHAEL GUGGENHEIM, Sociology, Goldsmiths: Producing risk

In this talk, Michael will argue that risks are collectively created, not only as dangers, but also as something that becomes reality through words and things. Using examples from the cold war and its aftermath, Michael will show that the risk of atomic war was first created as all-encompassing risk, and then replaced by a multiplicity of smaller risks.

11.45am

MARGARET IVERSEN, Art History and Theory, University of Essex: Contingency

Writing on the subject of contingency, Mary Ann Doane argues that photographic and phonographic technologies seem to make possible what had previously been beyond the grasp of representation, particularly the unexpected, the rupture in the fabric of existence. She argues that in *Circle Theatre* (1936) Edward Hopper wanted to show the effects of using a car or other vehicle as an apparatus that frames a contingent field of vision.

12.15pm

MATTHEW KIERAN Philosophy and the Arts, University of Leeds: Creative Risk?

'Creative Risk?' will consider what (good) creative risk taking looks like and what kind of characteristics promote or undermine it (e.g. arrogance, complacency, ignorance, courage etc.) in art and life.

12.45 – 1pm

PANEL DISCUSSION I

1 – 2pm Lunch Break

Afternoon session: chair Francesca Cavallo

2pm

PETER KENNARD, artist: in conversation with ELE CARPENTER Art, Goldsmiths

Peter Kennard is a British artist and activist working predominantly with collage and posters. His images have been the voice of the antinuclear movement in the UK and Beyond. Ele Carpenter is an artist and curator currently engaged in the EU funded Nuclear Culture research project. Their conversation will revolve around civil defence propaganda and artistic responses to nuclear threats in the cold war and present day.

2.30pm

CLAIRE FONTAINE, artist collective: Pretend to be Dead

Claire Fontaine is a collective artist based in Paris that declares herself a “readymade artist”. Her practice can be described as an on-going interrogation of the political impotence and the crisis of singularity that seem to define contemporary society today. Her ready-mades often consist of objects and tactics to manage risks, from self-defence to theft protection. Claire will discuss their work and how it determines different shifts in the perception of risk.

3pm

HILLEL SWARTZ, poet and cultural historian: Proximity Fuses

Given that any determination of risk entails a calculus of distance, is talk about “risk” in art a means for narrowing the distance between artist, artefact, and audience? Or is it more starkly a rhetoric meant to distance the ventures of an avant-garde from those of venture capital?

3.30 – 4pm

PANEL DISCUSSION II