

Life on earth could smell millions of years before it could see. Human infants can feel, taste, hear, and smell well before they take their first blurry look at the world. This morning, we ourselves awoke moments before opening our eyes, and to the same darkness we shall return tonight. If vision rules in the realm of the senses, then it does so as a latecomer, an upstart.

Poets from Orpheus to Baudelaire have often called us away from sight. But consider the dominant rubrics of contemporary literary analysis: *theory* (from *theôrein*, “to see”), *ideology* (from *idein*, “to see”), *representation* (almost always understood as a question of *images*).

What would happen if we tried to begin literary analysis not with sight, but with any (or all) of the remaining senses? At the simplest level, we would need to pay closer attention to the synesthetic language of our poets. We would also need to treat literature not as bodiless text but as a physical object, realized in wax, papyrus, parchment, stone, and susceptible therefore to engagement by senses other than sight. We would need to strive to listen once again to poetry, privileging—like ancient euphonist critics—sound over meaning. In sum, we would need to open our senses to meanings and pleasures not solely or simply visual. Even vision, in the end, potentially emerges from the Platonic nexus of sight and truth as, instead, something sensual, made of colors and shapes—a collaborator with its sister senses, rather than their overlord.

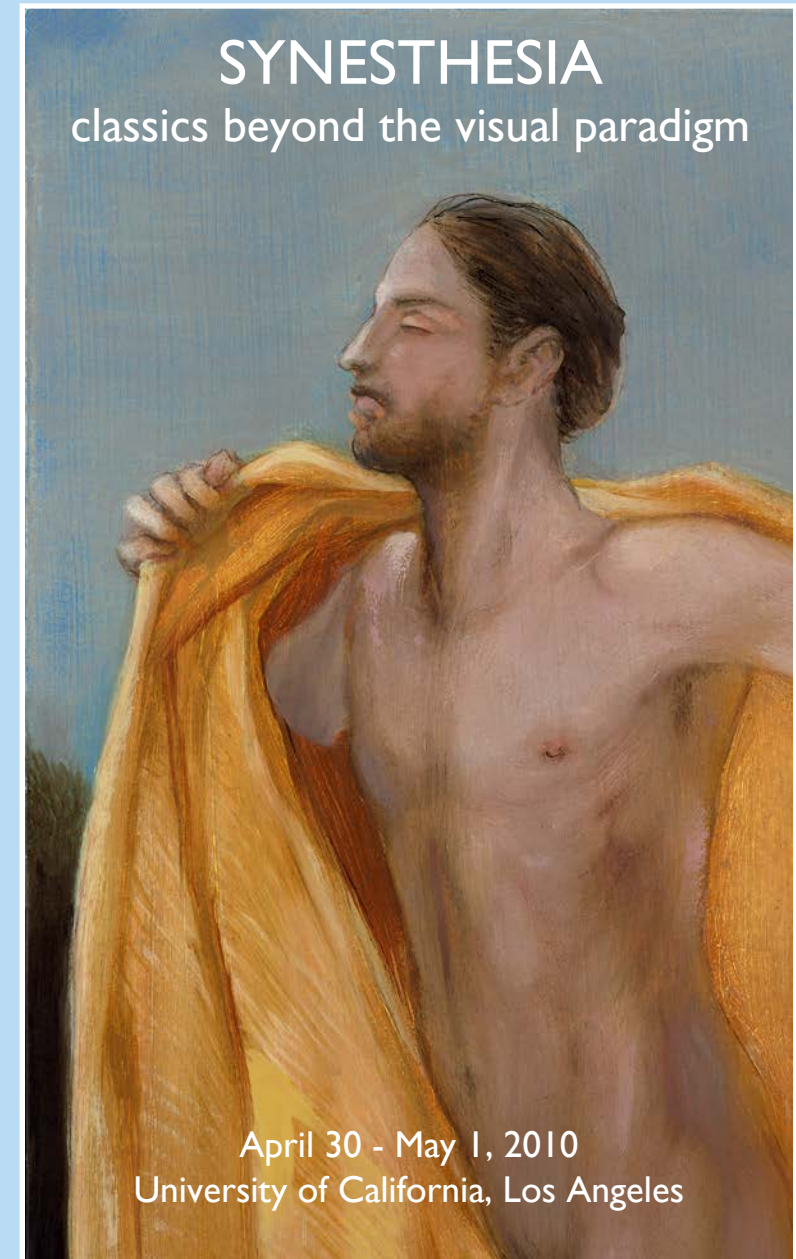
Co-organized by Shane Butler, Alex Purves, and MarioTelò, Department of Classics, UCLA

Support for this conference has been provided by a generous grant from the Ahmanson Foundation, with additional funding provided by the UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, the UCLA Vice Chancellor for Research, the Humanities Division of the UCLA College of Letters and Science, and the UCLA Department of Classics

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The CMRS Ahmanson Conference Series



Synesthesia April 30 – May 1, 2010

The UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies

SYNESTHESIA

Friday, April 30, 2010
Royce Hall 314, UCLA

8:30 Registration, Coffee
9:00 Welcoming Remarks
Brian P. Copenhagen (UCLA)
Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies
Shane Butler (UCLA)
Conference Co-Organizer

Session 1

9:15 Shane Butler (UCLA)
"Beyond Narcissus"
10:00 James I. Porter (UC Irvine)
"Why Are There Nine Muses?"

10:45 Break

Session 2

11:00 Brian Walters (UCLA)
"Experiencing Death in Ancient Rome"
11:45 James McHugh (University of Southern California)
"The Toilette of the Idols: Reflections on the Study of Smell and Aromatics in Early India"

12:30 Lunch

Session 3

1:30 Candace Weddle (University of Southern California)
"Making Sense of Emperor Worship:
The Sensory Experience of Roman Imperial Cult Sacrifices"
2:15 Mark Bradley (University of Nottingham)
"Color as Synaesthetic Experience in Antiquity"

3:00 Break

Session 4

3:15 Curtis Dozier (Vassar College)
"Reading in the Dark: Poetic Obscurity in Ancient Rome"
4:00 Alex Purves (UCLA)
"Haptic Herodotus"
5:00 Reception
6:00 James Tatum (Dartmouth College)
"Ragging the Classics" *Note: this event will take place in the Schoenberg Music Building, Room 1440.*

Saturday, May 1, 2010
Royce Hall 314, UCLA

8:30 Registration, Coffee

Session 5

9:00 Ralph M. Rosen (University of Pennsylvania)
"Plato on Beauty and Philosophical Synesthesia"
9:45 Joshua T. Katz (Princeton University)
"Saussure's *Anaphonie*: Sounds Asunder"

10:30 Break

Session 6

10:45 Mark Payne (University of Chicago)
"Sound and Sense in Ancient Narrative"
11:30 Katharina Volk (Columbia University)
"Manilius' Cosmos of the Senses"
12:15 Cathy Keane (Washington University in St. Louis)
"*Nucibus receptis*: The Sensations of Persius' *Satires*"

1:00 Lunch

Session 7

2:00 Gerard Passannante (University of Maryland)
"The Pervasive Influence"
2:45 Sean Keilen (College of William and Mary)
"The Sense of Innocence"
3:30 Break

Session 8

3:45 Ashley Clements (Trinity College Dublin)
"Tasteful Glances, Pungent Looks: Popular Epistemology and the Reciprocity of Sight in Aristophanes"
4:30 Mario Telò (UCLA)
"Aristophanes, Cratinus, and the Smell of Comedy"
5:15 Closing Remarks

Registration

Advance registration is not required. No admission fee.
Seating is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Parking

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Please use the Self Pay Parking in UCLA Lots 2, 3, or 4.
More parking information and maps are available online at
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Information

Contact cmrs@humnet.ucla.edu • 310-825-1880
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