

‘Yearning for unity’: The Idealist Visual Culture of Modernist Magazines

Dr Tim Satterthwaite (University of Brighton)

PPCRG New Directions Series

Time: 16.30 (GMT) on Thurs, 10 December 2020

Venue: Microsoft Teams

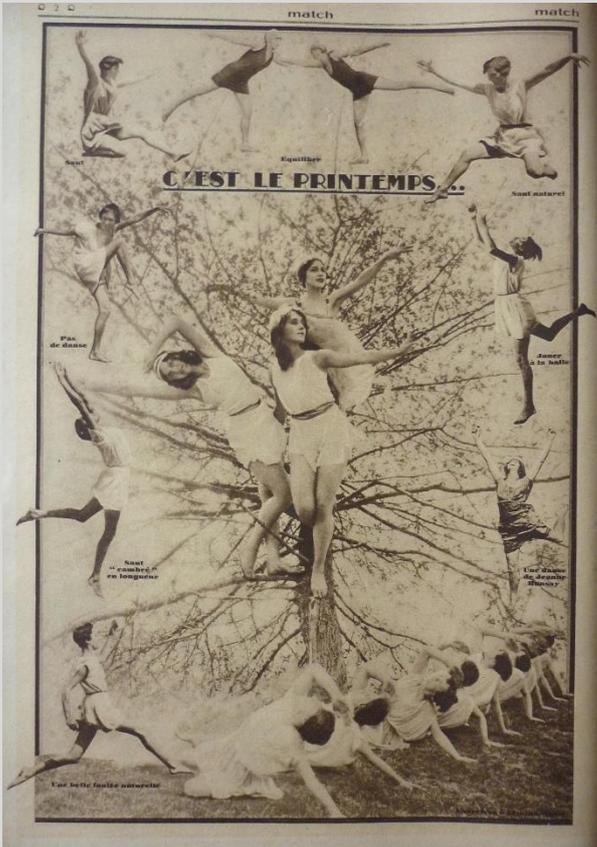
Duration: 75 mins (including 30 mins Q&A)

How to join: Email ppcrg@ntu.ac.uk to request a joining link.

The Periodicals and Print Culture Research Group (PPCRG) at Nottingham Trent University is delighted to welcome Dr Tim Satterthwaite (University of Brighton) as the second speaker this term in our 2020-21 **New Directions Series**.

Our New Directions series of invited guest speakers focuses on exchanging and developing methodologies across disciplines in periodicals and print cultural research. Hosted online, this occasional series of talks is free and open to all.

For this second talk in the series, Tim will discuss pattern theory as a means of understanding the cultural symbolism of the regularity and repetition of images in interwar magazines. The talk will be chaired by PPCRG member, Dr Hui-ying Kerr, a design practitioner turned design historian and Senior Lecturer in Product Design at NTU.



Overview:

The new popular magazines of the 1920s traded in images of an idealised modernity, promising motorised leisure, scientific progress, and social and sexual emancipation. Whilst the components of this modernist ideal varied from title to title, its common principle was one of tolerance: the reconciliation, or mutual co-existence, of opposing forces, ideologies, and traditions. The defining question, captured in photo-stories on technology, architecture and the natural world, and in images of youthful, sunlit bodies, concerned the nature of modern society: how could individuals, and nations, learn to live together, and avoid a return to civil unrest and the catastrophe of war.

Tim Satterthwaite's newly published book, *Modernist Magazines and the Social Ideal* (Bloomsbury, 2020) is a pioneering history of these periodicals, focusing on two of the leading European titles: the German monthly *UHU*, and the French news weekly *VU*, taken as representative of the broad class of popular titles launched in the 1920s. The book explores, in particular, the striking use of regularity and repetition in photographs of modernity, reading these repetitious images as symbolic of ideals of social order in the aftermath of the First World War. Introducing a novel methodology, pattern theory, the book argues for a critical return to the Gestalt tradition in visual studies. Interwar visual culture, in this reading, employed

pattern as a cultural signifier: the spectacular and submerged pattern forms of magazine images reveal ‘a symbolic resonance, an impress of their cultural intention’.

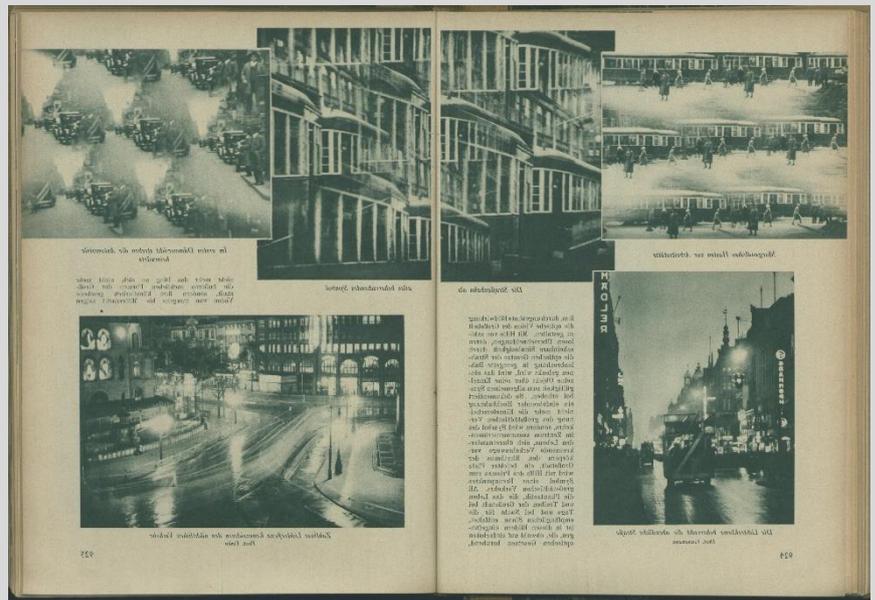
This talk will outline the principles of pattern theory, and describe how these are applied, in *Modernist Magazines*, to the critical reading of photographs and page layouts. Capturing repetitious and regular forms in both the manmade and natural world, the visual symbolism of interwar magazines embodied the contrasting ideals of technological and organic modernism.

About the Speaker:

After completing a BA in English at the University of Oxford, Tim Satterthwaite had a first career as a theatre practitioner and editor. In 2009, he enrolled on an MA History of Art at University of Sussex, graduating with distinction. He took his doctorate, on an AHRC scholarship, at The Courtauld Institute of Art, completing in 2016. Since then he has taught on History of Art and Design programmes at the University of Brighton, as associate lecturer at Middlesex University, and as summer school tutor for Courtauld Public Programmes. He was the organiser and co-director of [Future States](#) (University of Brighton, March-April 2020), a pioneering nearly carbon-neutral conference (NCNC) on the history of magazines. *Modernist Magazines and the Social Ideal*, based on his doctoral study of interwar periodicals, is his first book. Current projects include a special issue of the *Journal of European Periodical Studies* for which he is guest editor; a proposed edited volume, *Magazines and Modern Identities*, is currently under peer review.

About the PPCRG:

The Periodicals and Print Culture Research Group (PPCRG) is located in the English department at Nottingham Trent University and co-directed by Dr Catherine Clay and Professor Andrew Thacker. The group aims to develop work on the study of periodicals and print culture, from the nineteenth century to the present. It is concerned with the material culture of periodicals alongside books, newspapers, pamphlets, comics, zines, and other forms of print ephemera, along with the digital manifestations of these objects.



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