

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

Penn Humanities Forum

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CONNECTIONS
2009-2010

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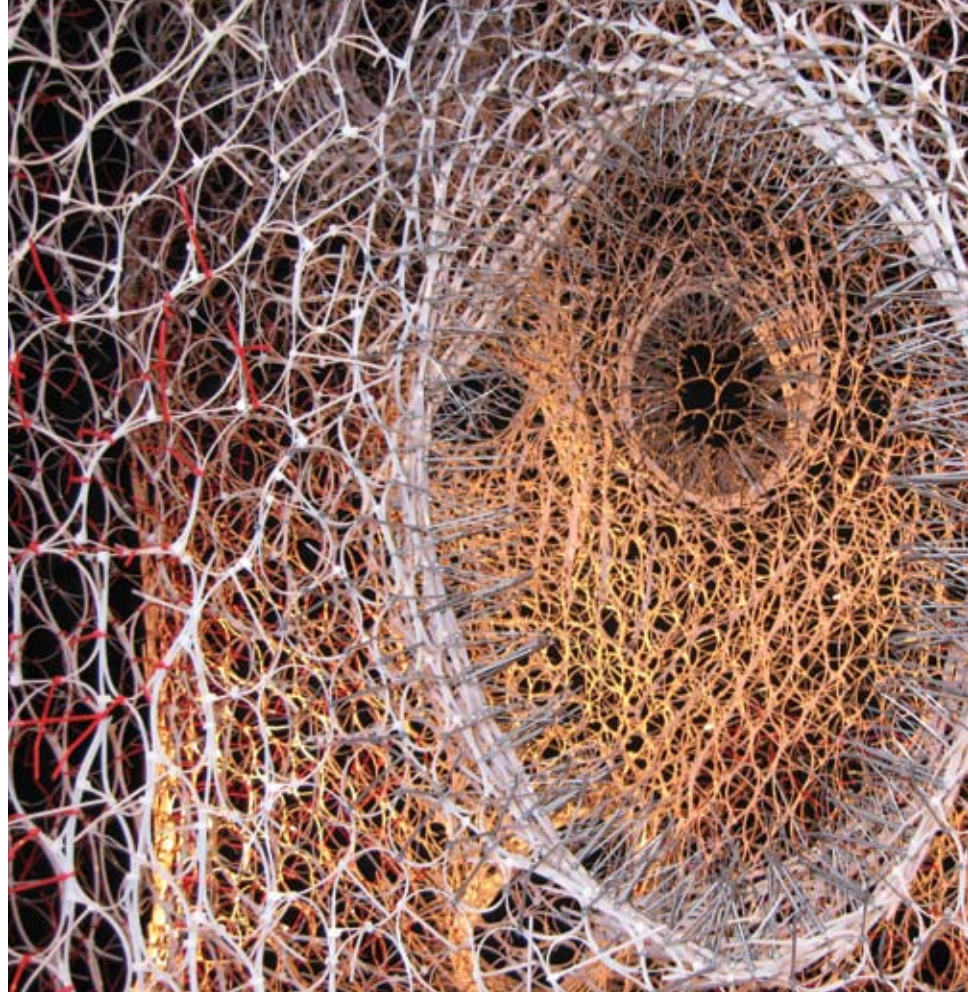
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PENN HUMANITIES FORUM

CONNECTIONS

2009-2010



"INTER-" HAS BECOME A PREFIX TO CONJURE BY IN A GLOBAL CULTURE OF INTERFACES, INTERRELATIONS, AND INTERDEPENDENCIES. BY NOW, EVEN SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION SEEM TOO MANY AS WE MORPH FROM INDIVIDUALS AND NATIONALS INTO *CITOYENS SANS FRONTIÈRES*. IN 2009–2010, THE PENN HUMANITIES FORUM INVESTIGATES WEBS, NETWORKS, AND CROSS-FERTILIZATIONS OF THE ANCIENT PAST AND THE FAST-APPROACHING FUTURE IN A **FORUM ON CONNECTIONS**.



CONNECTIONS

2009–2010

Images. Cover: IMG_2635, *Branching Morphogenesis*, courtesy of LabStudio, by Jenny E. Sabin and Andrew Lucia with Peter Lloyd Jones and Annette Fierro, photo by Jenny E. Sabin. Title Page: *Autumn Dew*, Tang Period, c.639-649 AD, stone, h.169 cm., C395, courtesy of Penn Museum; *Victimless Leather-A Prototype of Stitchless Jacket Grown in a Technoscientific "Body,"* The Tissue Culture & Art Project (Oron Cattis and Ionat Zurr), biodegradable polymer skin and bone cells from human and mouse.

PENN HUMANITIES FORUM • UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA



fall 2009

23 September

MICHAEL KEARNS, *Social Networks and Strategic Behavior*

7 October

DOUGLAS HOFSTADTER, *The Interconnectedness of Human Souls*

14 October

DAVID CRYSTAL, *Englises Past, Present, and Future*

4 November

ORON CATTS, *Killing Flesh: Can the Semi-Living Die?*

11 November

HELEN EPSTEIN, *Politics and Pandemics*

18 November

JIM ENDERSBY, *Darwin, Hooker, and Empire*

2 December

ANNE CARSON, *Cassandra Float Can*

All events are free and open to the public, unless otherwise noted.

To obtain further information or pre-register (required):

www.phf.upenn.edu or 215.573.8280

spring 2010

20–23 January

MEDICINE IN FILM: A SYMPOSIUM

27 January

VICTOR MAIR, *The East Asian Heartland in the Bronze Age*

10 February

PETER CONN, *Best Sellers*

19 February

LAURA OTIS, *Reconnecting Verbal and Visual Thinking*

24 February

LEWIS HYDE, *Benjamin Franklin and the Liberty to Communicate*

3 March

JOAN ACOCELLA, *Vaslav Nijinsky and the Mad Genius Formula*

24 March

JENNY SABIN and PETER LLOYD JONES, *LabStudio*

14 April

KWAME ANTHONY APPIAH, *Cosmopolitanism*

22 April

PARTHENIA, *When Music & Sweet Poetry Agree*

with Paul Hecht and Jacqueline Horner-Kwiatek



MICHAEL KEARNS

Professor of Computer and Information Science, Penn

Social Networks and Strategic Behavior

The Internet has vastly amplified our opportunities for networking of all kinds, and researchers have been hard at work describing the properties of these new social structures. But whether it is a matter of influencing an election or finding the right mate, how does our behavior affect others within these structures? How does a person's position in a social network, for example, determine her bargaining power? Penn computer scientist Michael Kearns explores the strategies we deploy in modern technological and social networks.

Wednesday, 23 September, 5:00–6:30 pm

Harrison Auditorium, Penn Museum, 3260 South Street



DOUGLAS HOFSTADTER

Distinguished Professor of Cognitive Science, Indiana University

The Deep Interconnectedness of Human Souls

A human soul is no longer thought of as an ethereal piece of matter that floats away to heaven when a person dies. Instead, we might imagine it as a special kind of pattern that arises in a human brain over the course of a lifetime. Like any pattern, it can occur in copies of greater or lesser fidelity. These copies, as neuroscientist Douglas Hofstadter contends, exist in other human brains.

Wednesday, 7 October, 5:00–6:30 pm

Harrison Auditorium, Penn Museum, 3260 South Street

DAVID CRYSTAL

Honorary Professor of Linguistics, University of Wales

Englishes Past, Present, and Future

A mere four hundred years ago, English was being written off as a language without a future, whereas today it is the closest thing we have to a lingua franca, a global code shared by speakers of all nations. How did this switch in linguistic fortunes come about, and will it continue? David Crystal, author of *Txtng: the Gr8 Db8*, reviews current trends in language and offers some predictions.

Wednesday, 14 October, 5:00–6:30 pm

Rainey Auditorium, Penn Museum, 3260 South Street



ORON CATTS

Founder, SymbioticA, University of Western Australia

Killing Flesh: Can the Semi-Living Die?

Perhaps no one has probed the connections between life and art more dramatically than Oron Catts, bio-artist and co-founder of SymbioticA, an artistic research laboratory housed within the biological science department at the University of Western Australia. Professor Catts discusses the fascinating issues raised by bio-artwork, such as the living coat he created out of mouse stem cells for a recent MoMA design exhibition.

Wednesday, 4 November, 5:00–6:30 pm

Harrison Auditorium, Penn Museum, 3260 South Street

Cosponsored by Institute of Contemporary Art





HELEN EPSTEIN

Journalist and Author of *The Invisible Cure*

Politics and Pandemics

Technological advances have improved the ease of international travel, and globalization motivates the unprecedented criss-crossing of the world that marks our era. The value of such cultural connection and communication has its disadvantages, including the specter of new and deadly diseases sweeping uncontrolled across the globe. Public health advocate Helen Epstein examines the political issues surrounding these fears.

Wednesday, 11 November, 5:00–6:30 pm

Harrison Auditorium, Penn Museum, 3260 South Street



JIM ENDERSBY

Senior Lecturer, History, University of Sussex

Darwin, Hooker, and Empire

Long before the Internet, Charles Darwin established an astonishing global network of correspondents. The 1300 letters he exchanged with botanist Joseph Dalton Hooker reveal the surprising links between science and empire, and show us how the private lives of these two men affected their public work, even shaping the language and philosophy of *Origin of Species*.

Guided tour of APS exhibition, "Dialogues with Darwin," at 3:30 pm with Director Sue Ann Prince. Tour spaces limited; please register early.

Wednesday, 18 November, 5:00–6:30 pm (lecture), 3:30–4:30 (tour)

Lecture: APS, Benjamin Franklin Hall, 427 Chestnut Street

Tour: APS, Philosophical Hall, 104 South Fifth Street

Cosponsored by American Philosophical Society

ANNE CARSON

Professor of Classical Studies, University of Michigan

Cassandra Float Can

Described as the "most exciting poet writing in English today," classical scholar and MacArthur Fellow Anne Carson connects ancient drama to modern philosophy and painting in her performance piece, *Cassandra Float Can*. The work links Aeschylus's *Cassandra*, doomed to speak the truth and not be believed, with other witnesses in turbulent times: the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl, the "anarchitect" Gordon Matta-Clark, and the translator of ancient texts herself, Anne Carson.

Wednesday, 2 December, 7:00–8:30 pm

Auditorium, The ARCH, 3601 Locust Walk



MEDICINE IN FILM: A SYMPOSIUM

Medical films were among the first moving pictures, and the field of medicine continues to pioneer breakthroughs in film technology. This symposium explores the history of medicine in film: from early documentaries of surgical procedures to training shorts, hygiene tutorials, and contemporary digital imaging. The conference concludes with an evening of screenings in the historic surgical amphitheater of Pennsylvania Hospital.

Curated by Community Screen; cosponsored by the Greater Philadelphia Film Office, Mutter Museum, International House, Moore College of Art & Design, Penn English Cinema Studies Program, Penn History & Sociology of Science Department, and Penn Humanities Forum.

20–23 January, 2010

Mutter Museum, 19 South 22nd Street, and other venues

To register, and for more information, www.medicalfilmsymposium.com
Fees may apply





VICTOR MAIR

Professor of Chinese Language and Literature, Penn

The East Asian Heartland and its Bronze Age Connections

“China” is often viewed as a pristine civilization that developed in isolation, sealed off behind a figurative and physical “Great Wall.” In reality, the cultures of the East Asian Heartland have been significantly connected to others in Eurasia since the Bronze Age. In this lecture, Penn Sinologist Victor Mair maps the network of cultural contacts in the ancient Far East.

*Guided tour of the Chinese collection, Penn Museum, at 4 pm.
Tour spaces limited; please register early.*

*Wednesday, 27 January, 5:00–6:30 pm (lecture), 4:00–4:45 (tour)
Rainey Auditorium, Penn Museum, 3260 South Street*

Cosponsored by Penn Museum



PETER CONN

Vartan Gregorian Professor of English, Penn

Best Sellers: Communities of Readers Past and Present

Best sellers emerged as a cultural phenomenon only in the nineteenth century, when they helped mobilize public opinion concerning social issues such as slavery and the conditions of the poor. In the postwar years, television and the Internet have taken over much of this political work. Yet best sellers still create communities through bookclubs ranging from a couple of friends to Oprah’s million-strong fans. In this lecture, Penn English Professor Peter Conn discusses the social history of the American best seller.

*Wednesday, 10 February, 5:00–6:30 pm
Rainey Auditorium, Penn Museum, 3260 South Street*

LAURA OTIS

Professor of English, Emory University

Reconnecting Visual and Verbal Thinking

Graduate Humanities Forum Keynote Address

In the humanities, many scholars associate ideas with words, but as we hear from our students in composition classes, thoughts suffer in the process of their “translation” into language. English Professor Laura Otis reviews some of the latest findings in cognitive science, philosophy, and literary studies to explain what thought is and whether we can make meaningful connections between its visual and verbal forms.

*Friday, 19 February, 5:00–6:30 pm
Rainey Auditorium, Penn Museum, 3260 South Street*

LEWIS HYDE

Fellow, Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Harvard

Benjamin Franklin and the Liberty to Communicate

Viewed in the light of intellectual property law, Benjamin Franklin appears to be our nation’s Founding Pirate. In his scientific pursuits and his relationship to the international circulation of knowledge, Franklin believed above all in the “liberty to communicate.” Reviewing the experiences and principles that shaped that view, Lewis Hyde explores Franklin’s belief that lively creative communities emerge when barriers to the exchange of ideas are low and connections, therefore, are easily forged.

*Wednesday, 24 February, 5:00–6:30 pm
Rainey Auditorium, Penn Museum, 3260 South Street*





JOAN ACOCELLA

Staff Writer, *The New Yorker*

Vaslav Nijinsky and the Mad Genius Formula

Since ancient times, people have believed in the connection between artistic genius and eccentricity, irrationality, and even insanity. The “mad genius” formula has been especially prevalent in discussions of dance. *New Yorker* critic Joan Acocella examines the history of this convention in dance criticism and assesses its value in a lecture on the great dancer/choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky.

Wednesday, 3 March, 5:00–6:30 pm

Location TBN



JENNY SABIN

PETER LLOYD JONES

Cofounders, LabStudio, Penn Schools of Design and Medicine

Design and Nonlinear Systems Biology: LabStudio

LabStudio is a hybrid architectural-biological design unit founded by architect Jenny Sabin and molecular biologist Peter Lloyd Jones at the University of Pennsylvania. Through this unique intersection of disciplines, LabStudio offers strikingly new insights into ecological and generative design in architecture, as well as new ways of seeing and measuring dynamic living systems.

Wednesday, 24 March, 5:00–6:30 pm

Rainey Auditorium, Penn Museum, 3260 South Street

KWAME ANTHONY APPIAH

Rockefeller University Professor of Philosophy, Princeton

Cosmopolitanism

Dr. S.T. Lee Distinguished Lecture

Kwame Anthony Appiah’s acclaimed study, *Cosmopolitanism*, is a response to the hostility and fears surrounding globalization, which conjure a world with a McDonald’s on every corner and monetary gain the universal goal. In this lecture, Professor Appiah considers whether the worldwide homogenization of products and values is necessarily a bad thing.

Wednesday, 14 April, 5:00–6:30 pm

Rainey Auditorium, Penn Museum, 3260 South Street



PARTHENIA, A CONSORT OF VIOLS

with actor **Paul Hecht**

and mezzo-soprano **Jacqueline Horner-Kwiatek**

When Music & Sweet Poetry Agree

In honor of Shakespeare’s birthday, the Forum celebrates the joyous links between English Renaissance poetry and music, with readings from Shakespeare and Donne by actor Paul Hecht, songs by mezzo-soprano Jacqueline Horner-Kwiatek, and viol music by Parthenia. Hailed by *The New Yorker* as “one of the brightest lights in New York’s early-music scene,” Parthenia presents this program of fantasias, consort songs, dances, and instrumental airs.

Thursday, 22 April, 8:00–10:00 pm

Trinity Center, 22nd & Spruce Streets

Tickets: \$15; General admission; <https://phf.ticketleap.com> or 215.573.8280



BECOME A *friend of the forum*

SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN 1999, the Penn Humanities Forum has been presenting distinguished lectures, exhibitions, and performances that join the public and the academy in a common experience of the “thinking arts.” Please help us continue this valuable work.

The Forum would be grateful for your tax-deductible gifts of \$50 or more (students, \$20), with special recognition given for contributions at the following levels: Donor (\$500), Patron (\$1,000), Benefactor (\$2,000), and Director’s Circle (\$5,000 or more).

Donate at www.phf.upenn.edu or send your checks payable to the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania to the Forum at the address below.

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PENN HUMANITIES FORUM

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Peter Conn, Connections Topic Director

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2010–2011 virtuality



FROM LATIN *VIRTUS* (“EXCELLENCE”) AND MIDDLE ENGLISH *VIRTUELL* (“EFFECTIVE,” “POWERFUL”) COMES OUR MODERN WORD *VIRTUALITY*. THIS HAPPY ETYMOLOGY SUPPORTS THE UTOPIAN HOPES OF THE INFORMATION AGE. AND YET, FOR MANY, *VIRTUALITY* REPRESENTS THE LOSS OF WHAT IS MOST PRECIOUS AND AUTHENTIC IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE. SHOULD WE NOT RESIST A FUTURE IN WHICH ROMANCE IS REDUCED TO VIRTUAL DATING AND EDUCATION TO ELECTRONIC INTERCHANGES OVER THE INTERNET? IN 2010–2011, THE PENN HUMANITIES FORUM LOCATES THESE HOPES AND FEARS IN THE RICH HISTORY OF THOUGHT CONCERNING ALTERNATIVE WORLDS, SIMULATIONS, AND THE “AS IF” OF THE IMAGINATION.

Images. Keyboard © Sergejs Rimkuss | Dreamstime.com; Globe © 3000ad | Dreamstime.com; Post box © Andres Rodriguez | Dreamstime.com; Medicine in Film Symposium: Detail, film still, “Let My People Live,” 1938, NARA ARC 98575; Hyde: Reuben Cox; Sabin and Jones: Candace DiCarlo; Appiah: Denise Applewhite; Hecht: David Rodgers; Horner-Kwiatk: Christian Steiner.