

Mediations

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Editors' note

One of the key questions in contemporary cultural practice is how to represent the present. Can contemporary art still figure "what is" in the assemblage of disparate and combined fragments that constitutes our globalized space? And more crucially, can contemporary art still present a critique of "what is"? The essays collected in the dossier "Time and the Labor of the Negative" are five attempts at interpreting art works and activities that rise up to this challenge. Initially they were papers presented at the 2012 Institute on Culture and Society that took place at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada. They were then, with the exception of Sasha X's contribution, rewritten and revised. Fredric Jameson, whose thoughts on the present are fundamental for all the essays, has kindly written an afterword. It is expected that the "Time and the Labor of the Negative" will prove to be a productive contribution to the struggles on the meaning of the here and now.

"Time and the Labor of the Negative" is followed by Maria Elisa Cevasco's "The São Paulo Fraction: The Lineaments of a Cultural Formation," which traces the origins, interrelations, and contemporary significance of an intellectual circle (several of whom have been published in these pages: see especially *Mediations* 23.1, Fall 2007: *Dossier: Brazil*) that, despite not being housed in any one formal institution, is nonetheless one of the most influential Left intellectual institutions both in Brazil and internationally. Preceding this issue's book review section are two recent winners of the Michael Sprinker Graduate Writing Competition. Julie Fiorelli's "Imagination Run Riot: Apocalyptic Race-War Novels of the Late 1960s" is the winner from 2012; Carolyn Ellerding's "Mass Online Education: Dialectic of Enlightenment 2.0" is the winner from 2013. The sixteenth annual Sprinker Prize competition is currently accepting submissions. The prize, established to remember and further Michael Sprinker's commitment to Marxist intellectual work and to graduate teaching and students, recognizes an essay or dissertation chapter that engages with Marxist theory, scholarship, pedagogy, and/or activism. Submissions will be judged by a committee of the Marxist Literary Group. The winner receives a prize of \$500 and automatic entry of the essay into the peer review process for *Mediations*. Any and all current graduate students are eligible, although submissions must be in English. Membership in the MLG is recommended but not required. Essays or chapters must be unpublished but finished work, and must be an absolute maximum of 8000 words, including notes

and/or works cited. Please include name, mailing address, phone number, and email address on a separate cover sheet. The writer's name should not appear on the essay itself. The deadline for submissions is Monday, May 18, 2015, and inquiries as well as submissions should be sent to Kevin Floyd at kfloyd@kent.edu.

The winner is announced at the MLG's annual Institute on Culture and Society, to be held this year at Georgetown University, June 24-28, 2015. This year's theme — "Marx's *Capital*: The Basement Tapes" — will focus on the posthumous volumes of Marx's *Capital*. In a departure from recent practice, this year's ICS will center on an intensive series of reading groups on Volumes II and III of *Capital* and on *Theories of Surplus Value*. Accepted papers may take the form of considered responses to some aspect of *Capital*, to be circulated in advance of the Institute but intended as preparation for discussion in the reading groups rather than as material for direct discussion. Alternatively, papers may take the more traditional form of round-table presentations of 5-8 minutes, on any topic that bears substantially on issues relevant to Marxist theory and practice, from Heraclitus and the dialectic to race and capital accumulation. Both kinds of papers will be listed on the program by presenter's name and presentation title. Additionally, the Institute welcomes the participation of non-presenters. In addition to roundtable proposals and paper proposals of both kinds, we invite proposals to lead reading sessions discussing particular sections of the posthumous volumes of *Capital*, or questions, issues, problems, or connections raised by them. The aim of this Institute is not only to study these volumes in depth, but to move them out of the exclusive province of specialists and to open them up to a diversity of approaches, interpretations, valences, and relevancies. In recent years articulations with feminism and queer theory have become a particular strength of the ICS, and engagements with research on race, postcolonial history, and other vectors of inequality are warmly encouraged. Please send reading group session proposals (title, section or sections to be discussed, discussion facilitator or facilitators, and a very brief justification), paper proposals of either kind (title and 250-word abstract), roundtable proposals (title, presenters' paper proposals, and a very brief justification), or intention to participate without presenting to MLGICS2015@gmail.com by February 1, 2015.