

RECEPTION IN DISTRACTION

*The Experience of Artistic Images
Beyond Abstraction and Empathy*

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Building on crucial elements from Walter Benjamin's Artwork-essay, this lecture will retrace the way in which a large part of the Western tradition in aesthetics, from Aristotle to Clement Greenberg, presupposes that an artistic image is characterized by an underlying unity and that this unity makes it possible for us to "empathize" into/be absorbed by it. Walter Benjamin's concepts of Innervation and Distraction [Zerstreuung] are helpful to understand that artistic images can just as well be perceived as multiplicities or, on account of their materiality, as entities that are divided from within. Benjamin's framework thus presupposes a different account of human attentiveness, i.e. one that starts precisely from the inability to empathize. I will pay attention to various media of art (theatre, painting, photography, cinema, music) and will refer to a variety of different, continental thinkers.

16:00-18:00, Thursday, July 28, 2011

Seminar Room, 2nd Floor, Building 101, University of Tokyo, Komaba
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