Hysterical Bodies:
Disabling Normative Behavior in Contemporary Art

UCSD Department of Visual Arts – 8th Annual PhD Symposium
Saturday, March 7, 2015

with a Keynote Presentation by
AMELIA JONES
Professor and Robert A. Day Chair of Fine Art and
Professor of Critical Studies at
USC Roski School of Art and Design, Los Angeles
Friday, March 6, 2015 at 6:30pm

CALL FOR PAPERS & PRESENTATIONS

What is the current state of hysteria within contemporary art praxis? This symposium will focus on how might we begin to expand our definitions of hysteria, so that it is utilized as a critical tool for disabling normative behaviors. Conventionally, hysteria has always been associated with “inappropriate” conduct, where it has been bound up in medical and cultural associations that mark diverse bodies as deviant, pathological and diseased, particularly as it pertains to “freakish” female bodies. But how can hysteria become a fleshed out, reclaimed term, which moves in and between diverse bodies as an empowering and generative framework, especially as it relates to feminist, queer, anti-racist and disabled subject positions?
The Visual Arts Department is pleased to welcome scholar Amelia Jones as the Keynote speaker for the PhD Symposium, and the theme of the 2015 iteration pivots around Jones’ scholarship. Jones will be giving a paper based on the work of renowned international performance artist Nao Bustamante, who deliberately engages in "inappropriate" performances in order to explore the ways in which she activates the hysterical (in the sense of hilarious but also as identified with female hysteria). Through excessive self-presentational strategies, Bustamante embarrasses viewers of all kinds and provokes our considered response to questions of "appropriate" or normative social behavior.

Papers and artist project presentations are welcome relating to a broad theme of hysterical bodies and ancillary behaviors in contemporary-based art practices with a special emphasis on performance, film, video, and installation.

Suggested topics may include, but are not limited to the following:

• Feminist, queer, anti-racist and disabled notions of hysteria
• Hysteria as a humorous or hilarious device
• Complex social behaviors intersecting with complex embodiment
• The re-imagined maternal body as hysterical body
• Revised medical and cultural representations of the hysteric
• Deviant female sexuality and reproduction
• Alternative articulations of the body and hysterical aesthetics
• Defective bodies and defective behaviors

The symposium is organized by PhD students in Art History, Theory & Criticism in the Department of Visual Arts, UCSD.

Organizers: Vanessa Bateman & Amanda Cachia

Applicants should submit a CV and 300 word abstract by Monday, December 29, 2014 to: UCSDphdsymposium2015@gmail.com. Selected participants will be notified by Monday, January 9, 2015.