

# Seriously Funny

Animation, The Concealed Avant-garde



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The progressive migration of the European avant-gardes to America in the late 1930s compelled an adjustment of modern art practice and theory to the new cultural environment and to the needs of the cultural institutions that supported them. This radical redefinition of modern art implied the construction of a modernist canon, one that became hegemonic after WWII with the institutionalization of a discourse of modernism strictly focused on the value of form and an adherence to medium specificity. Associated with cartoons, advertising, and with popular culture in general, animation was dismissed as kitsch. Moreover, while modernist scholars widely acknowledged film as the modernist medium par excellence, they did not pay much attention to animation, which was relegated to the category of a minor, subsidiary cinematic genre.



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Inherently and unabashedly multidisciplinary (it encompasses and creatively blends painting, drawing, sculpture, film and many other artistic media), animation obdurately defied and still challenges disciplinary regulation. Animation and animation theory, developed in the interstices between modernist fields of practice and theorization such as art history and film studies, offer a unique standpoint from where to analyze modernism in art, the historiography of this discourse, and modernist theory itself.



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First Round :: Initial statement 5-7 minutes

Second Round :: Reassessments 3-5 minutes

Third Round :: Closing Statements 1-3 minutes

Final Round :: Open to the Public



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**QUESTION** :: Concerning the evaluation of Animation within the historiography of art. What should animation scholars do regarding the terms Modernism and Avant-garde? Try to redefine them, skew them, or take advantage of them and use them for the as criteria of assessment and evaluation?



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**QUESTION** :: According to Greenberg, the artist had to reflect about the medium, the specific medium they were working with. Currently, Animation is not talked about as a genre but a medium, then what is specific to this medium? For example: what would be a self-reflective practice in animation? What would be “medium-specificity” in animation?



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**QUESTION** :: What are the problems you see in creating a place for animation within the visual arts historiography? How do you approach this within your area of expertise?



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# AUDIENCE?



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## Suggested Readings