

AHGBI International Visiting Fellow

September 2017

Dr Carlos Garrido Castellano

This is a summary of the activities carried out by Dr Carlos Garrido Castellano as AHGBI International Visiting Fellow at University College Cork in September 2017.

Short Bio

Carlos Garrido Castellano is a FCT Post-Doctoral Researcher at the Centre for Comparative Studies of the University of Lisbon. His research focuses on Socially-Engaged Art, Curatorship and Postcolonial Theory. Currently he is the main researcher on the research project “Comparing We’s. Collectivism, Emancipation, Postcoloniality”. He has done extensive fieldwork research in the Caribbean area, the United States and Africa, and has collaborated with journals such as *Third Text*, *Social Identities*, *Travessia*, *Anthurium* and *Cultural Dynamics*.

Schedule

CONTEMPORARY ART PRACTICE & COLONIALITY @UCCSPLAS

With AHGBI International Visiting Fellow Dr Carlos Garrido Castellano

September 7th | 15:40 | Mary Ryan Seminar Room

On Exhibitions, Empires and Difference

Curating Contemporaneity in Contemporary Iberia

Part of Symposium *Out of Africa: Spanish Language & Identity in Post-Colonial Africa & Beyond*

September 13th | 16:00 | O’Rahilly Building (1.24)

Anticolonial Experience and/as Collective Agency

Seminar for UG and PG Students at @UCCSPLAS

September 20th | 14:00 | Glucksman River Room

Socially-Engaged Art and Coloniality

Public Lecture as part of *UNESCO Learning Cities* + discussion of different forms of practice

September 22nd | 10:00 | O’Rahilly Building (2.01)

Critical Theory and Socially-Engaged Practice in Latin America

Postgraduate master class: Seminar and Roundtable

September 22nd | 16:00 | West Wing (Main Quad)

Contemporary Caribbean Art and Civic Engagement

@UCCSPLAS Public Lecture as part of Culture Night Events

Week 1

4th – 10th September 2017

Within the first week, meetings with curators and cultural agents were held in Cork. On **7th September**, I participated in the “Out of Africa” Symposium at UCC, where I gave the lecture “On Exhibitions, Empires and Difference. Curating Coloniality in Contemporary Iberia”. This lecture compared art exhibitions dealing with the continuities of Portugal and Spain’s imperial past and produced during the last two decades in the Iberian Peninsula. It analyzed how curatorial practices deal with coloniality and, more specifically, with the legacies of colonialism and imperialism in present-day Iberia. The interest in rethinking these legacies arose at a moment of radical geopolitical transformation, marked by the inclusion of Portugal and Spain in the European Union, critical responses to the commemoration of their imperial past, and reconsideration of their postcolonial, post-dictatorial identity. Frequently framed separately, from the point of view of exceptionalism, this presentation argued that Iberian postcoloniality could be better understood when approached from a comparative perspective. Adopting such a perspective means not just to contrast Portuguese and Spanish cultural politics, but rather to pay attention to a wider sociopolitical and cultural Iberian configuration. Indeed, many territories belonging to the Spanish nation-state have approached their historical participation within former processes of expansion and world-making in order to state their identity within the Iberian reality. The main hypothesis of this lecture, then, was that the artistic relations in the Iberian territory cannot be understood if not examined within an international framework, attentive to the configuration of regional identities and alliances.



Week 2

11th - 17th September 2017

During this week I held meetings with academic partners and postgraduate students in Cork as follows:

13th September: Seminar and lecture for UG and PG students on “Anticolonial Experience and/as Collective Agency”. This lecture, emerging out of an ongoing interest in anticolonial thought and praxis, explored the thought of Amílcar Cabral, paying special attention to the role of collective agency in his conceptualization of culture. Cabral’s idea of political and cultural agency was strongly shaped by an interest in knowing the surrounding reality from where the act of thinking and planning emerged. For him, culture was simultaneously “both a cultural fact and a factor of culture”, a structured and structuring element that echoes Bourdieu’s habitus. Rejecting any kind of generalization and untested application of existing formulae, he thought that experience and close engagement paved the only possible path for action. More importantly, he paired emancipation, social transformation and culture with great foresight, aware of the need for building bottom-up solidarities as the only way of making possible a transformative use of culture. By looking at Cabral’s thought and lived experience, I argued that his conceptualization of culture could play a central role in illuminating emancipative approaches to our postcolonial present.

An open conversation on the current purchase of anticolonial practices followed this event.

15th September: Participation in the Conference of Portuguese Studies (University of Mainz, Germany).

Week 3

18th – 22nd September 2017

UNESCO Learning Cities and Culture Night. Sharing Socially Engaged Art Practice:

20th September: Public Lecture at Glucksman Gallery’s River Room as part of UNESCO Learning Cities events: “Socially-Engaged Art and Coloniality”, followed by hands-on discussion of different forms of practice. Based on an ongoing concern with how coloniality has shaped our global artistic contemporaneity, this lecture explored how approaches to socially-engaged art might benefit from a postcolonial lens. There is much to gain from approaching socially-engaged art practices from a lens sensitive to colonial and postcolonial struggles: whilst issues of collective agency, autonomy, citizenship, public space, accountability or commoning are commonly framed within debates confronting socially-engaged art practices, these also emerge as central concerns of societies confronting past or ongoing processes of neocolonial domination. This shift in focus is motivated by the need to confront two common assumptions: first, the focus on individual authorship, a sublimation of particular subjectivities, embedded with a singular capacity to “being ahead of their time and place”, that has prevailed in much of the research on postcolonial artistic practices; second, the fact that socially-engaged and activist art are often explained as a recent artistic trend deriving from European and American avant-garde aesthetics. In challenging both assumptions, I

conceive artistic collaboration and socially-driven artistic projects as crucial in the promotion and configuration of a critical consciousness and emergent modes of cultural engagement in postcolonial public spheres.

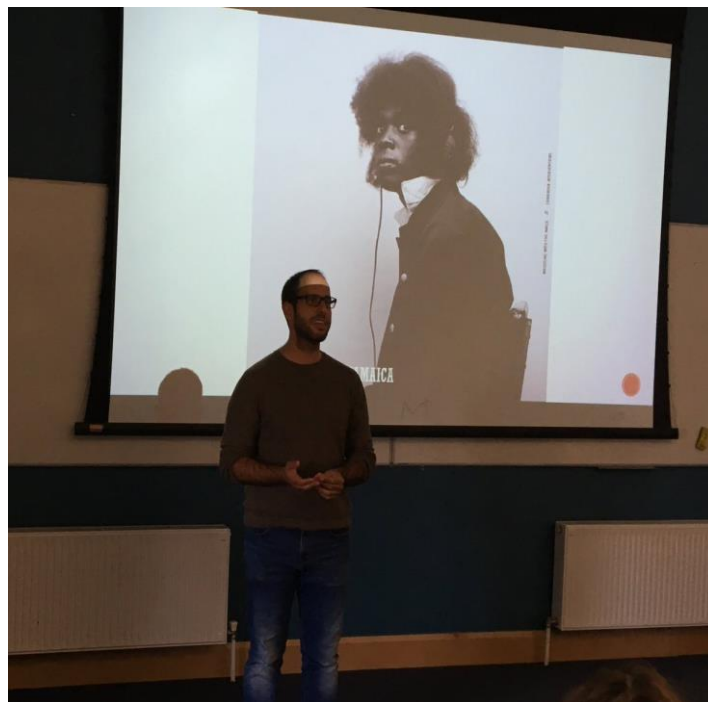
UCC Department of Spanish, Portuguese & Latin American Studies
CONTEMPORARY ART PRACTICE & COLONIALITY
@UCCSPLAS
With AHGBI International Visiting Fellow
Dr Carlos Garrido Castellano
4th-30th SEPTEMBER
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK
September 20th | 14:00 | Glucksman River Room
Socially-Engaged Art and Coloniality
Public Lecture as part of UNESCO Learning Cities + discussion



22nd September: Postgraduate masterclass on “Critical Theory and Socially-Engaged Practice in Latin America”: A Seminar and Roundtable (O’Rahilly Building, UCC). This activity consisted of a lecture on the confluence between bottom-up, socially-committed artistic practices and Latin American critical theory. After revising the common points between socially-engaged art and Latin American insights on hegemony, civic agency and social movements, the conversation provided a common ground for illuminating theory through practical experiences and vice versa. A very enriching dialogue with students at UCC followed this event.

Early evening lecture: “Contemporary Caribbean Art and Civic Engagement”. Based on my recent book *Spaces and Places of Artistic Contemporaneity in the Caribbean*, this lecture analyzed the ways in which Caribbean creators have actively

produced spaces for affirmation, discussion and visual representation. Its main argument was that Caribbean visual practice is strongly linked to an exercise of spatial imagination, in which alternative lives, encounters and futures are experienced and made possible. This exercise is not restricted to a task of challenging foreign and internal expectations about what the Caribbean is or how its visual imaginary has been constructed; rather, it implies developing strategies, structures and platforms of artistic creation. Focusing on Caribbean artistic practices ranging from the eighties to the present moment, I aimed to measure the potential for artistic practice to engage the main issues facing Caribbean societies. The main focus of this talk was, then, agency: agency *within* space, agency *through* space, agency *as* space, the agency of space.





Lecture on “Contemporary Caribbean and Latin American Art and Civil Society” at Maynooth University.

Week 4
25th – 29th September 2017

Visits to other academic institutions:

Two lectures were organized at King’s College London and Birmingham University.