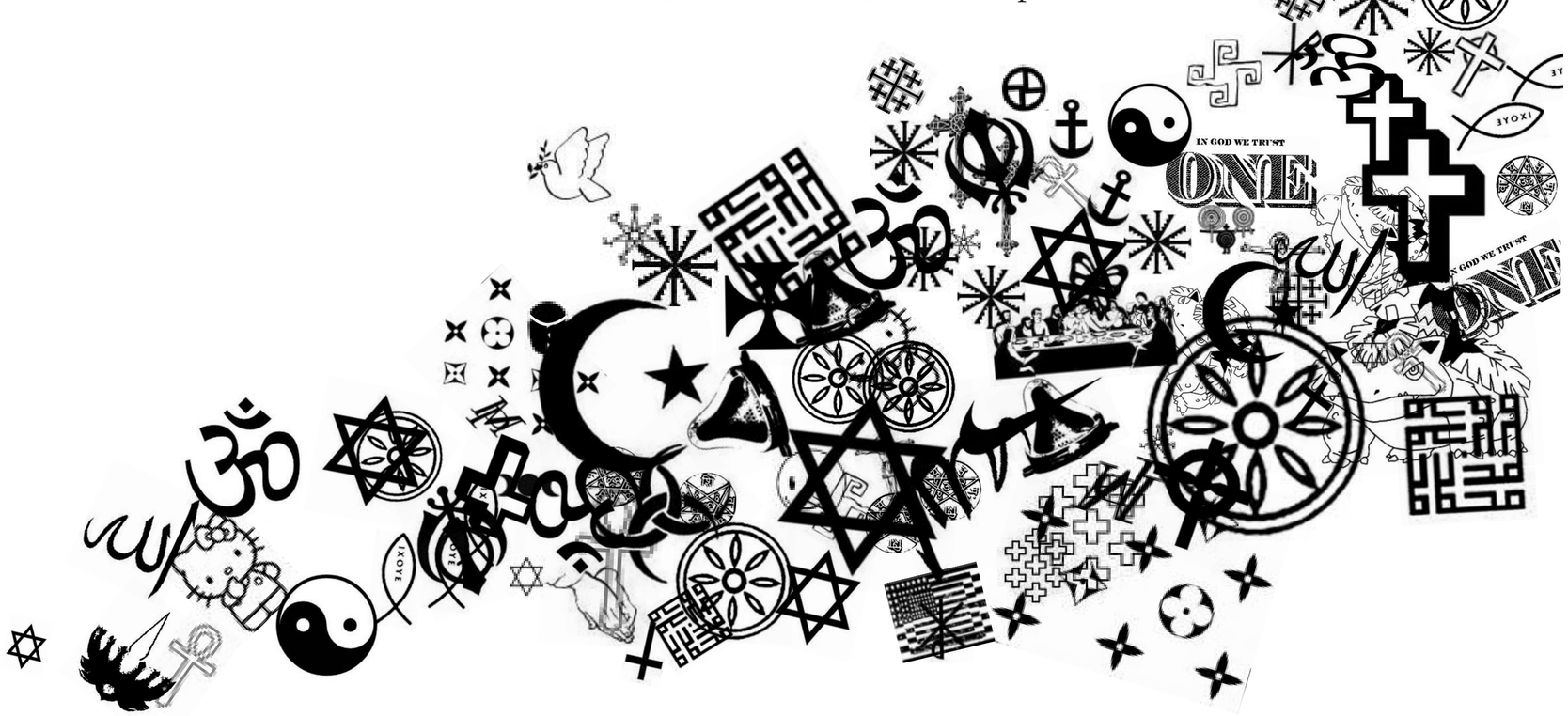
deus (e)X historia

MIT, April 26 - 28, 2007



deus (e)X historia

A Conference Exploring Divinity and Reason in the Production of Knowledge
April 26 - 28, 2007 / Organized by htc@mit and the Department of Architecture MIT

How are the "liberal arts," cultural spaces, the places of ritual, monumentalization, memory and commemoration implicated in the traffic between religion and secularism, church and state? Religion is now resurgent as a critical factor in global affairs, whether social, economic or political. In order to examine some of the implications and motivations behind these phenomena, the faculty at the History, Theory, Criticism Program at the Department of Architecture at MIT propose a conference entitled deus e(X) historia. The use of the X here is used both phonetically, as in deus ex historia, and symbolically, as in God crossing out History. The conference seeks to examine "God" and the conventions of "rational" historiography as competing principles of causality and eschatology in human affairs and the natural world. We wish to create a conference that reassesses the problematics of religion both within and without academic and aesthetic production. The conference will raise questions about the respective claims to futurity by religion and theology, reason and the critique of reason, the space of government and the public sphere, and the traditions of secular cosmopolitanism.

For more information and updates see conference homepage: http://web.mit.edu/htc/dxh/

SPECIAL PROGRAM

THURSDAY, APRIL 26 -- Artists' Keynote

7:00 -- 9:30 p.m. Room 32-123, Stata Center, MIT; 32 Vasser Street, Cambridge

A conversation with the artists
Kamin Lertchaiprasert and Aroon Puritat from "The Land," Thailand

FRIDAY, APRIL 27 -- Keynote Address

5:00 p.m. Room 32-123, Stata Center, MIT; 32 Vasser Street, Cambridge

Tapati Guha Thakurta
The Blurring of Distinctions: The Crossed Destinies of India's Artistic and Religious Icons

DAILY PROGRAM

FRIDAY, APRIL 27

10:00 am – 4:30 p.m.
Room 1-190, MIT; 33 Mass. Ave., Cambridge

10:30 – 12:55

Session 1: The Sleep of Reason: Spirituality Versus the Embarrassment of Religion in Contemporary Art

Caroline Jones
James Elkins
Sarah Rich
Discussion with Kamin Lertchaiprasert and Aroon Puritat

Lunch break 12:55 – 2:00

2:10 – 4:25

Session 2: Religion, Modernism and Aesthetics

Mark Jarzombek
Jonathan Massey
Daniel Bertrand Monk
Jorge Otero-Pailos

SATURDAY, APRIL 28

9:00 am – 7:00 p.m. Room 32-123, Stata Center, MIT; 32 Vasser St., Cambridge

9:00 – 11:25

Session 3: The Modern Icon: Making New Spaces for Contemplation

Erika Naginski
Irvin C. Schick
Jonathan M. Reynolds
Z. S. Strother

11:25 – 1:00 Lunch break

1:00 – 3:25

Session 4: Idolatry Permanent and Impermanent

Arindam Dutta
Jamal Elias
Venkat Rao
Alberto Moreiras

4:00 – 6:40

Session 5: Time and the Divine

Nasser Rabbat
Roy Mottahedeh
Georges Tamer
Samer Akkach

We are very grateful to our sponsors who made this conference possible: The Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts , The Friends of HTC , Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, MIT, School of Architecture and Planning, MIT, Department of Architecture, MIT, Office of Religious Life, DSL, MIT , School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, MIT, Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School , Council for the Arts , MIT, Office off the Provost, MIT