

CENTRE FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE SEMINAR SERIES 2012-2013

Tuesday, 14 May 2013 (Week 4)
5.00 pm – Ramphal Building Room R.014



Professor Ludmilla Jordanova
(Kings College London)

'Situating Medicine in Visual Culture'

My title was chosen to engage with Warwick's 'situating medicine' theme. I am interested in the nature of 'visual culture', and in the methods and approaches deployed in its study. And I am interested in 'medicine'. Both these capacious notions refer to phenomena that are ubiquitous. There are a number of problems, however, with this title, beyond an interrogation of its key terms. The preposition used after 'situate' is in, but is it right to think of medicine IN visual culture? It could just as well be the other way round. And what about 'situate', which I take to be inviting contextualisation? So my talk worries at some of these questions, using examples I am currently working on, many of which are portraits. I am keen that we get away from the 'medicine and ...' formulation, but developing alternatives is a challenging task that raises questions about the nature of historical practice that are always worth keeping in play. In this context, such questions are most generatively addressed through rich examples. I have recently been thinking about the work of Marc Quinn, Barbara Hepworth and John Bellany, for instance.



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