



NEUBAUER  
COLLEGIUM  
FOR CULTURE AND SOCIETY

# COMEDY, AN ISSUE

DEC 10 - 11, 2015 • Neubauer Collegium • 5701 S. Woodlawn Ave.



Zachary Cahill

This workshop conference, in advance of a special edition of *Critical Inquiry* called *Comedy, an Issue*, is associated with the Neubauer Collegium project Infrastructures for the Comedic. The research initiative is led by Lauren Berlant, Zachary Cahill, and Catherine Sullivan.



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
CHICAGO

# COMEDY, AN ISSUE

## WORKSHOP AGENDA

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10

9:30 a.m.	<i>Coffee</i>
9:45 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Introductory Remarks
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	<b>Sianne Ngai</b> , Stanford University
11:10 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.	<b>Glenda Carpio</b> , Harvard University
12:10 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	<i>Lunch Break</i>
1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	<b>Peter Goodrich</b> , Yeshiva University
2:40 p.m. - 3:40 p.m.	<b>Anca Parvulescu</b> , Washington University in St. Louis
3:40 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	<i>Coffee Break</i>
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	<b>Judith Farquhar</b> , University of Chicago
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Closing Roundtable

### ABOUT THE WORKSHOP CONFERENCE

Comedy is no stranger to suffering; in addition to representing troubles, it seems to get in trouble with more frequency than other aesthetic modes, practices, and attitudes. Why are its pleasures so radically disturbing and its disturbances so full of acid and pleasure, and how do those generic tendencies affect its appearance as aesthetic form? This workshop conference takes up law, literature, cinema, TV, stand-up, opera, jokes, and performance media—including a laughing machine.



## FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11

9:45 a.m.	<i>Coffee</i>
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	<b>David Carroll Simon</b> , University of California, Berkeley
11:10 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.	<b>Roger Grant</b> , Wesleyan University
12:10 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	<i>Lunch Break</i>
1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	<b>Joshua Clover</b> , University of California, Davis
2:40 p.m. - 3:40 p.m.	<b>Lauren Berlant</b> , University of Chicago
3:40 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	<i>Coffee Break</i>
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	<b>William Cheng</b> , Dartmouth College
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Closing Roundtable

## ABOUT INFRASTRUCTURES FOR THE COMEDIC

The aim of this project is to build pedagogic, critical and aesthetic infrastructures through which the comic can be engaged as a scene of disturbance, a regime of corporeal technique, and a particular mood within aesthetic form. The comedic pokes fun at inelastic seriousness and inserts the threat of inappropriateness into painful scenes. Yet the study of the comedic is underdeveloped in contrast to the study of tragedy and catastrophe. We look at incongruities of status and mind as social problems and problems of comic form. In addition to addressing these in theory and history--in a special issue of *Critical Inquiry* and a major conference on painting's humors--we explore the comedic through performance. We expect the performance or bodily component to be revelatory conceptually. Central to our concern are the phenomena of self-mastery, physiognomy, mimicry, bodily citation and gesture. What consequences do bodily habits and formal conventions have for the comic? What are the binding and liberating functions of format, genre, and archetype for the experience of mood, pleasure, and laughter? How do social ecologies of production contribute to these scenes? How do particular media, such as painting, theoretical writing, or performance, shift the comic encounter with pleasure and aggression?

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5701 S. Woodlawn Ave.  
Chicago IL 60637  
**773.795.2329**