

Prof. Dennis Smith (Loughborough University, UK)

Talks on Historical Sociology 2017

„Surrealism, shock and the civilizing process“



Mon. 30. 10. 2017 14:00, room 5022

The so-called pope of surrealism was André Breton who presided over a kind of court society in Paris during the early and mid 1930s. By contrast, Norbert Elias in Frankfurt was surviving on the fringes of German academic life, an extensively connected low-status figure at a high-status institution. In the mid-1930s, the networks of Breton and Elias intersected when the latter fled to France and arrived in bohemian Montparnasse. Surrealism sought out shocking images and impressions in painting, sculpture, writing and film as part of their ideology and methodology. Did that approach influence Elias? What are the connections between surrealism, shock and the civilizing process?

Possible reading includes:

Norbert Elias, *Reflections On a Life* (Polity)

Ruth Brandon, *Surreal Lives. The Surrealists 1917-1945* (Macmillan)

Mark Pollizzotti, *Revolution of the Mind. The Life of André Breton* (Black Widow)