



The Epidemic Sublime: Reflections on the Representation of Collective Suffering

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Epidemic events and their sociopolitical impact are mediated in an emphatic sense and pose complex challenges to the reflection of their literary and pictorial representation. The rendering of the collective suffering constitutive of these events relies on strategies that illuminate exemplary aspects of their experience. This lecture proposes that the central epistemological challenge – to represent the failure of representation – can be explored with the help of the concept of the sublime as defined by Kant among others. By examining aspects of exemplary and influential points in the history of painting and literature from Poussin to Defoe, Manzoni, and possibly Thomas Mann, the lecture aims to examine the representation of epidemics and its relation to the sublime.

Fall
2022
Lecture
Series

Monday
October 24
4:30–6:00 pm ET
East Pyne 205

Registration required for
virtual attendees only



If you require accessibility
accommodations, contact
fromaine@princeton.edu
up to one week in
advance of the event.