

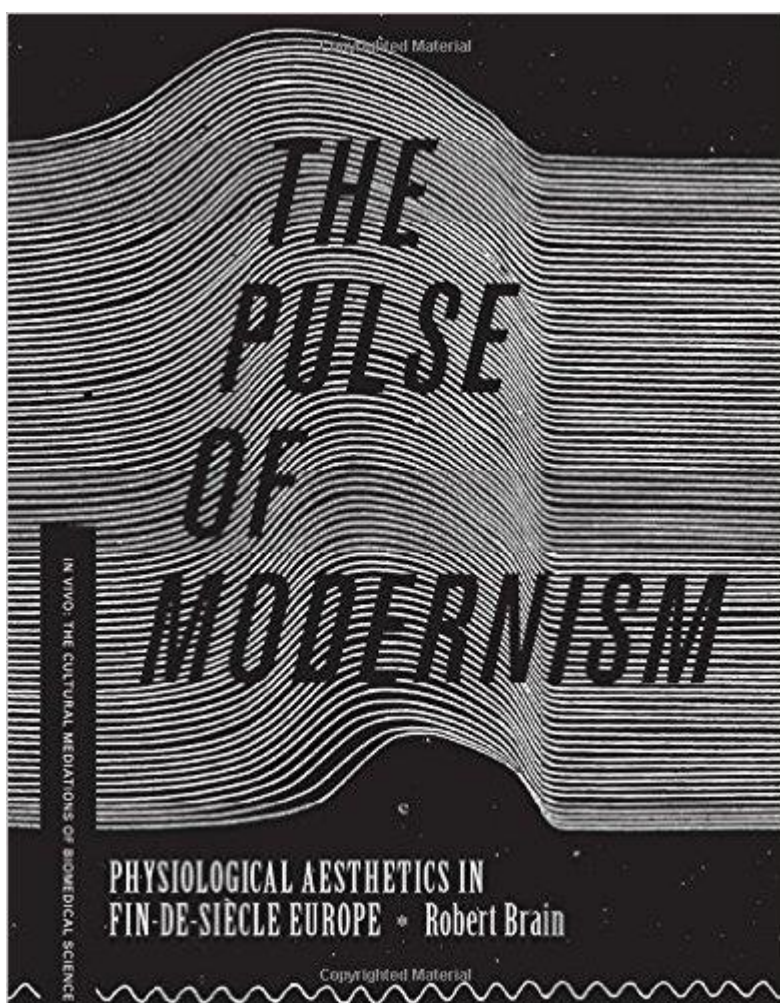
# Science Studies Lectures

Robert M. Brain

University of British Columbia

## The Pulse of Modernism: Physiological Aesthetics in Fin-de-Siècle Europe

Monday, June 6, 2016 - 5:30pm to 7:00pm



What have the sciences and the arts to do with each other? This question has been answered differently in various times and places. Around 1900 many experimental physiologists believed that they could explain the key questions of aesthetics: how does art compel its effects on the beholder? Artists, poets, and composers took heed, developing artistic expert systems based on physiological aesthetic “algorithms” to enhance interventions in a new independent art market and produce technical solutions to the labour crisis among artisans. The results were the new artforms of Neo-impressionist painting, vers libre poetry, and the music composition techniques of Debussy—the key techniques of early Modernism in the arts. I argue that physiology provided the key to the early modernist credo that art might re-invent the social bond and re-engineer the sensory, affective, and pulsatile life of societies. This talk is based on my 2015 book of the same title.

Gellner Room

Nador u. 9, Monument Building  
Central European University