

The Mobile Spectator: viewing on the move (Nottingham, 4-5 Jul 14)

The University of Nottingham, Department of Art History, Jul 4-06, 2014

Deadline: Dec 1, 2013

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In theories of looking at art, spectators are usually assumed to be static, having arrived at a correct viewing position before a given work of art. Yet in our experiences of art, vision and movement are inseparable. Travel is often a prerequisite to putting oneself in a position to be able to see something, or to see it properly; physical effort is required to address the object or image appropriately. Works of art usually inhabit spaces which necessitate adjustment of the viewer's position. Institutions of art require active engagements such as entering, scanning, exploring, traversing, perusing, surveying, and other forms of behaviour or gestures. When such contingencies of viewing are acknowledged, the question arises as to whether the idea of a static viewer engaged in motionless contemplation is a Modernist, ocularcentric paradigm that fails to take into account movements of the body as a precondition to sight. This conference wishes to explore the role(s) of physical movement in creating an art viewer, among other questions. Is there a difference between 'viewer' and 'spectator'? Does one term imply a more active or passive role than the other? Does either term imply motion?

We welcome and encourage studies of all periods and locations. Suggested lines of inquiry include but are not limited to the following:

The language of looking

Correct positions: the ideology and practices of viewing positions

Anamorphosis: the image as at once coded and controlling

Narratives and itineraries of viewing art

Instances, objects, structures that demand a viewer's movement in order to see

Sustained ways of seeing

First impressions: the moment of encounter

Glimpse versus gaze

Modes of scanning and surveying

Art History on the run: from biennales to pilgrimage

The traversal of surfaces

Mobility in digital terms

Stasis and mobility in panoramic vision

Please send proposals of up to 200 words and C.V. to:

Ting Chang (ting.chang@nottingham.ac.uk) and

Richard Wrigley (richard.wrigley@nottingham.ac.uk) by 1 December 2013.

Reference:

CFP: The Mobile Spectator: viewing on the move (Nottingham, 4-5 Jul 14). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 16, 2013
(accessed Feb 22, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/6438>>.