

## Framing the Critical Decade: After the Black Arts Movement (Bristol, 31 Mar 16)

University of Bristol, UK, Mar 21, 2016

Deadline: Nov 1, 2015

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'It is simply too early to try to define the 1980s as a closed or finished period... It is still unresolved and very much ongoing.'

Kobena Mercer, 'Iconography After Identity' (2005)

The Black Arts Movement was generated by the tumult of the 1980s – a decade defined as much by Thatcherism, civil unrest and race riots as by the rise of cultural theory and so-called 'single issue' social movements. It aimed to transform the nature and perception of British art and its histories. Under its banner, a constellation of artists and critics from a wide range of diasporic backgrounds worked around, and through, questions of 'Blackness' in Britain. They interrogated the possibilities and implications of Black British Art and its relationship to other forms of creative production, popular culture and transnational modernisms more broadly.

This conference will examine the ways in which the dialogues and discourses initiated by the Black Arts Movement are, as Kobena Mercer reminds us, unresolved and ongoing. It will continue to unpack and unpick questions around the efficacy and outcomes of the tenuously labeled Movement and reflect on the ways in which this period, only thirty short years ago, has become historicized (or not). It also aims to push debate forward, to ask how the aesthetic, historical, methodological and/or critical threads of the 'critical decade' wind through the 1990s and beyond; to address the rise of globalization, multiculturalism, digital networks and technologies, developments in the bio-sciences and post-racial debates to the playful posturing of the YBAs and an increasingly transnational art scene.

Proposals are invited for papers covering any aspect of Black British Art (before and after the 1980s) and the Black Arts Movement, from scholars working in all fields of creative and visual culture. Topics might include, but are not limited to:

- The global/the local
- History and myth
- The canon/canonicity
- Art, science, and technology
- Exhibitions

- Archives
- The relationship between art and literature
- Gender and the body
- Before the Black Arts Movement
- Fashion/Style/Dress

Please send proposals along with a brief biography to Dr. Elizabeth Robles (haekr@bristol.ac.uk) before 1 November, 2015.

Reference:

CFP: Framing the Critical Decade: After the Black Arts Movement (Bristol, 31 Mar 16). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 23, 2015 (accessed Oct 3, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/10630>>.