Private Collecting and Public Display: Art Markets and Museums (Leeds, 30-31 Mar 17)

Centre for the Study of the Art and Antiques Market, University of Leeds, Mar 30–31, 2017
Deadline: Nov 1, 2016

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Private Collecting and Public Display: Art Markets and Museums

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Susanna Avery-Quash, Senior Research Curator (History of Collecting) at the National Gallery, London

Deadline for Abstracts: Tuesday 1st November 2016

This two-day conference investigates the relationships between 'private' collections of art (fine art, decorative art and antiquities), and the changing dynamics of their display in 'public' exhibitions and museums. This shift from 'private' to 'public' involves a complex dialectic of socio-cultural forces, together with an increasing engagement with the art market. The conference aims to explore the relationship between the 'private' and 'public' spheres of the home and the museum, and to situate this within the scholarship of the histories of the art market and collecting.

Art collections occupy a cultural space which can represent the individual identity of a collector; often as a manifestation of self-expression and social class. Many museums today arose from 'private' collections including the Wallace Collection, Musée Nissim de Camondo, the Frick Museum and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Whilst they now exist as 'public' spaces, many still signify the residues of the 'private' home of a collector. What processes do collections undergo when they move from a 'private' sphere to a 'public' exhibition space? In what ways are collections viewed differently in these environments?

How and when do 'private' collections move into the 'public' domain, and what does this tell us about the increasingly porous nature of these boundaries? Whilst the relationship between 'private' and 'public' art collecting takes on particular forms from the early modern period onwards, it emerged particularly in the latter half of the nineteenth century, with the creation of temporary exhibitions and permanent displays in museums that relied on donations from collectors. Many national museums are indebted to loans made by private individuals. The Waddesdon Bequest at the British Museum, the Wrightsman Galleries at the Metropolitan Museum, and the John Jones collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, are key examples of the continuity of the private in the public. What are the 'private' to 'public' dynamics of these exchanges? How have museums negotiated the restrictions proposed by the collector for the display, containment, expansion or reinterpretation of their collection? What is the implication for the status and value of an object

when ‘public’ works are sold and re-enter the art market? What meanings are attached to ‘public’ art objects when they begin, once again, to circulate in the art market?

The PGR subcommittee of the Centre for the Study of the Art and Antiques Market welcomes proposals for 20-minute papers which explore these themes or which address any other aspect of the private collecting and public display of collections, from the Early Modern period until the 21st century. We are delighted to confirm Dr. Susanna Avery-Quash, Senior Research Curator (History of Collecting) at the National Gallery, London as our keynote speaker.

Topics can include but are not limited to:

The relationships between ‘private’ and ‘public’ spheres
The role and impact of the art market in the ‘public’ and ‘private’ realms
The history and role of temporary loan exhibitions
The role played by gender in collecting practices and bequests
Collecting and loaning objects by minority groups
Legacies of the collector
Philanthropy vs self-promotion
Deaccessioning- public museums selling art back into art market/into private collections
The dynamic of contemporary art collecting and public art galleries

To propose a paper: Please send a Word document with your contact information, paper title, an abstract of 300-500 words, and a short biographical note. Full session proposals for a panel of three papers are also welcomed. Some travel bursaries will be available for accepted speakers.

Proposals should be sent to csaa@leeds.ac.uk by 1st November 2016.

Reference:
CFP: Private Collecting and Public Display: Art Markets and Museums (Leeds, 30-31 Mar 17). In: ArtHist.net, Jul 14, 2016 (accessed Nov 20, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/13484>.