

Reuse Reconsidered (Providence, 15–17 Sep 17)

Providence, Rhode Island, USA

Deadline: Apr 14, 2017

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Reuse Reconsidered

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Spolia. Appropriation. Palimpsests. Afterlives... These terms, and others, have been employed by scholars across disciplines to describe the reuse of architecture and material culture. This conference aims to advance current scholarship by exploring some of these terms and unpacking the phenomenon throughout history and across cultures. From the Mexica reuse of Olmec relics to the fascist appropriation of historic styles in building projects—to name two examples—societies have given new meanings to objects, architectonic fragments, buildings, and styles by repurposing them for new contexts.

The field of reuse studies has grown rapidly in the last three decades. In the United States, this is a more recent conversation, particularly as a result of 2006's "The Mirror of Spolia: Premodern Practice and Postmodern Theory" colloquium at the Clark Art Institute. The colloquium, and subsequent edited volume *Reuse Value*, covered a wide range of fields and time periods. In the years since, other academic forums have taken a more focused approach, such as Wesleyan University's "Monuments as Palimpsests" symposium and a College Art Association session on reuse in the ancient world.

While acknowledging the importance of these more focused conversations, this conference aims to broaden the conversation once again. It seeks to unite scholars, from graduate students to senior faculty members, that study a variety of time periods, cultures, and types of reuse. This cross-disciplinary conference will explore the complex and multivalent motivations behind the reuse of cultural heritage. It will also seek to expand how we understand the phenomenon of cultural identity in relationship to the appropriation, memorialization, and reimagining of the past.

We imagine that papers could address questions including, but not limited to:

- How do cultures (re)employ objects, buildings, or styles from the past as part of the definition of themselves in their present?
- What is the role of the architect/patron in the act of reuse?
- How does the cultural biography of the reused object or building inform its use in new contexts?
- Why do certain things (buildings, styles, time periods) get called upon for a new use while others do not?
- Why and how are specific buildings or cities reimagined in new contexts?
- How is the history of museums and antiquarianism connected to the motivations behind reuse?

Abstracts (up to 300 words) and a CV should be sent to: Reuse.Reconsidered@gmail.com by April 14, 2017. Applicants will be notified by mid-May. Papers should be in English and approximately 20 minutes. Any questions should be addressed to Lia Dykstra at Reuse.Reconsidered@gmail.com.

Reference:

CFP: Reuse Reconsidered (Providence, 15-17 Sep 17). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 4, 2017 (accessed Jul 13, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/14689>>.