

Vital Constitutions (Houston, 13–14 Oct 17)

Rice University, Houston, Tx, Oct 13–14, 2017

Deadline: Jun 16, 2017

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Call for Submissions

Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference, October 13-14, 2017

Vital Constitutions: The Appearance of "Health" in History

Rice University | Houston, Texas

Hosted by the Department of Art History

www.arthistory.rice.edu

www.vitalconstitutions.com

Rice University's Department of Art History is delighted to introduce its inaugural graduate conference, Vital Constitutions, which seeks to problematize the nature of "health." All living forms—from biological to social bodies—realize unique ways to survive and at times thrive in tenuous and hostile environments. Vital Constitutions aims to explore the conference title broadly in relation to structures by which bodies, communities, societies and environments have adapted, and been sustained, when such structures become precarious. We hope to challenge claims of normativity by considering how objects, institutions, and the "natural" environment affect conceptions of vitality. Questions for consideration include: How have representations of the well, the sick, treatment, and contagion been visualized? In what ways have discursive languages surrounding "health" expanded and contracted, and to what societal effect? How do terms such as "anthropocene," "global warming," "climate change," or "preservation" impact ecological debates and actions? When and through what methods have humans placed needs for "health"—be it of the biological or social body—above all else? How have artists, scientists, activists, grassroots leaders, and intellectuals grappled with representations and realities of care and castigation visually and conceptually across time and geography?

Potential points of exploration include but are not limited to the following terms:

Alternative spaces or communities

Art and neoliberalism

Avant-Garde and canon

Bioethics

Dis/ability

Disease and cure

Drug use and policing

Food economies

Gender and sexualities
Hygiene and filth
In/accessibility
Labor and insurance
Niche construction
Normativity and "Other"
Pseudo-sciences
Recreation and play
Rehabilitation (of land or the body)
Representation and the invisible
Self-care and apathy
Social practice
Social reform movements
Surgery and intervention
Urban planning and transient housing

This conference intends to have an accessible and inclusive structure within and beyond academia. Our aim is for an experimental and collaborative forum that presents not only graduate papers, but also art objects, time-based media, and relics of visual culture. Artists, activists, and scholars will join the public beyond university walls to engage with a local institution or community project. A public roundtable will consolidate ideas, arguments, and strategies explored over the course of the weekend. Updates to the conference schedule will be posted at vitalconstitutions.com.

Please send submissions to vitalconstitutions@gmail.com by June 16, 2017. For paper presentations, please send a 250-word abstract or description and curriculum vitae (limited to 3 pages or less). For artist submissions, please send JPEGs and/or mp3 or mp4 files (include title, work date, process, dimensions, and medium) and a curriculum vitae (Dropbox and other FTP links will not be reviewed). All proposals should be submitted online. Lastly, we are able to offer limited support for travel to participants on a need basis, to be determined after selection of papers.

Reference:

CFP: Vital Constitutions (Houston, 13-14 Oct 17). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 20, 2017 (accessed Jan 26, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/15289>>.