

Conflicting Art Histories (AAH Milton Keynes, 29–31 Mar 12)

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Conflicting Art Histories: Dialogues of Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism in Eighteenth-Century British Culture

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William Hogarth's traditional position as the stalwart of English nationalism in the arts was drastically re-evaluated in 2007 with the publication of Robin Simon's *Hogarth, France & British Art*. Published to coincide with the Tate's major Hogarth exhibition of 2007, Simon's text situates Hogarth, a renowned anglophile, within a firmly European context of artistic theory and practice. How does the idea that Hogarth gleefully propagated his anti-Gallic public image, but was in fact greatly indebted to French art and theory affect our understanding of apparently critical eighteenth-century works of art such as his *Marriage-à-la-Mode* (c. 1743)? While historians Linda Colley and Gerald Newman prioritised national identity as an evaluative tool for the examination of aspects of eighteenth-century British culture, is it appropriate to apply this label to broad cultural manifestations, notably the consumptive behavioural patterns of the aristocracy and the middling classes alike? This session will consider this intriguing dichotomy of eighteenth-century British art - the underwritten and unresolved conflict between nationalism and cosmopolitanism - and its relation to the artistic practice, material culture and intellectual history of the period.

Topics for discussion could include, but are not limited to:

- artistic response to the luxury debates

- landscape and nation
- the connoisseur and the Grand Tour
- the usefulness of labels (exotic, chinoiserie, rococo)
- the reception of Italy
- the creation of a British national school
- consumption & the meaning of goods
- the local and the global/the provincial and the metropolitan
- the issue of -isms (Englishness, Britishness, Scottishness)

Reference:

CFP: Conflicting Art Histories (AAH Milton Keynes, 29-31 Mar 12). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 18, 2011 (accessed Jun 10, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/1560>>.