

## Scenes of the Obscene (Milton Keynes, 29 – 31 Mar 12)

The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK, Mar 29–31, 2012

Deadline: Nov 7, 2011

Kassandra Nakas, Jessica Ullrich

Association of Art Historians 38th Annual Conference

The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK

29-31 March 2012

We invite proposals for the session:

Scenes of the Obscene

Session Convenors:

Kassandra Nakas, Universität der Künste Berlin, nakas@udk-berlin.de

Jessica Ullrich, Universität der Künste Berlin, ullrich@udk-berlin.de

Scenes of the Obscene

While explicit images and lyrics appear to be an ever more dominant feature of contemporary culture, notions of obscenity are remarkably shifting. Given a rather libertine society in many countries of the (Western) world, art today seems less to be the realm of breaking normative rules (as, e.g., 1970s performance art) than a sphere of reflecting upon them. Images of violence, the experience of terror, or human/animal relationships are some of the issues that address, in contemporary art, the obscene as an “attack on the scene of representation” (Hal Foster).

Taking this observation as a starting point, the session aims to examine the topic with a larger scope historically, geographically and conceptually. Recent studies have centred the shifting social and legal frameworks for moral acceptability in art and aesthetics (Nead 2000; Douzinas/Nead 1999), whilst the rhetorics and images of obscenity since the Middle Ages seem to have passed from general view since groundbreaking studies of the 1990s (Hunt 1993; Ziolkowski 1998; McDonald 2006). Against this art historical backdrop and developing further recent interdisciplinary and contemporary studies (Bernas/Dakhliya 2008; Mey 2007), the session seeks to bring together new methodological and topical approaches towards the concept of the obscene, be it in regards to its historical and cultural variability, the transvaluation of queer aesthetics, non-Western notions of obscenity, zoophilia, or the adialectical relationship of transgression and taboo (Bataille), to name but just a few possible themes.

Please send your paper proposal (max. 250 words) to both of the panel convenors by Monday, 7 November 2011.

For further information about the conference including submission guidelines visit the AAH web-

ArtHist.net

site: [www.aah.org.uk/page/3327](http://www.aah.org.uk/page/3327).

Reference:

CFP: Scenes of the Obscene (Milton Keynes, 29 - 31 Mar 12). In: ArtHist.net, Jul 16, 2011 (accessed Apr 3, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/1657>>.