

Session at CAA (New York, 13–16 Feb 19)

Annual College Art Association Conference 2019, Hilton Midtown, New York, Feb
13–16, 2019

Deadline: Apr 25, 2018

Devon Smither, Canada

"The Art of Failure"

Currently seeking panelists for a session focused on the productive potential of failure as a theoretical, historiographic, and aesthetic means of examining art, curatorial practice and their discursive histories. From the failure of neoliberalism's rising tide to "lift all boats," to what many see as the UK's failure to remain part of the European Union, to the consideration of failed cosmopolitanism in the face of rising nationalist sentiment, what might we learn from failure? Failure, as the unrealizable quest for perfection, success, and wealth accumulation, offers the possibility of the unexpected, of becoming differently. If failure offers an alternative to constricting social norms and the drive for success, then it also posits a theoretical means of opening up a space of resistance. As Jack Halberstam has argued, "...failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world." How is failure a form of subversive creativity? How does failure allow a reappraisal and reframing of art history and historiography? What happens when artists, scholars, and curators heed Beckett's call to, "Fail again. Fail better"? By resisting mastery, master narratives, and masculinist standards, failure also offers a feminist strategy to think past patriarchal ideals and to resist heteronormativity. This session foregrounds how failure in art and art history has particular ramifications for feminist and queer thinking.

Please send proposals for a paper(250 words), along with a CV to Dr. Devon Smither (devon-smither@uleth.ca). CAA is in New York, Feb. 13-16, 2019. For more information, see <http://www.collegeart.org/programs/conference/proposals>

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Reference:

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