

Exhibiting (and) History (Rome, 6–7 Dec 18)

Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History, Rome, Dec 6–07, 2018

Deadline: Aug 31, 2018

Maria Bremer

Exhibiting (and) History

Concept and organization: Maria Bremer, PhD (Bibliotheca Hertziana)

The Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History invites paper proposals for the workshop “Exhibiting (and) History,” organized in the context of the research initiative Rome Contemporary. The aim of the workshop is to develop new perspectives on the relationship between exhibition practice and history from 1960 to the present. Striving for an expanded notion of exhibiting as entangled in and impacting the historical conditions of its time, we seek to re-examine the ways in which art historical research can contribute to the broader field of exhibition studies.

Stemming from the Latin verb *exhibere* (ex, “out” + *habere*, “to hold”), literally “hold out, hold forth,” “to show, display, present,” exhibiting has long been considered a practice of deactivation, suspending and reconfiguring the practical use of its objects for aesthetic contemplation. Yet, especially since the 1960s, as the understanding of art has been expanded to include artistic practices beyond art objects, exhibitions too experienced significant transformations. Hitherto mainly object-based, they diversified into a range of discursive, contextual, and performative formats grounded on modes of acting rather than just modes of showing. These processual and activating formats engage more firmly with a broader social nexus. Thereby, they draw our attention to the extent to which exhibition practice can mediate a given time – i.e., its geopolitical contexts, economic and knowledge systems, power authorities and relations, categories of time or visions of the past, present and future – weaving itself into the social processes and contingencies involved in the making of history.

Our workshop aims to address the relationships between exhibition practice and history focusing on post-war and contemporary examples worldwide. Positing a two-fold understanding of history as “*res gestae*” (event) and “*historia*” (narration), we are interested in discussing the potential of exhibiting in this dual sense: poietic and narrative. Our leading questions are:

- As they make things happen, how do exhibition practices negotiate and impact their historical circumstances?
- Rather than prioritizing text or spoken word, exhibitions rely on enactment, spatialization, visualization, design, etc. to develop their subjects and arguments. By which means can these trans-medial constellations be analyzed as narrative forms?
- The mediation of historical time through exhibitions poses a methodological challenge to the linear histories of exhibited art and the histories of exhibitions produced so far. In what ways could

this form of mediation prompt us to rethink art historical methods for the reconstruction and study of exhibitions intersecting with neighboring disciplines?

We welcome papers addressing these and related questions from different angles, ranging from methodological reflections to pressing themes currently discussed in exhibition studies – such as expographic technologies, mediation, reconstruction, scopic regimes and subjectivation, knowledge production, non-object-based exhibitions, and spatial organization of time.

The workshop will be held in English; the format is discussion-oriented and open to the public. We invite doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers and early career scholars to submit proposals for 15-minute presentations. Prior to the workshop, the selected participants will be asked to share their bibliography and a reading excerpt.

Please send an abstract of 250 words along with a 150-word bio to Maria Bremer (bremer@bibliotheca.hertz.it) by August 31, subject: “Exhibiting”. The Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History will provide accommodation for two nights in Rome and partially reimburse travel costs (up to €150 for scholars based in Europe and up to €500 for those coming from elsewhere).

Reference:

CFP: Exhibiting (and) History (Rome, 6-7 Dec 18). In: ArtHist.net, May 30, 2018 (accessed Aug 21, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/18279>>.