Arts Patronage in Modern America (Oxford, 26-28 Jun 19)

Oxford, UK, Jun 26–28, 2019
Deadline: Jan 4, 2019

KPHeath

Arts Patronage in Modern America
Rothermere American Institute, University of Oxford, UK

The founding of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965 was a celebrated occasion for many artists and cultural patrons in the United States, but it failed to put to rest the decades old public debate over whether or not art and culture ought to be supported by the federal government. From the Reagan era in particular onwards, straight through to the Trump administration, Culture Wars debates have centred on whether the federal government should fund art, if so, how much, and if not, who should? From the New Deal federal arts projects of the 1930s to the cultural Cold War and beyond, the story of the growth of American arts patronage has often been told through the lens of the federal government, with philanthropies, corporations, state and local governments playing supporting roles to leading federal agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency, the United States Information Agency, and the State Department, amongst others.

Although the American state's role and influence in cultural affairs expanded in the twentieth century, the degree to which the state actually drove these transformations both at home and abroad remains to be examined. What role did American corporations or philanthropies play in shaping emerging forms of cultural patronage? Did state or local programmes and policymakers push changes at the national or international level? And what impact did artistic participants have on developing or curtailing the institutionalisation of American art and culture? Answering such questions will offer an insight into cultural relations between private and state actors, which promises, in turn, to inform not only understandings of the institutional forms of modern American culture, but also to illuminate how individual and private actors have shaped the American state. This conference therefore calls upon scholars, policy-practitioners and artists working on and in modern American arts patronage, broadly defined, to submit proposals for papers that explore and critique the existing narrative.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:
- philanthropy and government cultural cooperation or conflict
- cultural funding, policy or exchange either at home or abroad
- the creation, implementation, and impact of cultural policymaking at the state or local levels
- how artists or academics experienced cultural policy or patronage
- cultural policy and protest or lack thereof
- philanthropy or philanthropic funding in the cultural sphere

- federal cultural programmes and agencies
- national or transnational public-private arts partnerships and programmes

Individuals interested in delivering a 20 minute paper should submit a brief abstract (approx. 400 words), a short CV (no more than 2 pages), and a brief biography (of around 250 words) to karen.heath@rai.ox.ac.uk and niedf005@umn.edu by 4th January 2019. Full panel proposals are welcome, although all-male panels will not be considered nor compiled by the organisers. We encourage submissions from scholars of colour and from those whose voices have traditionally been left out of scholarly narratives.

We hope to be able to offer a limited number of bursaries to support attendance by postgraduates and early career researchers. Priority will be given to those presenting papers. Please indicate in your email if you would like to apply for a bursary and whether you have access to institutional support, giving an estimate of potential travel and accommodation costs. You can visit our web-site at https://americanartspatronage.wordpress.com/

Conference Organisers:
Karen Patricia Heath, Rothermere American Institute, University of Oxford
Amanda Niedfeldt, University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

Reference:

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