A Matter of Access (Munich/London, 22-25 Jun 19)

Munich and London, Jun 22–25, 2019
Deadline: Feb 28, 2019

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A Matter of Access – Collections and their Visibility
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Since its foundation in 2004, the international forum Collecting & Display has investigated numerous aspects of both collections and collectors. Such activity has taken place at regular seminars and at our conferences and has resulted in a number of publications. For June 2019 we plan an international conference at two venues: Munich (22.06.2019) and London (24 and 25.06.2019). Speakers and attendees are welcome to book either part of the conference separately or both as a package.

This conference aims to extend the discussion of the nature and pertinence of collections by focusing on the spaces in which they were displayed and how access to those spaces was controlled. By examining how collections were displayed, used and presented and who had access to these spaces, we hope to develop a deeper understanding of the meaning of collections to their owners and of their significance to contemporaries. Topics to be discussed across the three conference days are the visibility and non-visibility of collections and how these – together with diverse modes of access – may have enhanced interest in collections.

We invite proposals that address the following issues:
- If the direct visibility of a collection was limited, were there other means of gaining or controlling access to collections, e.g. through reports, publications or depictions?
- How important was the locale of collections for their appreciation and how much did their place of preservation contribute to their safety or to their visual enhancement?
- Did male and female collectors have opposing approaches to collecting and display, including accessibility to and advertisement of their collections?
- How did a potential audience react to being invited or excluded, after having been informed about the quality and importance of a particular collection?
- When did such an invitation become compulsory?
We encourage proposals that consider any of the many different types of collections, including collections of natural objects, flora or fauna as well as collections of drawings, miniatures and works of art through the ages.

22 June 2019, Munich, Kunsthistorisches Institute, Ludwig Maximilian
University Accessing Audiences

The first part of the conference will be dedicated to the study of “advertising” collections, for example, by means of publications, such as that of the Giustiniani Collection. These compilations were frequently used to increase the fame attached to a particular collection. In disseminating information about it, they provided another kind of imaginative access. Another type of such “marketing” occurred in the guise of less formal, but no less intentional, spreading of information e.g. through reports sent as letters between courts and collectors. Access to a particular collection and contact with a particular collector may thus have been vicarious – and not always entirely based on facts – but without some kind of advertisement, a collection might have been excluded from public awareness. In that case, the number of those wishing to see a collection would have been very limited, as would the potential enhancement of the collector’s reputation.

24 June 2019, London, Institute of Historical Research, University of London
The Importance of the Site
We envisage the first day in London to be about places and locations: how the site of a collection might both enable and hamper access; how the location itself might have been used to characterise the collection or bolster the status of the collector. Possible topics might include the diverse locales used to house and display collections, such as gardens, galleries, churches etc. This session could also address the issue of early museums, which often institutionalised private collections in early modern Europe and necessitated a new etiquette to control the audience wishing to see the treasures amassed. In addition, the session could explore private collections which were subsequently re-designated as foundations, thus making them more publicly accessible, as well as the operation of
oundations with only limited collections that by necessity invite loans in order to facilitate their exhibitions.

25 June 2019, London, Institute of Historical Research, University of London
Female Spaces
Finally, on the third day, the topic is “intimate geographies”. Examining the spaces in which women displayed their collections provides an opportunity to investigate the meaning of their collections and to challenge preconceived notions of privacy and the personal. We invite discussion as to the role of women in the household and whether they had their own spaces or shared the spaces of their consorts. In discussing the collecting and patronage of women, it may also be important to investigate
collections. Through the breadth of discussion we hope to demonstrate the multifaceted roles of women as collectors over the centuries.

Please send your proposals on any of the three topics with abstracts of no more than 250 words together with a short bio by 28 February, 2019 to collecting_display@hotmail.com.

The conference language is English.

Reference:
CFP: A Matter of Access (Munich/London, 22-25 Jun 19). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 9, 2019 (accessed Nov 19, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/19822>.