

Contemporary Art, Health and Medicine (Birmingham, 14–17 Apr 21)

Birmingham, Apr 14–17, 2021

Deadline: Oct 19, 2020

Imogen Wiltshire

Session convenors:

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We invite paper proposals for our session at the Association for Art History 2021 Annual Conference.

This panel explores the proliferation of artistic practices addressing medical and health-related subjects, both within and outside of traditional systems of art production and display. As well as the increasing prevalence of medical themes in the work of individual artists, contemporary art is now called on to interpret, communicate and produce health-related knowledge in academic research, medical museums and medical environments.

The intersections between contemporary art and medicine have received little critical attention (to date, most work on art and medicine has focused on the 19th and early 20th centuries). As Jordanova notes, 'we lack a basic map' of 'the multiple relationships between medicine and the visual arts since the war' (Ludmilla Jordanova, 2014. 'Medicine and the Visual Arts', in *Medicine, Health and the Arts*, edited by Victoria Bates, Alan Bleakley, and Sam Goodman, 41-63. London and New York: Routledge). This panel explores these relationships from 1945 onwards, with the aim of furthering recent debates about the distinctive roles played by contemporary fine art practice and art-historical scholarship within the critical medical humanities.

Papers will analyse the mechanisms through which artists produce knowledge about medicine and health, and probe the assumptions about art that underpin its increasing use in academic projects on illness, and its presence in medical museum contexts. How is art discursively framed within these non-art institutions? What kind of work is art being called on to do here? What kind of subjectivities are produced through these practices and displays? Conversely, how are existing definitions of 'medicine' and 'health' being (re)defined by artists and art institutions? In particular, we hope to critically reframe the 'therapeutic' label and biographical readings that are often applied to artists working in these areas, and to explore the culturally situated methods that are deployed both by, and in relation to, such artists, in order to question epistemological frameworks and normative discourses.

Abstract max. 250 words. Deadline 19 October 2020.

Please email your paper proposal to the session convenors using the paper proposal form:
eu.eventscloud.com/website/2065/sessions-2021/

Reference:

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