

Performance: The Ethics and Politics of Care (online, 29–30 May 21)

Online / University of the Arts, Bern, May 29–30, 2021

Deadline: Mar 5, 2021

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We are inviting contributions to the following event: PERFORMANCE: THE ETHICS AND THE POLITICS OF CARE – # 1. Mapping the Field

This is the first event in the series of annual colloquia on the topic of the conservability of performance art and performance-based works (“performance”). The events aim at advancing the knowledge on this topic within the discipline of conservation on the one hand, while, on the other, locating the discourse of conservation within a broader field of the humanities disciplines concerned with the theories and practices of performance— performance studies, anthropology, art history, curatorial studies, heritage studies and museology. We propose to contest the common-sense understanding of performance as a non-conservable form and ask questions concerning how, and to what extent, performance art and performance-based works can be conserved. We welcome academic papers and contributions from researchers across the mentioned disciplines, including conservation scholars and practitioners, artists and museums professionals that address one or several of the following themes:

- ☒ Care for performance at museums
- ☒ Performance beyond institutions
- ☒ Performance on the intersection of conservation and curation
- ☒ The role – and limits – of documentation in performance
- ☒ Presentation and preservation of performance: the curator’s role
- ☒ Reenactment, reperformance, and reinterpretation
- ☒ The object in performance: Relic, leftover and remnant
- ☒ The “death” and “afterlife” of performance
- ☒ Perspectives on the continuity of performance from other fields
- ☒ Theoretical and conceptual considerations, e.g.: What does it mean to conserve performance? What are the media and means in performance conservation? Is conservation documentation? Is presentation preservation? What role does the initial spatial and temporal context play in the perpetuation of historical performance? What is the role of authenticity, originality and intention in these debates? What, for whom and why do we conserve?

This colloquium is a part of the ongoing research project “Performance: Conservation, Materiality, Knowledge” funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation at Bern University of the Arts. The project focuses on the questions of conservation of performance-based works, their temporal specifics, the involvement of the human and non-human body, the world of their extended trace histo-

ry, memory, and archive. Explored are notions of care, the ideals of traditional conservation and their relations to tacit or explicit knowledge, skill and technique. Taking as a starting point the necessity for conservators to access and deepen this area of study, and unlike queries that situate these questions within other disciplines, in this project, we approach performance as a necessarily conservable form. Proposals for 20-minute presentations should not exceed 500 words and be accompanied by the applicant's short biography (200w) and affiliation. The language of the event is English. Selected speakers will be invited to present their contributions during a live-streamed event on Saturday, May 29, or Sunday, May 30, 2021. The recordings of the event will be archived. Selected speakers will be invited to publish their papers in an anthology. A small contribution towards expenses will be offered to the invitees.

Direct your proposals as a Word file by emailing performanceconservation@gmail.com by March 5, 2021.

You can learn more about our project and activities on the website: www.performanceconservationmaterialityknowledge.com

Reference:

CFP: Performance: The Ethics and Politics of Care (online, 29-30 May 21). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 17, 2021 (accessed Apr 8, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/33421>>.