

Relationality in American Art (online, 24–25 Jun 21)

The Courtauld (online), Jun 24–25, 2021

Registration deadline: Jun 25, 2021

Elizabeth Buhe, Fordham University

Whether in current critical discourse or recognized retrospectively, relationality has been central to the study of twentieth-century art. Art history is, after all, predicated on the study of relations between bodies, artworks and forms, and their contexts or communities. Moving beyond the simple situatedness of an artwork faced by a viewer, this conference foregrounds the concept of relationality as a means through which we might learn to encounter difference. Relationality is a key tenet of phenomenology, or the study of the structures of consciousness, and in this context it has returned every thirty years or so since its emergence in the first half of the twentieth century in the theorization of feminism, race, film, body art and most recently queer and trans studies to help scholars conceptualize the contours of subjectivity as non-oppositional and fluid. Addressing art of the Americas in the long twentieth century, this conference asks how relationality as an analytic might undo binaries and critique the persistence of a universalized maker and viewer within art history. The conference looks to modes of relation emergent within phenomenology in artistic discourse of the 1950s and 1960s and seeks especially to explore those conceived through historical and theoretical models in other periods. Presentations from artists and scholars will attend to relational models of form; the role of artworks in demonstrating conversational modes of knowing; the artwork's potential to engender community or make space for difference; creative acts of co-emergence in making or viewing; and strategies of reading that focus on relationships that artworks and artists produce with audiences.

Organised by Dr Elizabeth Buhe, The Courtauld and Centre for American Art

PROGRAMME

Day One: Thursday June 24 (4:30pm BST / 11:30am ET / 8:30am PT)

4.30pm: Introduction

David Peters Corbett and Elizabeth Buhe

4.45pm: Panel 1 – Intersubjectivity and the Politics of Viewing

Moderator: Carole Bourne-Taylor, Fellow and Tutor in French at Brasenose College, Oxford

Louise Siddons, Fulbright Fellow, Eccles Centre for American Studies at the British Library; Associate Professor, Oklahoma State University

"Intimate Relations: Touch and Gaze Across Media in the Collaborative Portraits of Laura Gilpin and Brenda Putnam"

Helen Fielding, Professor, Department of Philosophy/Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, University of Western Ontario

"Joan Mitchell: Cultivating our Perceptual Nature"

Stefan Torralba, PhD Candidate, Department of English, University of California, Riverside

"Dirty Looks: Kelvin Burzon's and Xandra Ibarra's Relational Performances of the Rorschach"

Moderated Q&A

5.45pm: Break

5.55pm: Panel 2 – Reorientations Toward the Landscape

Moderator: Iggy Cortez, Mellon Assistant Professor, Department of Cinema and Media Arts, Vanderbilt University

Ramey Mize, University of Pennsylvania, PhD Candidate, History of Art; Douglass Foundation Fellow in American Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art

"Mitákuye Oyás'ínj: Relations between Buffalo, People, and Place in Plains Painting"

Kate Keohane, Associate Lecturer, History of Art, University of St Andrews

"Poetics of Relation: Édouard Glissant and Wifredo Lam's Livres des artistes"

Siobhan Angus, Banting Postdoctoral Fellow in the History of Art, Yale University

"Embodiment, De/Industrialization, and Environmental Justice in LaToya Ruby Frazier's On the Making of Steel Genesis: Sandra Gould Ford"

Moderated Q&A

6.55pm: Break

7.00pm: Keynote Lecture

Caitlin Cherry, Assistant Professor of Painting and Printmaking, Virginia Commonwealth University

"Painting OS (operating system): Self-Touching the Other"

8.00pm: End of Day One

Day Two: Friday June 25 (4:30pm BST / 11:30am ET / 8:30am PT)

4.30pm: Introduction

Elizabeth Buhe

4.35pm: Panel 3 – Agency, Subjectivity, and the Relations of Collective Experience

Moderator: Sampada Aranke, Assistant Professor, Art History, Theory and Criticism, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Rachel Stratton, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Paul Mellon Centre, London

"Relationality in Viktor Lowenfeld's 'Social Haptics'"

Kristen Carter, Assistant Professor, Department of Art History, Florida Southern College
"Re-Thinking and Re-Grouping: On the Politics of Phenomenology and Touch in Late 1960s America"

Kimberly Bain, John Holmes Assistant Professor in the Humanities, Department of English, Tufts University
"Black Unrest"

Moderated Q&A

5.35pm: Break

5.45pm: Keynote Lecture

Jennifer Doyle, Professor, Department of English, University of California, Riverside

6.45pm: Concluding Remarks

Elizabeth Buhe

Please join us! Registration is free and required:

<https://courtauld.ac.uk/whats-on/events/call-for-papers-relationality-in-american-art/>

Reference:

CONF: Relationality in American Art (online, 24-25 Jun 21). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 5, 2021 (accessed Sep 13, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/34259>>.