

Aura: authenticity, experience, and art (Cleveland, 12 Nov 21)

Cleveland Museum of Art, Nov 12, 2021

Deadline: Jul 2, 2021

Jessica Long

!!! Deadline to submit an abstract extended to Friday, July 2nd !!!

47TH ANNUAL CLEVELAND SYMPOSIUM

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY AND THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART, CLEVELAND, OHIO

AURA: AUTHENTICITY, EXPERIENCE, AND ART

The Department of Art History and Art at Case Western Reserve University invites graduate students to submit abstracts for its 2021 Annual Symposium Aura: Authenticity, Experience, and Art. The Cleveland Symposium is one of the longest-running annual art history graduate symposia in the United States, organized by students in the joint graduate program with the Cleveland Museum of Art.

In 1935, Walter Benjamin asserted that the aura of a work of art derives from authenticity, originality, and site specificity. This aura has been observed in a variety of forms based on first-hand experiences with an object. Throughout time, objects have also had effects on viewers that extend beyond their aesthetic qualities. Benjamin also argued that “mechanical” reproductions are without an aura and that reproductions can tarnish the art object’s originality but can also “emancipate... the work of art from its parasitic subservience to ritual.” (Benjamin, 106) By reproducing the art object and removing it from ritualistic settings, the work can become more available and become relevant to contemporary culture. Questions about authenticity and experience continue into the twenty-first century and intensify, as commercial, digital, and mechanical art shape the course of art history, artistic practice, and museum and gallery display. Very recently, digitization has become a necessity and we have expanded our outlook on how digital reproduction can help, rather than harm, the goals of artists, historians, heritage preservation specialists and museum professionals. While we continue to consider the aura of objects, we also explore a future of increasing the accessibility of art through digital reproduction.

How do we expand our celebration of the aura of an object to encompass its many forms? How do we grapple with the subject of originality and authenticity in an increasingly digital world? How do artists and museum professionals address the history of the aura and issues of reproduction, circulation, and access in their work? In what ways do reproductions benefit or potentially harm the original art objects? This year’s symposium welcomes innovative research papers that explore

issues of authenticity and reproduction in and around the creation, reception, and circulation of the visual arts. Submissions may explore aspects of this theme as manifested in any medium as well as in any historical period and geographical location. Different methodological perspectives are welcomed.

Potential topics may include, but are not limited to:

Social functions of objects: religious, ritual, sentimental, etc.

Contemplating the sensorial aspect of object and site specificity

Developments in connoisseurship utilizing digital technologies

Destruction, looting, and defacing art objects

Uncovering lost or forgotten objects, narratives, and perspectives

Collecting intangible artworks and the digital art market

Open Access and the future of the field of object study

Artists recreating past works or reconfiguring materials into new works

Objects and images referencing famous art pieces

The reuse and commercialization of artwork in popular culture

With keynote speaker Adam Lowe of Factum Arte and the Factum Foundation

Adam Lowe founded Factum Arte in 2001. Factum Arte is a Madrid based team of artists, technicians, and conservators dedicated to digital mediation. Their projects include the production of contemporary artworks and the creation of facsimiles as an approach to preservation. The work of Factum Arte is internationally celebrated for setting new standards in digital documentation that are redefining the relationship between originality and authenticity. Creating a bridge between technology and craft is at the heart of Factum Arte's mission. In 2009, Lowe founded the non-profit organization Factum Foundation for Digital Technology in Conservation, which "develops tools and skills which help professionals, scholars, and local communities in documenting, monitoring, studying, recreating, and disseminating the world's cultural heritage." Together, these two organizations develop, implement, and share technologies that are changing our approach to the preservation and conservation of the material evidence of the past.

Current and recent graduate students in art history and related disciplines are invited to submit a 350-word abstract and a CV to clevelandsymposium@gmail.com by Friday, June 18, 2021 (Deadline to submit an abstract extended to Friday, July 2nd). Selected participants will be notified by the end of July. Paper presentations will be 20 minutes in length and should be accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation. Three papers will be awarded prizes.

Please note: Planning for this year's in person symposium is already underway, but given the current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, we understand that plans may need to be amended. Alternative arrangements are being made to transition to an online platform should an in-person symposium not be feasible.

Please direct all questions to Julie Polsinelli and Jessica Long at clevelandsymposium@gmail.com.

Reference:

CFP: Aura: authenticity, experience, and art (Cleveland, 12 Nov 21). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 11, 2021 (accessed Apr 20, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/34337>>.