

## 4 Sessions at AAH (London, 6–8 Apr 22)

Goldschmidt, University of London, Apr 6–08, 2022  
[eu.eventscloud.com/website/5317/](http://eu.eventscloud.com/website/5317/)

ArtHist.net Redaktion

Association for Art History's 48th Annual Conference

- [1] Plunder: An Alternative History of Art
- [2] Crafting Medieval Spain: The Torrijos Ceilings in Context
- [3] How New York Lost the Idea of (Post)Modern Art
- [4] The Artist's Friend

---

### [1] Plunder: An Alternative History of Art

From: Elsje van Kessel, ejmvk@st-andrews.ac.uk  
Date: 22 Sep 21  
Deadline: 1 Nov 21

'I place looting at the heart of the modern formation of what is called art, analyzing how it was obscured and transformed into the history of collecting.' This session proposes to take up the challenge presented by Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, examining the history of plunder and loot as an alternative history of art. From the triumphant parade of sacred objects from the Temple in Jerusalem through the streets of Rome, to the stolen treasures from Egypt, Italy and elsewhere that were put in a new museum in Paris by Napoleon Bonaparte, art objects have been seized and taken back home as trophies of war, spoil and loot. Over time, these illicit transfers of artistic 'treasures' and their display, have been captured, imagined, and re-interpreted by contemporary artists, whose works continue to question and tell stories of triumph and loss. This session invites papers that critically engage with the relationship between art history and the history of plunder. What instances, beyond the canonical cases, can be identified? How has looting been represented visually? How have histories of loss and possession forged an understanding of objects as art? What are the roles of resistance and restitution? The session aims to combine case studies of plunder with more theoretical reflections, in order to open up a fundamental debate about the role of looting in our discipline and the global history of art.

Session convenors:

Mary-Ann Middelkoop, University of Oxford, [mary-ann.middelkoop@prm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mary-ann.middelkoop@prm.ox.ac.uk)  
Elsje van Kessel, University of St Andrews, [ejmvk@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:ejmvk@st-andrews.ac.uk)

Please email your proposal directly to the convenors. Include in your proposal a clear paper title, a short abstract (max 250 words), your name and email. The deadline for paper proposals is 1 November 2021.

For further details about the conference see:

<https://eu.eventscloud.com/website/5317/>

---

[2] **Crafting Medieval Spain: The Torrijos Ceilings in Context**

From: Maria-Teresa Chicote, mtchicote@gmail.com

Date: 21 Sep 21

Deadline: 1 Nov 21

This session will explore the legacy of Islamic art in Europe through its medieval ceilings, many of which are dispersed as architectural fragments in contemporary museums. It will focus on the case study of the Torrijos ceilings, four monumental wooden ceilings that were commissioned in the 1490s by a couple close to the Catholic Monarchs, for their palace in Torrijos near Toledo (Spain). The ceilings were separated in 1904 when the Torrijos palace was dismantled, and they are now dispersed across collections in Europe and the USA. Despite their significance to histories of both Islamic and European art, these important objects remain under-explored. As objects made using techniques and motifs associated with Islamic craftsmanship, the Torrijos ceilings are not considered European enough to sit within western art history; on the other hand, their commission for a Christian-owned palace using a style adapted to Gothic taste means that neither are they considered within Islamic art history.

Drawing from a new interdisciplinary BA/Leverhulme funded research project with these ceilings at its heart, this panel invites papers that more fully contextualise the ceilings and their role in understanding the complex history of Islamic art in Europe. We seek to discuss the circumstances of the ceilings' original making and decorative choices; the relationship of their carpentry techniques to earlier traditions, especially in the wider Islamic world; their fragmentation and acquisition, in the wider context of the dispersal of Spain's cultural heritage in the late 19th and 20th centuries; their modes of display, and the potential for these ceilings to foster a new understanding of Spain's medieval craftsmanship among contemporary museum-going publics.

Convenors:

- Mariam Rosser-Owen, Curator Middle East, Victoria and Albert Museum, m.rosserowen@vam.ac.uk, @mrosserowen
- Anna McSweeney, Lecturer in History of Art and Architecture, Trinity College Dublin, mcsweean@tcd.ie

Call for Papers deadline 1 November 2021.

Please submit your paper proposal or any query to the convenor.

Website:

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/research/projects/crafting-medieval-spain-the-torrijos-ceiling-in-the-global-museu>

m

Instagram: @craftingmedievalspain

---

[3] **How New York Lost the Idea of (Post)Modern Art**

From: Oliver O'Donnell, odonnell@bilderfahrzeuge.org

Date: 21 Sep 21

Deadline: 12 Nov 21

The historiography of postwar American art tracks a movement from the modern to the contemporary. But this was not the experience of the artists and critics who lived through the transition. For those intent on squeezing out modernism's last drops, as well as for those washing their hands of it, 'postmodern' was a far more apposite word to describe the paradigm shift. That the postmodern has been absorbed into the contemporary testifies to the way in which postmodernism fell below its stated intentions. This defeat was naturalised in the 1990s by passing postmodernism off as a fad, rather than taking seriously its oedipal ambitions.

At stake in the burial of the postmodern is the object of its critique: the modern. Though Habermas tells us that this too was an incomplete project, postmodernism has obscured modernism's contingency by rendering it a *fait accompli*. This panel seeks to charge both the modern and the postmodern with possibility once more by resurfacing the intellectual histories of those working at the fraught intersection of both. While pinpointing the gathering point for such histories in 1960s New York, the panel also welcomes papers that explore the precursors and aftershocks for this critical juncture, widening the historical reach to *Partisan Review*, *October* and everything in between.

Today, as we live through various crises defined by some of the very forms of thinking that postmodernism helped popularize—namely, modes of scepticism about norms of evaluation and arguments about identity—its historicisation has become all the more pressing. By framing the turn away from both modernism and postmodernism not as progress but as a loss, this panel asks whether we can locate within the period's well-rehearsed debates—for example, about minimalism, pop, photography, or indeed Clement Greenberg—an art history that could have been.

Call for Papers deadline: 1 November 2021.

Please submit your paper proposal to the convenors:

Oliver O'Donnell, *Bilderfahrzeuge* Project, [odonnell@bilderfahrzeuge.org](mailto:odonnell@bilderfahrzeuge.org);

Chloe Julius, UCL, [chloe.julius.18@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:chloe.julius.18@ucl.ac.uk)

---

#### [4] The Artist's Friend

From: Anne Rana, [anne.rana@gmail.com](mailto:anne.rana@gmail.com)

Date: 21 Sep 21

Deadline: 1 Nov 21

Being identified as a great friend of artists, or 'artist's friend', often elevates ancillary art historical figures, past and present. For some collectors, critics, curators, dealers—consider broadly drawn examples like Giorgio Vasari, Alain Locke, Gertrude Stein, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, Okwui Enwezor or Geeta Kapur—friendship has represented a deep connection with a particular artist or signaled bonds of loyalty and support with many. Notwithstanding its assumed virtue and frequent invocation, the idea of the 'artist's friend' has escaped meaningful definition.

This panel seeks to undertake a critical analysis of the 'artist's friend', examining case studies that leverage friendship as a conceptual model of relation between artists and non-artists. Our inquiry aims to engage the broad theoretical terrain of friendship: its nature and value, the reciprocal self-knowledge and

self-formation it cultivates, and the moral quandaries it raises. We welcome interdisciplinary contributions across geography and chronology, and encourage papers that help us consider such questions as:

- What are defining features of friendship with the artist? How is 'friend' distinct from positions such as muse, lover, donor, or patron?
- A friend is said to be 'another self.' How might we understand artistic identity or the status of the artist from the standpoint of figures who are considered the 'artist's friend'?
- When partiality is an essential feature of friendship, how does friendship enrich or complicate scholarship, curating, or criticism, conventionally predicated on distance and impartiality?
- How do friendship's ethical and moral commitments intersect with the cultural field's conditions of production, circulation, and legitimization?

#### SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All abstracts must be submitted and presented in English. Paper proposals should include a clear title, a short abstract (max 250 words), your name and email address. Please submit your 25 minute paper proposals to [theartistsfriend2022@gmail.com](mailto:theartistsfriend2022@gmail.com) no later than 1 November 2021.

Convenors: Jamin An & Anne Rana

For further information, please visit: <https://forarthistory.org.uk/conference/2022-annual-conference/>

Reference:

CFP: 4 Sessions at AAH (London, 6-8 Apr 22). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 27, 2021 (accessed Jan 9, 2026), [<https://arthist.net/archive/34920>](https://arthist.net/archive/34920).