

The world of Robert C. Smith (Lisbon/Sintra, 14-16 Nov 22)

Lisbon, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation; Sintra, National Palace of Queluz, Nov 14-16, 2022

Deadline: Jul 15, 2022

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Instituto de História da Arte

Artistic Confluences in the Iberoamerican culture (1600-1850). The world of Robert C. Smith (1912-1975)

Lisbon, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation | 14th and 15th November, 2022

Sintra, National Palace of Queluz | 16th November, 2022 (Social Programme)

This year marks the 110th anniversary of the birth of Robert C. Smith (1912-1975), the North American art historian who devoted much of his academic life to the study of Ibero-American art and culture of the 17th and 18th centuries. To mark this event the International Conference "Artistic Confluences in Ibero-American Culture. The world of Robert C. Smith (1912-1975)" was launched.

This congress aims to revisit the themes of Robert Smith's work, expanding its dimension in an interdisciplinary and contemporary context. His published and unpublished work currently constitutes a scientifically relevant legacy for the research that is developed around the chosen theme. Reflecting on and problematizing his legacy, inserting it in the broader field of Iberoamerican cultural studies, recovering minor themes and objects in the light of the new art historiography and projecting new paths for its study and dissemination are the broad objectives of this international event.

Keynote Speakers:

Josiah Blackmore | Harvard University

António Filipe Pimentel | Director of the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum

Registrations open until 15th October, 2022

(<https://congresso-robertsmith.weebly.com/registration.html>)

Call for papers:

(<https://congresso-robertsmith.weebly.com/call-for-papers.html>)

Robert Chester Smith, an American art historian, dedicated most of his academic life to studying architecture and Decorative Arts from the Baroque and late Baroque in Ibero-America, namely Brazil and Portugal. Smith graduated from Harvard University in 1936 and was part of a pioneering group in academia devoted to Latin American art and culture.

Learned societies devoted to Hispanic studies like the Hispanic Society of America, founded in 1904 by the scholar and collector Archer Milton Huntington (1870-1955), began to thrive in the early 20th century. The Hispanic Society was the first to amass a collection of prints, rare books, maps, photographs, paintings, and decorative art objects. The curiosity embedded in the spirits of these first collectors and scholars stemmed from the re-discovery of a nearby world such as Latin American countries that remained partly alien to their cultural codes.

The role of Robert Smith as vice-director of the Hispanic Division at the Library of Congress in Washington helped to sanction his research and the publishing of his Ibero-American studies in Portugal, Brazil and elsewhere in various media, from local newspapers to scientific journals and books. His studies, dedicated to Baroque art in Portugal and colonial Brazil, were mainly sponsored by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation through scholarships and other fellowships. His gratitude is mirrored in his will by bequeathing all of his professional documents to this Portuguese cultural institution.

This congress aims to consider and re-contextualize the world and the working methods of Robert Smith, anchored in photographic campaigns of objects, archival and bibliographical research, the comparative approach and methodologies in social sciences, the importance of research field trips and the establishment of academic networks. How can we, with new tools at our reach, compare and connect personal research experiences, rethink and reassess his legacy, put in value and think about the challenges that this field of studies still holds today?

To better foster a methodological and interdisciplinary dialogue, possible topics include but are not limited to:

- The legacy of Robert C. Smith: challenges for future research
- Political and religious agendas: desire, production, and consumption of cultural goods
- Cultural encounters in the Ibero-American arts: continuities and disruptions
- Beyond nationhood: transnationality as cultural and social practice
- The afterlife of objects: new usages and resignifications
- Rethinking the archive: new readings and interpretations of old documents
- In the absence of the archive: anonymous objects of art and new avenues of research
- Diaspora: impacts in production, consumption and meaning of art objects
- Art and propaganda in the Portuguese (1936-1975) and Brazilian (1937-1945) Estados Novos: the role of the media
- Visual and material heritage: interdisciplinary approaches to the knowledge and management of cultural goods
- Virtual reconstruction, or recreation of lost or destroyed objects: from photogrammetry to 3D scanning
- Historiographies and Luso Tropicalism

We welcome proposals for 20-minute presentations in English, Portuguese or Spanish which should include:

- Title of the proposal;
- Applicant's identification (name, institutional affiliation, country and email);
- Abstract (up to 300 words);
- Short curriculum vitae (up to 200 words).

Proposals must be sent in Word format (.docx) by email to congresso.robertsmith@gmail.com
NEW DEADLINE: 15th July 2022

A selection of papers will be published in a peer reviewed digital journal.

See all the information here: <https://congresso-robertsmith.weebly.com/>

Organization:

Sílvia Ferreira (IHA/NOVA FCSH)

Filomena Serra (IHC/NOVA FCSH)

Dalton Sala (independent researcher)

Reference:

CFP: The world of Robert C. Smith (Lisbon/Sintra, 14-16 Nov 22). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 14, 2022 (accessed Jun 4, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/36397>>.