

Workshop at AHAA 2022 (Arkansas, 6–8 Oct 22)

Northwest Arkansas, Oct 6–08, 2022

Deadline: Jun 3, 2022

Robert Gordon-Fogelson, University of Southern California

Seventh Biennial Symposium of the Association of Historians of American Art (AHAA)

[1] Pattern-Thinking: Object, Theory, Method

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Date: May 17, 2022

Deadline: June 3, 2022

Workshop chairs: Robert Gordon-Fogelson and Julia Silverman.

The “pattern” is a multifaceted concept. As objects, patterns like stencils, blueprints, prototypes, and manuals graph how visual information moves between cultures, studios, hands, or media. As theories, patterns serve as critical frameworks for conceptualizing visual, historical, or social relations. They have informed artistic practices ranging from Hopi-Tewa potter Nampeyo’s self-conscious reuse of ancient motifs to American adoptions of “systems of world ornament” to the Pattern and Decoration movement of the 1970s and 1980s. As method, pattern-thinking is evident in the work of the discipline’s founding figures—such as Heinrich Wölfflin and Aby Warburg, who used formal analysis to discern collective patterns of vision, perception, and experience—as well as in more recent data-driven approaches to art history that seek to uncover scales of information allegedly unobservable at the level of form, object, archive, or case study.

This workshop examines the “pattern” as a concept for interrogating the mobility of images and ideas in the arts of the Americas. Unfinished and expansive by nature, patterns offer critical insight into how ideas and images travel in ways that elude observation in finished objects. Thinking with and about patterns allows us to broach a host of topics critical to current debates in American art history, such as: the protection or exploitation of intellectual property and cultural heritage; the gendered nature of artistic processes; or systems of institutionalized power that regulate access to the arts. More broadly, this workshop seeks to foster meaningful connections across patterns as object, theory, and method: how might patterns’ material forms yield insight for art historical methods and vice versa?

This workshop will commence with a series of preselected five-minute presentations on objects or methods pertinent to the workshop theme before opening to broader discussion. We invite those interested in presenting to apply by submitting a 150-word proposal and two-page CV to: gordonfo@usc.edu and juliasilverman@g.harvard.edu. Selected participants will be notified by June 10 and will be eligible to apply to AHAA for a travel stipend.

The Seventh Biennial Symposium of the Association of Historians of American Art will be held October 6-8, 2022 in Northwest Arkansas, jointly hosted by Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville and The School of Art at The University of Arkansas in Fayetteville.

<https://www.ahaaonline.org/page/2022SymposiumCFP>

Reference:

CFP: Workshop at AHAA 2022 (Arkansas, 6-8 Oct 22). In: ArtHist.net, May 19, 2022 (accessed Dec 17, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/36729>>.