

Visual Arts and Architecture in Post-imperial Contexts (Prague, 18–20 May 23)

Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague, Czech Republic, May 18–20, 2023

Deadline: Nov 25, 2022

Matthew Rampley

Unfinished Empire? Visual Arts and Architecture in Post-imperial Contexts, 1900 - 2022.

Keynote Speakers:

Prof. Zeynep Çelik, Columbia University

Prof. Tapati Guha-Thakurta, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata

The call to decolonize the visual arts rests on the notion that empires, even after they have fallen, continue to shape artistic values, concepts and practices. It argues that even when post-independence states declared their liberation from their former rulers, imperial and colonial regimes cast a long shadow it has proven difficult to evade.

The general contours of this argument are well known, but while broad critical explanations of hegemony, neo-colonial domination and deneocolonizing are established, there have been fewer focused individual historical studies of how and why imperial and colonial ideologies and attitudes persisted, even among the colonised.

The dismantling of, for example, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, British rule in Africa and India, imperial Japan, Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union, may have had enormous political consequences, but there were many patterns of continuity of practice, values and ideas. Many individual artists and architects, cultural institutions and creative networks in post-independence states may have sought to establish new post-colonial ideas and practices, but many others perpetuated the old.

Analysis of this phenomenon is the theme of this conference, which seeks to examine the post-imperial ambivalences faced and negotiated by individual and groups of artists and architects, artistic organisations and institutions, even entire municipal, regional and national governments. The conference invites proposals for papers analysing examples and case studies analysing the difficulties encountered in post-imperial states and situations. Specific questions that might be addressed include, for example:

- To what extent did post-independence states consciously foster and develop cultural and artistic policies designed to dismantle the legacy of the past? How far did they achieve their goals? Is it possible to discern the reasons for success / failure?
- In what ways, if at all, did artistic and cultural relations between post-independence states and

former imperial powers change in the light of new circumstances?

- How did institutions (eg. museums and galleries, art schools and academies, art associations) that were a product of the old imperial order respond to new post-imperial political conditions?
- To what extent were new national imperatives advanced by individual artists, architects and designers? What forms did they take?
- How widespread was the sense of loss and nostalgia at the fall of the old imperial order? What forms did it take, and what were the grounds for such mourning?
- Given the importance of decolonising in the present, are there also lessons to be learnt from the failed efforts of the past?

Proposals are invited of 200-300 words for a presentation of 25-30 minutes in length, accompanied by a brief speaker CV. They should be submitted to: craace@muni.cz.

Deadline for submissions: 25 November 2022.

Notification of acceptance of proposals will be issued on 9 December 2022.

This conference is the final event of the European Research Council-funded Advanced Grant project Continuity / Rupture: Art and Architecture in Central Europe, 1918-1939 (<https://craace.com>).

Reference:

CFP: Visual Arts and Architecture in Post-imperial Contexts (Prague, 18-20 May 23). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 24, 2022 (accessed Apr 15, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/37491>>.