

Decentering art and design history (Nicosia, 15–17 Jun 23)

Nicosia, Cyprus, Jun 15–17, 2023

Deadline: Jan 15, 2023

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Decentering art and design history: research, practice, education

15 – 17 June 2023, University of Nicosia, Cyprus

This conference considers the development of art and design history in the Mediterranean region during the twentieth century. It focuses on how colonialism, postcolonialism, conflicting nationalist ideologies and western discourses of modernity have shaped a) the development of historiography, b) the methodological and interpretative approaches, including artistic and curatorial, through which history has been written and c) the narrative forms that have been adopted for its articulation.

Taking into account the example of Cyprus where we are situated, we are interested in how art and design historical knowledge is produced in places that experienced colonialism or acted as colonial powers and where cultural identities were shaped through the perspective of the West. Our main question concentrates on whether we can re-imagine the ways of writing the history of art and design in places ridden by conflicts and cultural clashes, such as the Eastern Mediterranean. How can we adopt a critical approach to Eurocentric thought? Is it even possible to displace the West from its privileged centrality, interrogate its validating institutions and write through a lens where local and inherent characteristics of narrating the history of art and design are appreciated?

We welcome papers on the following, by no means exhaustive, list of questions:

What challenges do we face when writing the history of art and design at a local or regional level?

What does it mean to write art and design history in countries where the disciplines have not yet been institutionalized?

What are the dominant forms and discourses through which knowledge about art and design history is expressed and enacted in ongoing research, publications, and exhibitions?

What are the methodologies and tools that will enable us to reveal, criticize and change the existing ideological frameworks of writing art and design history?

What kind of art and design history is produced in countries where archival resources are scarce and dispersed? What are the challenges researchers face when they engage with colonial archives?

How have different colonial legacies shaped teaching art and design history as well as other related disciplines such as architecture (i.e., curricula, textbooks, other teaching resources)?

How have colonial and postcolonial modernities shaped local art and design practices and the writing of their history?

To what extent the discourses on art and design were nationally framed? How did they underpin the shaping of ethno-national identities social tensions, divisive politics and even conflict?

Can art and design help produce new archives and histories based on multiple epicenters of power instead of privileging one-sided or hegemonic narratives?

How have art and design practices framed colonial/postcolonial transformations on the built environment and the landscape?

The Conference is organised by the Art and Design Research Lab of the Department of Design and Multimedia, University of Nicosia. The working language of the conference is English. We welcome proposals for papers and panels of three papers from academics, researchers, practitioners, and postgraduate students. Please submit your abstract (max 300 words) and a short bio by the 15th of January 2023.

All submissions will be double blind peer-reviewed by the conference scientific committee. Following the conference, a proposal to publish selected papers in an edited volume or special issue will be submitted.

Reference:

CFP: Decentering art and design history (Nicosia, 15-17 Jun 23). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 9, 2022 (accessed Apr 5, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/37615>>.