

## 4 Sessions at AAH 2023 (London, 12–14 Apr 23)

University College London, Apr 12–14, 2023

Deadline: Nov 4, 2022

ArtHist.net Redaktion

Association for Art History (AAH) 2023 Annual Conference.

[1] Heading Uptown: Art and Activism in the Bronx.

[2] Matter Matters. The Aesthetics and Politics of Soil.

[3] Romantic Legacies in the Twentieth Century.

[4] Watery Circulations in the Early Modern World.

For the conference details, please visit:  
<https://forarthistory.org.uk/conference/2023-annual-conference/>

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[1] Heading Uptown: Art and Activism in the Bronx

From: Tom Day, tom.day@courtauld.ac.uk

Date: 04 Oct, 2022

Heading Uptown: Art and Activism in the Bronx

Unlike the southern portion of its sister borough to the south (Downtown Manhattan), the art and cultural production both created in and associated with New York City's northern most municipality has gone largely unremarked upon in scholarly discourse. While there have been some curatorial and recent cultural histories, there remains scant academic commentary on the Bronx as a vital arena of cultural production, especially as it relates to activism.

Like the much more well-established discourse on the Downtown scene of Lower Manhattan, to study the intersection of art history and activism of the Bronx is to explode disciplinary and artistic categories: Sculpture, painting, journalistic and art photography, film and video making, street art and performance all collide in this fecund context. Akin to their Downtown compatriots, the culture makers and activists of the Bronx have demonstrated a consistent commitment to confronting causes that remain ever-present in New York City and other urban spaces including police brutality; housing and health inequity; and the legacies and contemporary realities of racial capitalism and the American imperial project. This call invites participants to think through and examine the histories and currents of art and activism in the Bronx, from the racist re-housing and redlining programmes brought on through urban development in the 1960s and the arson-for-profit scandals that gutted the area in the 1970s, to the brutal police killing of Amadou Diallo in 1999 and the borough's on-going battle with an ever-encroaching neoliberal gentrification today. The panel seeks speakers to help explore the art and visual cultures of activism in this borough; its radical histories and the lessons it may continue to teach us.

Please submit a title and an abstract of no more than 250 words for your proposed paper, as well as your name and institutional affiliation to: Tom Day, The Courtauld Institute of Art, tom.day@courtauld.ac.uk

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[2] Matter Matters. The Aesthetics and Politics of Soil

From: Cassandra Nakas, nakas@leuphana.de

Date: 04 Oct, 2022

Soil constitutes the world we live from and in. It is the foundation of all life, provides food and fuel, shapes landscapes and cities. It is an “inscribed body” and “scarred terrain” (Savvy Contemporary 2019), visualizes time and teaches us about the Earth’s past. According to some anthropogenic myths, mankind was formed from soil; ‘humus’ shares its linguistic roots with ‘human’, and eventually all life becomes soil. Yet its status is precarious: According to the Global Land Outlook report, up to 40% of all soils are degraded: washed away, sealed, poisoned, salinated, contaminated, parched, depleted, over-fertilized (Sheikh and Gray 2018). Neo-extractivism poses a further threat to the integrity of soil, engendering our epoch’s redefinition as ‘Plantationocene’ (Haraway 2015): Soil becomes a crime scene, an object of colonial exploitation and environmental violence (Demos 2020).

Today, artists reflect upon the precarious status of soil and its aesthetic and political implications. They tackle political and environmental, mythological-narrative and personal issues, acknowledging both soil’s sculptural and symbolic potentials. They build and sculpt, map and display, metabolize and listen to soil, collect and create fertile soils, narrate their stories and explore their sensual qualities.

We invite paper proposals from different disciplines that discuss the materiality, aesthetics, politics and agency of soil in art and the discourses, cultures and metaphors surrounding it. We welcome contributions that think with and through soil to assess the histories and semiotics of sedimentation, composting, stratigraphy and neo-extractivism, reflecting upon issues of agropolitics, land rights, land degradation, and the geological imaginary.

Please submit a title and abstract of no more than 250 words for your proposed paper, as well as your name and institutional affiliation (if any) to:

Jessica Ullrich, ullrichj@kunstakademie-muenster.de

and

Kassandra Nakas, nakas@leuphana.de

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[3] Romantic Legacies in the Twentieth Century

From: Will Atkin, william.atkin@nottingham.ac.uk

Date: 05 Oct, 2022

Against a backdrop of rapid industrialisation, the Romantic movement that emerged at the turn of the nineteenth-century upheld the fantastical possibilities of the imagination against the hard-edged reason of scientific empiricism, decried the wanton destruction of the natural world, and lamented the all-consuming cycles of labour set in motion under industrial capitalism. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Romanticism’s principles, ideals, and concepts were still keenly felt in the cultural sphere and were proving enduringly relevant for post-industrial society. Far from expressing a nostalgic yearning for a lost past, Romanticism was adopted as a vital, world-building pool of ideas in which Nature and human nature ceased to be perceived as contradictions, exerting a profound influence on the artistic expression of 20th

century experience.

The panel seeks to explore the diverse ways in which Romanticism influenced twentieth-century artists. Themes that would be of particular relevance to this discussion include but are not limited to: artists' recourse to Romanticism as a font of mythological and allegorical narratives; appropriations of Romanticism as the cultural substrate of national and political identities; and conceptions of Romanticism as a basis for ecological activism. Papers might explore the critical conceptual value of Romanticism as it was variously related to childhood, adventure, estrangement, love, the dream, subjectivity, and the sanctity and creative power of nature; themes and phenomena that all acquired new meaning and significance in the 1900s.

Please submit your title, abstract of no more than 250 words, name and institutional affiliation to the session convenors by 4th November:

Dr Will Atkin, University of Nottingham (william.atkin@nottingham.ac.uk)

Elina Gudmundsson, The Courtauld Institute of Art (elina.gudmundsson@courtauld.ac.uk)

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[4] Watery Circulations in the Early Modern World

From: Elsje van Kessel, ejmvk@st-andrews.ac.uk

Date: 06 Oct, 2022

This session explores how early modern water enabled and resisted the circulation of objects, makers, and ideas. Recent work across the humanities has highlighted the role of water and, in particular, the sea in history. So-called blue humanities are foregrounding the world's water in and of itself, not as an alleged void opposed to dry, inhabited land, but as spaces with their own qualities and potentialities essential to human history. Art and architectural historians are beginning to explore the material side of aquatic worlds and the critical implications of thinking in terms of wet and dry. Work about water offers the possibility to look beyond established racist and speciesist hierarchies towards more ecological and socially just practices. We are inviting papers focused on the early modern period that engage with water through case studies and/or theoretical analysis. Potential topics include the circulation of knowledge, objects, and makers, with case studies that can focus on infrastructures (aqueducts, fountains, ports), buildings (and building technologies), ships, wrecks, visual representation of sea voyages, objects created or modified by the water or its animal inhabitants, as well as speculative approaches to water and wetness. We are explicitly interested in contributions from a variety of geographies, especially from beyond Europe.

Full CFP and further information: <https://forarthistory.org.uk/conference/2023-annual-conference/>

Abstract submission deadline: 4 November

Please submit your abstract directly with the session convenor, Dr Elsje van Kessel at [ejmvk@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:ejmvk@st-andrews.ac.uk).

Reference:

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