Revising art stories□in search of potential changes□□□(Lisbon, 6–7 Dec 23)

Lisbon, Dec 6–07, 2023
Deadline: Jul 10, 2023

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+++ PLEASE NOTE: The deadline for sending proposals for individual and collaborative contributions has been extended to 10th July 2023. +++

The lost-and-found: revising art stories□in search of potential changes.

International Symposium.

This is a call for contributions for an International Symposium envisaged as a series of three events in three locations: Lisbon, Warsaw, Riga.

The first event will take place at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal, December 6-7, 2023. The following events (call for contributions will be published over the course of 2023) will take place in Warsaw, March 2024, and in Riga June 2024.

It is envisaged that selected contributions from the symposium will be developed into either an edited book or a special issue of a peer-reviewed journal.

HERE WE INVITE TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS FOR THE FIRST EVENT IN LISBON.

THEME
I lost a few goddesses while moving south to north,□
and also some gods while moving east to west.□
I let several stars go out for good, they can't be traced.□
An island or two sank on me, they're lost at sea.□
I'm not even sure exactly where I left my claws,□
who's got my fur coat, who's living in my shell.□
My siblings died the day I left for dry land□
and only one small bone recalls that anniversary in me.□
I've shed my skin, squandered vertebrae and legs,□
taken leave of my senses time and again.□
I've long since closed my third eye to all that,□
washed my fins of it and shrugged my branches.□
Gone, lost, scattered to the four winds. It still surprises me□
how little now remains, one first person sing, temporarily□
declined in human form, just now making such a fuss□

about a blue umbrella left yesterday on a bus.

Wisława Szymborska A Speech at the Lost-And-Found (1972)
(from Wisława Szymborska Poems New and Collected (1998) trans. Stanisław Barańczak and Clare Cavanagh, Harcourt Brace International)
Losing things, or realising their lack, usually causes a feeling of deep disorientation, distress, helplessness or anger. These feelings are felt across the loss of objects, identities, ideas, sense, language, bonds, and power. Similar emotions are revealed through the verses of A Speech at the Lost-And-Found (1972) by 1996 Literature Nobel Lauriat, Wisława Szymborska. The Polish poet grieves for the loss of community with/in the world. When disrupted and confused worldly relationships accompany (mis)understandings of works of art as treasures, carefully evaluated and classified by experts but isolated from everyday life. Perhaps this moment of loss and confusion offers us a chance to uncover a new art-storical paradigm that focuses on building intra-relational ecologies founded on care, attentiveness and respect. We are hopeful that losing that to which we have become accustomed may allow us attend to abandoned possibilities and missed chances, and enable us to unlearn hierarchical and violent ways of building knowledge, including art as a vehicle of sustaining power structures.
In this symposium, we propose to critically engage with the noticeable shift in understanding the paradigm of art. This departs from ‘interpreting’ and ‘decoding’, towards a physical, affective and material experiencing within diverse contexts and communities.
Objects approached from a new contemporary perspective may be revealed as lost, but at the same time, also (re)found, allowing for the negotiation potentials of their uses, understandings and performativity. Attending to relations and things that were once discarded as unworthy enables us to unlearn, and re-define existing concepts of identity relationships (gender, class, ethnic, spiritual, familial) and unearth forgotten rituals, languages and stories (her-stories, it-stories, their-stories). We question the circumstances and contexts, and the presence and performativity of objects (considered as having artistic qualities) within spaces to reveal neglected, disregarded, ignored or lost potentials.
Szymborska’s poem encourages us to leave the itineraries to which we have become accustomed and to distance ourselves from a priori discourses - technocratic thinking and bureaucratic controls - that have maintained accepted patterns of power and control. We are not interested in ‘speak back’ narratives, instead everything that has been found or recovered has been subjected to transformations, hybridisations, mutations and disintegration.

Imagined as a series of three events in three locations in order to emphasise the importance of local socio-cultural and political contexts, we will consider the practical and beneficial role of art objects and the space(s) they create for and towards their users. The arts’ ability to provoke curiosity, wonder, joy and pleasure activates attentiveness, respect and gratitude. We will explore the diverse and varied existence of art objects, their manifestations and status, and interrogate the space of art and the materiality it offers with regard to its potential to foster and support empathy, responsibility and response-ability towards others and care for and about a better communal life.
We hope the discussions and dialogues during the events will be attentive to the connections and relations constituted through and alongside art (especially in collectives but particularly in women’s collectives)* but also of those marginalised and/or peripheral subjects, including the non-hu-

man.

Each location navigates the constellation of issues explored through interventions that challenge traditional conference or symposium formats.

Within the above framework concerning a paradigm shift, in Lisbon we focus on artistic, curatorial, institutional, academic practices and artistic research that engage with art objects, art works, collectives and exhibitions that respond to three thematic constellations based on Szymborska's poem:
1st thematic constellation: STARS and GODDESSES
 Alternative ways of thinking and building knowledge (including, but not limited to assemblage and/ or tentacular thinking; practices of unlearning and undoing; epistemologies of ignorance, creative unknowing, building knowledges anew; non-anthroponormative languages and non-human approaches; decentering his-storical framings towards her-stories, it-stories, their-stories and other-stories;
 The role of spirituality and faiths in the context of decolonisation and endogenic concepts of progression (change);
 The role of materiality and corporeality in imagining new methodologies.

PROPOSALS

We invite proposals for the first event in Lisbon.

We seek individual or collaborative contributions and for creative panels, to imagine alternative presentation formats and prioritise dialogue, object-based encounters and interventions that occur outside of the institution. These may include, but are not limited to, walkshops and strolls (itineraries proposed by participants should reflect on the issues mobilised by their contributions); gift giving and/ or sharing. We are happy to discuss and support any creative ideas prior to proposal submissions.

We encourage activities that are dialogical and collaborative, responding not only to the above themes, but also to those embedded within local contexts or the specific urban spaces of Lisbon, Riga and Warsaw.

Contributions must be on material that has not already been published. A prospective presenter must also be willing to develop the proposed contribution into either a book chapter or journal article, should it be selected for inclusion in a publication. Contributions must be in English.
Please submit your proposal with 'The-Lost-and-Found' in the subject line, and send it to lostandfoundlisbon@gmail.com.
The deadline for sending proposals for creative panels is 31st March 2023.
The deadline for sending proposals for individual or collaborative contributions is 15th June 2023.
Please submit a single document with the following information:
1. a title for your contribution
2. an abstract up to 300 words in length; please specify the type of contribution (for example, individual or collaborative presentation, panel, object-based workshop, walkshop, stroll, gift giving and/ or sharing)
3. a short biography, including your current institutional affiliation (up to 150 words)

Applicants will be notified of decisions by mid April 2023 (creative panels) and the end of June 2023 (individual or collaborative contributions).

ORGANISERS
The Symposium is organised collaboratively between University of Wrocław (Poland), Polish Institute of World Art Studies, Instituto de História da Arte - NOVA University Lisbon (Portugal) and Art Academy of Latvia in Riga (Latvia). The general concept of this event was conceived within the framework of the project 'Residua of pre-modern relations with art in selected contemporary convents in Lesser Poland and Lower Silesia' financed by the National Centre of Science (nr 2021/41/B/HS2/03148).
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Sources:
https://institutodehistoriadaarte.com/2023/02/06/call-for-proposals-the-lost-and-found-symposium/
https://uwr.edu.pl/en/call-for-proposals-symposium-on-art-stories/

Reference:
CFP: Revising art stories in search of potential changes (Lisbon, 6-7 Dec 23). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 8, 2023 (accessed Nov 9, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/38513>.