

## Belatedness and U.S. Exhibitions in Transnational Contexts (online, 24 Feb 23)

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Emily Burns

"Belatedness and U.S. Exhibitions in Transnational Contexts".

The second event of the "Belatedness and North American Art" series is sponsored by the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, and will be taking place online on Friday 24th, 2023 (6 PM BST, 1 PM EST, 12 PM CST).

The series interrogates: How has belatedness – framed through constructs of being behind, delayed, and not yet arrived – shaped the arts and the historiography of the arts of North America? This series considers how North American art has been both historically denigrated and celebrated through ironically longstanding charges that parts of the continent were young, without history, and without tradition compared with European civilizations. From where did this myth arise, and what are its contours, limitations, and implications? How and in what contexts did this liability become an asset in ways that interweave with fluid ideas of national identity and modernity? How did this assertion shape aesthetic practices? How did these ideas resonate differently related to the cultures of the United States, Canada, Mexico, Indigenous nations, and the Caribbean, as well as in other modern transnational contexts? How has the idea of belatedness shaped the field of North American art history, and the inclusions and exclusions of its canon, within art history's attention to narratives of aesthetic progress? Where is it ruptured or challenged? How does it align with or depart from wider discussions of temporalities and the history of art? This set of events proposes to identify and to critique the myths around newness that have constructed a sense of American cultural belatedness from various angles by exploring the impacts the myths have made on art and cultural production, display, criticism, and art historiography.

Key Questions:

- how has the display of U.S. art in transnational contexts built or rejected ideas of American culture as belated?
- how do exhibitions outside the United States construct cultural arguments, from John Singleton Copley and Benjamin West in eighteenth-century London to interwar and post-World War II exhibitions on the history of U.S. art?
- how did Copley's transnational performance shape attempts by John Trumbull and Thomas Sully to circulate exhibitions of art related to U.S. revolutionary history?
- how did the international circulation of paintings in exhibitions like "Three Centuries of American Art" (1938), "Advancing American Art" (1946-57), "The New American Painting" (1958-59), and the second documenta in 1959 capitalize on ambiguous claims of art's 'coming of age' in these decades?
- what is the role of art criticism in reinforcing ever dynamic ideas of culture?

PROGRAMME (approximate schedule)

6 PM BST: Welcome

6:10 PM: Emily Ballew Neff, Minding the Gap: John Singleton Copley's Provincialism, Belatedness, and the Paradox of Colonial Self-Fashioning

6:28 PM: Tanya Pohrt, Timing and History in Trumbull and Sully's Early American Single Painting Exhibitions

6:46 PM: Caroline Riley, American Cultural 'Innocence' as Political Tool in 1930s France

7:04 PM: discussion led by Emily Burns

The second half will be moderated by Angela Miller, Washington University in St. Louis

7:17 PM: Mark A. White, The Long Struggle: Belatedness and International Exhibitions of American Art, 1946-1959

7:36 PM: Joshua Cohen, Global Modernism, US Imperialism, and the Paradoxes of Decolonization

7:54 PM: Matthew Holman, 'Documenta? An American assault on Europe!' Gesture Painting and the Failures of Transatlanticism at documenta II (1959)

8:12 PM: discussion led by Angela Miller

8:25 PM: wrap-up

For registration and for further information such as speaker abstracts and bios, please visit:

<https://courtauld.ac.uk/whats-on/belatedness-and-u-s-exhibitions-in-transnational-contexts/>

Reference:

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