Rethinking Art Historical Narratives and Canons (Helsinki, 9-10 Nov 23)

University of Helsinki & Ateneum Art Museum, Nov 9–10, 2023
Deadline: May 1, 2023

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Conference organised by the Society for Art History in Finland and the Faculty of Arts at the University of Helsinki.

In the last decades established art historical canons and narratives have increasingly been challenged. Intersectionality, decolonisation, transnational approaches, and the introduction of global art history are only a few examples of the modes of thinking that have gradually emerged from the margins to mainstream art history.

Conventional ways of constructing periodisations and genres based on notions of national specificity and the idea of progress have become highly questionable in the context of recent political, societal, and cultural developments. The urgency of generating new approaches and conceptual and methodological tools has become indisputable. Global and transnational perspectives have not only questioned the self-evidence of national canons, but also that of narratives that have been considered universal, such as the teleological progression of art towards modernism. Yet, notions like nationalism and progress remain central and extremely powerful aspects in contemporary political culture. Hence, the greatest challenge presented to art historical scholarship in these turbulent times is to find ways of engaging with these issues in ways that are sensitive, productive, and societally relevant.

We invite papers that approach this topic from various historical and contemporary perspective. For instance:

- The role of museums, archives, and educational institutions in producing and reproducing narratives
- Queer and/or gender perspectives in canon formation
- Global/postcolonial perspectives in canon formation
- Marginalisation and canon formation: how and why certain phenomena gets included and others remain in the margins
- Rethinking nationalism and transnationalism in the formation art historical narratives: how do transnational perspectives challenge national art history?
- The role of cultural memory and forgetting in art historical narratives
- The role of art historical canons in the networks of cultural memory and forgetting
- The meaning of national canons in a global world
- The role of art historical scholarship in shaping and challenging nationalist narratives

Please send your abstract (max 500 words) to rahncconference2023@gmail.com by 1 May 2023. The conference's working languages are Finnish and English.

https://blogs.helsinki.fi/rethinkingconference2023/

Reference:
CFP: Rethinking Art Historical Narratives and Canons (Helsinki, 9-10 Nov 23). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 28, 2023 (accessed Nov 16, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/38658>.