

Ornament. ICDAD Annual Conference (Lisbon, 10–12 Oct 23)

Lisbon, Palácio Nacional da Ajuda, Oct 10–12, 2023

Deadline: May 15, 2023

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Annual Conference of the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Decorative Arts and Design (ICOM-ICDAD)

“Ornament is not only produced by criminals; it itself commits a crime,” So said architect and designer Adolf Loos in his 1910 lecture-turned-essay “Ornament and Crime,” where he described the effort in designing and creating ornaments as superfluous and wasteful and helped to set the stage for the minimalist, stripped-down forms that would shape modern architecture and design for much of the twentieth century. More than fifty years later, postmodern designers rejected the strict functionalism of modern design, with Robert Venturi declaring, “more is more, less is a bore,” and Ettore Sottsass poetically describing decoration as “a state of mind, an unusual perception, a ritual whisper.”

The debate over ornament—what is its purpose, what should it look like, how should it be applied, and is it even necessary at all—chronologically and geographically transcends any of these figures and is in fact as old as the field of decorative arts itself. Skilled craftspeople have been producing ornament-laden decorative arts for more than a millennia. Throughout the world, cultures have developed complex relationships to ornament, making it an ideal topic for ICDAD’s 2023 annual meeting.

This year’s ICDAD conference invites papers that consider the many dimensions of ornament and its multiple roles in decorative arts and design. For instance, what is its role today? How have relationships to decoration evolved over periods of time? What are its social and political functions? Does ornament enhance or obscure meaning and use? How do different cultures address ornament and decoration, and where have they served as a connector between communities? How does decoration function in global art history, and how might the approaches taken by artists and makers in non-western countries illuminate alternative relationships to ornament?

Lisbon is an interesting site for this productive dialogue; a city marked by its centuries-old tradition of decorative tile as well as gilded and polychrome wood carving. Lisbon is also the home of present-day designers rethinking associations to material and aesthetics. The ICDAD meeting in Lisbon will take full advantage of this fertile ground, visiting significant historical sites and museums throughout the city and the surroundings while engaging with contemporary collections and makers.

The after conference tour shall be to Coimbra and Porto, in the north of Portugal, on 13 and 14 October.

Send an abstract of 250–300 words, including a short CV to: icdad.lisbon23@gmail.com.

Proposals must be written in English, and participants will also be expected to give their presentations in English. Presentations should be 15 minutes in length and include a visual presentation component (Powerpoint, Google Slides, etc.). Participants will also have the opportunity to publish their papers in the ICDAD conference publication.

Presentators will be expected to cover their own registration, but travel grants for young ICOM members are available. More information about travel grants will be released shortly.

Please note: ICDAD welcomes abstracts from museum professionals worldwide, members and non-members. However, all participants must be individual members or representatives of institutional members of ICDAD at the time of the conference.

Find more information about how to become a member of ICOM and ICDAD here: <https://icom.museum/en/get-involved/>. Please check with your national committee if you are eligible to become an ICOM member.

Submission deadline: 15 May 2023 to icdad.lisbon23@gmail.com

Notification of acceptance: 30 June 2023

Reference:

CFP: Ornament. ICDAD Annual Conference (Lisbon, 10-12 Oct 23). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 2, 2023 (accessed Apr 19, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/38953>>.