The Backstage View (Poznan, 26-27 Oct 23)

Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań, Collegium Maius, Salon Mickiewicza, ul. Fredy 10, Poznań, Oct 26–27, 2023

Camilla Murgia and Michał Mencfel

The Backstage View: a Mundane History of Collecting (1600-1918).

After more than half a century of intense scientific exploration, resulting in hundreds of in-depth studies, the history of collections has established itself as one of the privileged fields of research in humanities. Various issues such as the provenance of objects in collections; ways in which these objects have been ordered, arranged, and displayed; rooms and buildings in which they have been kept and exhibited; narratives beyond objects and collections; biographies of collectors; social practices connected with collections, etc. have been versatilely investigated. Consequently, collecting, fascinating in its own right, proved also to be a sensitive indicator of broad cultural and social phenomena connected with artistic, scientific, philosophical, societal, and political movements.

Indeed, recent research has shown how the art market has been crucial to the history of collections in specific cultural contexts that have undergone a series of exchanges and openings linking different economic elements and realities (Brill's Studies in the History of Collecting & Art Markets). Furthermore, particular attention has been paid to both the circulation of works of art from the perspective of collecting strategies (Art Markets, Agents and Collectors: Collecting Strategies in Europe and the United States 1550-1950, ed. by Adriana Turpin and Susan Bracken, 2021), and of provenances (Study of Collecting and Provenance & the Getty Provenance Index).

Collecting, however, also relies on a great number of less noble and less sophisticated but nevertheless indispensable practices. These include negotiating with artists and dealers, observing (or escaping) the formalities, paying (or avoiding paying) customs fees, transporting and securing the collectibles, restoring and framing the pieces of art, etc. The present call for contributions aims to invite proposals for papers focusing on this everyday – somewhat down-to-earth and mundane – side of collecting. What about this background, consisting of daily actions, practical skills, and made-to-measure resolutions, that contributes to the constitution of collections and the act of collecting itself? How does this meticulous, essential and somehow "invisible" infrastructure enable the purchase, conditioning, sale, and exchange of artwork?

This conference aims to explore the various aspects regarding the mundane site of the history of collecting. We intend to question the multitude of logistic, administrative, organisational, and managerial practices that contribute to the act of collecting and how they affect selling and buying artwork. We are interested in identifying and studying the elements that mark out the diverse and versatile apparatuses of collecting in specific cultural, social, and economic realities, both private

and public. Changes in issues, paradigms, and availability are at the heart of our study.

Thursday October 26, 2023
Adam Mickiewicz University, Collegium Maius - Salon Mickiewicza, ul. Fredy 10, Poznań

9:00 Registration
9:30 Welcoming note : Michał Mencfel (Adam Mickiewicz University) and Camilla Murgia (Université de Lausanne)

PANEL 1: References
10:00 Katharina Januschewski (Universität Paderborn)
Lasciapassare (and handle with drama): Selling Italian landscapes to the Russian Empire. Sylvester Shchedrin's Letters from Italy 1818-1830 as a Source for International Art Transport Logistics and Sales Strategies
10:25 Malena Rotter (Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Kassel)
"I am Gradually Acquiring the Necessary Material for a Gallery of Italian Pieces" - Landgrave William VIII of Hesse-Kassel (1682–1760) and his Italian Collection
10:50 Discussion
11:10 Coffee break

PANEL 2: Mundanity
11:30 Ulrike Müller (Antwerp University and Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium) and Davy Depelchin (Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium) Staging Privately-Owned Artworks. Private Collectors and the Exhibitions for Living Masters in Brussels (1830-1860)
11:55 Maria Chiara Scuderi (University of Leicester) Missionary Exhibitions as Mundane Sites for Private Collections: the Case of Dryad 'Handicrafts'
12:20 Discussion
12:40 Lunch Break

PANEL 3: Curating
14:15 Arianna Candeago (Ca' Foscari University Venice)
On the Art Market in late Eighteenth-Century Venice: Everyday Practices from the Letters of Collectors and Intermediaries
14:40 Michelle Huang (University of St Andrews)
Curatorial Considerations and Practices Behind the Acquisitions of the George Eumorfopoulos Collection of Chinese art by the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum
15:05 Discussion
15:20 Coffee Break

PANEL 4: Practices
15:40 Dorothee Haffner (Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft Berlin) Organising and Visualising Collections: Changing Principles and Functions
16:05 Laia Anguix-Vilches (Radboud University Nijmegen)
Women in the Backstage: Gender-Related Challenges in Institutional Collecting practices
16:30 Discussion
16:50 Closing Notes

Friday October 27, 2023
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9:30 Welcoming note
Michał Mencfel (Adam Mickiewicz University) and Camilla Murgia (Université de Lausanne)

9:45 Keynote Lecture
Erin Thompson (City University of New York)
Backstage, Viewed from the Archives: Researching Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property
10:45 Coffee break

PANEL 1: Trading & Cataloguing
11:00 Nadia Rizzo (Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa)
The Unfortunate vVcissitudes of Jean Gossaert's 'Malvagna' Triptych
11:25 Bénédicte Miyamoto (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle)
Auction Clerks and Paper Trails: the Bureaucracy of Collection Transfers in Eighteenth- Century Britain
11:50 Elizabeth Pergam (Society for the History of Collecting)
Trading Art History: Art Dealer Archives and Day-To-Day Business of Collecting
12:15 Discussion
12:45 Lunch

PANEL 2: Shaping Collections
14:30 Martyna Łukasiewicz (Adam Mickiewicz University)
Fortune and Vision. Art Market and the Emergence of Major Art Collections in Copenhagen, 1850-1900
14:55 Silvia Marin Barutcieff (University of Bucharest)
Collecting Art in Modern Romania. Social Circumstances and Economic Endeavors (1881-1918)
15:20 Discussion
15:40 Closing Notes & Coffee

Contact & organisation:
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Reference:
CONF: The Backstage View (Poznan, 26-27 Oct 23). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 18, 2023 (accessed Nov 17, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/40355>.