

Making Contac (St. Louis, 23–24 Feb 24)

Washington University in St.Louis, Feb 23–24, 2024

Deadline: Dec 1, 2023

Katie DiDomenico

The Department of Art History and Archaeology at Washington University in St. Louis is seeking papers for its 2024 Graduate Student Art History Symposium (GSAHS). The theme of the symposium is “Making Contact: Haptic, Temporal, Spatial, and Conceptual Connections” and the event will be held in-person on our campus in St. Louis on February 23-24, 2024.

Following border closures, public health interventions, and a shift to digital solutions to combat the spread of COVID-19, there is a desire to interact, move, and touch as a means to re-explore and reorient ourselves with the places, people, and objects with which we may have lost direct access. As artists and art historians, much of our work relies on the ability to make contact with museums and exhibitions, architectural and archaeological sites, archives and libraries, artists, scholars, and objects. As we emerge from a period of reduced and restricted engagement with the methods and objects of our study, the impact of contact on the production, circulation, and reception of art and artifacts is perhaps more present than ever. Not only are there recent resonances to this topic, but there is also a much longer history that can be explored in regard to “contact”—one that is messy, contested, and complex. This symposium examines the implications of contact, broadly conceived, allowing for the exploration of haptic, temporal, spatial, and conceptual forms of connection and exchange.

With keynote speaker: Dr. Elena FitzPatrick Sifford, Associate Professor of Art History and Director of Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Muhlenberg College

We invite current and recent graduate students in art history, archaeology, and related disciplines to submit abstracts for this symposium. Submissions may explore aspects of this theme as manifested in any medium, historical period, cultural, and geographical context.

Potential topics may include but are not limited to the following:

- Artistic networks and encounters
- Transnational and transcultural studies
- Hybridization, conflation, convergence, appropriation, and exchange of imagery, materials, and practices
- The mobility of people, materials, and objects
- Contact in colonial and imperial contexts
- Contact in border zones, frontiers, and liminal spaces
- The effects of migration on artists and artistic practice
- The (in)ability to travel and make contact

- Real, virtual/digital, and imagined travels through time and space
- The visual and material culture of travel (maps, atlases, travelogues, souvenirs)
- Museums, exhibitions, and archives as mediators of contact
- Archaeological field practices, excavation, and conservation as moments of contact
- Tactility and non-tactility: touch and its alternatives
- Haptic encounters with materials, objects, and artifacts
- The effects of time and physical contact on objects, their conservation, and their (non)existence
- Interdisciplinarity as a form of intellectual contact

To apply:

Submit a 350-word abstract and a CV in a single PDF file by Friday, December 1st, 2023 to Katie DiDomenico and Hoyon Mephokee at gsahs@wustl.edu. Paper presentations must not exceed 18 minutes in length and should be accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation. The symposium will be held entirely in-person at Washington University in St. Louis. Modest honoraria will be provided to student speakers to offset the cost of travel and accommodation.

Reference:

CFP: Making Contac (St. Louis, 23-24 Feb 24). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 19, 2023 (accessed Sep 16, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/40380>>.