

## 8th Congress of Czech Art Historians (Brno, 12–14 Sep 24)

Brno, Sep 12–14, 2024

Deadline: Feb 29, 2024

Hana Buddeus

The Endings (and Beginnings) of Times.

8th Congress of Czech Art Historians.

Call for papers

The Czech Association of Art Historians and the Department of Art History of the Masaryk University in Brno announce an open call for papers for the 8th Congress of Czech Art Historians, dedicated to the subject of The Endings (and Beginnings) of Times. The Congress is open to all colleagues working in art history of the region and related fields.

Language: Czech, Slovak, English

Abstract submission deadline: February 29, 2024

Please send proposals for papers (in English, Slovak or Czech), together with abstract (max. 1800 characters), title, the section for which the paper is intended, and author bio (max. 600 characters) to the following address: [uhs-sjezd-2024@googlegroups.com](mailto:uhs-sjezd-2024@googlegroups.com) by February 29, 2024. The final program will be drafted based on the proposals and interest in the various sections.

Titles and annotations of sections and their coordinators:

### 1. The End of Art History (Epizode 3)

Coordinator: Milena Bartlová, UMPRUM

Forty years ago, Hans Belting, as professor of art history in Munich, published an expanded text of his lecture that asked whether art history still has meaning and a future. He meant above all the disintegration of the authority of grand narratives under the pressure of postmodern thought and asked the question of what's left after them from the history of art. In 1995 he published a revision of the text without a question mark in the title.

As we come to the end of postmodernism, questions may arise over the basic sectoral paradigms that used to be hidden as self-evident terms and defining the field procedures that did not need to be discussed. It's time to ask questions again: what is the future of art history? What will be their basic concepts, subject matter and standard methods? What from tradition has worked and will continue to be necessary, what will change in new communication situations and how? What goals does art history set itself and how does it intend to achieve them?

In this section, we welcome contributions that in general, or perhaps preferably, using specific examples, will reflect the functionality of such categories as style and its change, artistic quality, historical distance, aesthetic and artistic function, etc. What is and should be the relationship between material analyses and formal and stylistic analyses in the future? How does art history want to situate itself in the spaces between the art market, theoretical speculation and historical narrative, including its political instrumentalizations?

## 2. Revisiting folk art: agency, change and emancipation

Coordinators: Marta Filipová – Julia Secklehner, Masaryk University Brno

Many modernists announced the end of folk art and confined it to the coffin of the museum of the pre-industrial age. Yet, some artists and craftspeople adopted modernity in order to update folk art in the name of class, gender and art emancipation. Challenging the perspective of folk art's lack of agency, we invite proposals for papers that engage with the following topics and questions both historically and in relation to contemporary issues:

- Folk art is often perceived as an element of national culture. How do regional and international aspects of folk culture come into play?
- Folk art has often been studied in relation to ethnography and heritage. How relevant is folk art to the project of modernity and the post-modern world?
- The producers of folk art have traditionally been women and marginalised people in society. How does the emancipation of folk art affect their position as artists or craftswomen?
- Folk art consistently adopted new technologies and materials upon its entrance into modernity. What role did they play in maintaining folk art's position in contemporary society?
- Many folk practices have been recently revived to respond to the environmental crisis. What potential does folk art hold as an avant-garde today, to rethink modes of production?

## 3. Digital Art History: Revolution or Tradition?

Coordinator: Jakub Stejskal, Masaryk University Brno

Various forms of 'deep' machine learning have been unavoidably permeating our ways of orienting in the world. This is the case also with the analysis or retrieval of visual data, which are means that find application also in art history (Wasielowski 2023; Stork 2023). Machine learning is, however, yet another, if significant, addition to the range of tools already used by digital art history, including various ways of generating 3D models or conducting statistical research into digitized collections' metadata. Paradoxically, these tools seem to have found use in more traditional modes of conducting art history. In what sense, then, does digitization transform the discipline?

This panel welcomes contributions devoted to reflections on the potential and limits of tools and procedures associated with digital art history. Welcome are interventions thematizing the very functioning of these means and methods as well as reflecting on their place in art historiography.

## 4. Through Learning Towards a New World. Education of Artists, Architects and Designers in Response to Social Change

Coordinators: Veronika Rollová – Johana Lomová, UMPRUM

Since the end of the 19th century, art education in its broadest sense has been institutionally involved in the debate about the form and meaning of artistic creation. In our panel we will be

interested in how both social and political demands have been reflected in the structure and course of artists' training, and how its forms and aims have changed in relation to visions of the future, or the rejection of old ways. Examples of questions we are looking to discuss might be: how did the training of artists accelerate the emancipation of women? What visions of the future did the Bauhaus model of education advocate for? What did art training look like during the promotion of socialist realism? What are the current alternatives to the master model? How can education respond to climate change and other related crises? How can we view these issues through the lens of art history?

We welcome papers dealing with all kinds of artistic production from the late 18th century to the present, case studies of specific situations, and more general reflections on the relationship between education and social change.

#### 5. The Beginnings and Endings: exhibition as a historical format

Coordinators: Markéta Jarošová, Catholic Theological Faculty, Charles University – Terezie Nekvindová, Academy of Fine Arts in Prague

The medium of the exhibition has been an important means of communication necessary for presenting art to the public since modernism. With the gradual rise of digitalization, the question arises whether the organization of “traditional” forms of exhibitions is losing its privileged position. We get to know art through the screen or reproduction rather than through confrontation with the original work. Have we reached a turning point in the case of exhibitions? What challenges, difficulties, and opportunities does the volatile digital era bring with online and virtual exhibitions, interactive displays, or the involvement of artificial intelligence in the world of exhibitions? Conversely, what was the entry of the medium of the exhibition “onto the public stage” in the 19th century, and how did it transform the perception of artworks at the time? This section focuses on the concept of exhibitions and curating in a broader timeline. We are interested in moments when the paradigm of modes of exhibition changed, both in terms of content, and exhibition design, through changes in art history and for social or political reasons. We also want to pursue the question of the form, nature, and meaning of exhibitions and curating in the future in the context of climate change, the problematics of decolonization, gender issues, and other contemporary challenges. We also welcome the presentation of the results of artistic research.

#### 6. Heritage conservation of the future – without art historians or still with them?

Coordinator: Martin Horáček, Palacký University Olomouc

In the conservation of tangible heritage, art historians had a strong voice in the 20th century: they determined what should become “heritage” and how to treat this heritage properly. The situation in the 21st century seems less clear. New categories of heritage have been added, while the heritage stock has been depleted. The number of protected areas has multiplied, while the devastation of unprotected ones has increased. More actors have entered the debate. Where is the place of art historians today in the coordinates of heritage science, critical heritage studies, architecture, art, restoration, nature conservation, political agendas and civic activism? What has changed? How will art historians contribute to saving our heritage threatened by the pressures of a population of eight billion, local conflicts, bureaucratization and other challenges that Max Dvořák could hardly have foreseen more than a century ago? We welcome contributions that address the role of art historians in the multidisciplinary debate on the protection of different

types of heritage, from more general reflections to specific case studies of heritage conservation.

#### 7. 'È la vita anche la morte'. Dream, death, rebirth and rites of passage in visual culture

Coordinator: Marcela Rusinko, Masaryk university Brno

On June 6, 1977, the famous Italian director and screenwriter Federico Fellini, author of *La Dolce Vita* (1960) and *Amarcord* (1973), wrote in his diary a sentence that his colleague Pier Paolo Pasolini communicated to him in a dream from that morning in intimate creative harmony against the backdrop of ancient Roman ruins: "È la vita anche la morte"! Which translates: "Even death is life"! Or conversely: "Life is death too"! The phrase's inherent ambiguity opens the field to several reflections and interpretations. Intimately personal and at the same time radically timeless, supra-individual and enigmatic, this unconscious message of one of Europe's greatest filmmakers brings us back to the original centre of gravity of artistic creation which finds its imprint across centuries and millennia in perhaps all known media and cultures. The theme of life and death, or illusion and dream, which is also a kind of "little death", or a window to another dimension of reality, the possible ambiguity, fluid permeability of these categories, or the various rituals and artifacts of transition associated with them, creates one of the essential areas of human experience and artistic creation, inherently tied to the paradigm of "new beginnings". Thus, we are inviting to grasp the phenomenon comparatively across space, time, and a vast variety of media (from ancient sculpture to film and performance), an inspiring and colourful account of the possible forms of "endings and beginnings"; of both individual and shared time can emerge.

#### 8. Eco-Art History and Central Europe

Coordinators: Tomáš Valeš – Jan Galeta, Masaryk University Brno

In Czech scientific discourse, the position on the dangers of climate change and humanity's impact on the Earth is quite clearly defined. However, political discussions and public opinion are still riddled with distorted information. Although art history as a discipline at first glance cannot offer much to address the problems of our planet, recent eco-art history discourse suggests the opposite (e.g., Andrew Patrizio 2019, Sugata Ray 2019, De-nin D. Lee (ed.) 2019).

The proposed section aims to open the issues of eco-art history in Central Europe and to build on the first domestic reflection on this issue (conf. Shaped by Greed, FF MU Brno 2023). Among the possible questions are: what is the place of eco-art history in Czech art history? Can our discipline, by reflecting on the Anthropocene, contribute to solving the ecological and climatic crisis? What is the relationship between artistic production and visual culture to interventions in the landscape and the exploitation of natural resources and animals?

#### 9. Beginnings of times and endings of the Middle Ages or medieval endings?

Coordinators: Pavlína Cermanová, Centre for Medieval Studies, Czech Academy of Sciences – Kateřina Horníčková, Palacký University Olomouc – Lenka Panušková, Institute of Art History, Czech Academy of Sciences

The medieval concept of history and time was deeply rooted in Judeo-Christian theology. In general, the consciousness of history happened at the level of salvation history, the meaning of which was determined by the Apocalypse of St. John. The Apocalypse defined the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega of all creation. Yet, unlike in modern times, the end of history and

time was interpreted optimistically in terms of the coming of the New Jerusalem. The section aims to demonstrate new approaches of medieval studies in understanding the relationship between text and image.

For this session, we accept papers that deal with Christian eschatology and apocalyptic ideas, medieval reflections on temporality on both individual and universal levels, including the "ends" of medieval times in the sense of the end of phenomena usually associated with the Middle Ages. At the same time, we welcome contributions that reflect the modern and pop-cultural view of the end of the Middle Ages and attempt to contradict the traditional concept of the Middle Ages as a period of darkness.

Reference:

CFP: 8th Congress of Czech Art Historians (Brno, 12-14 Sep 24). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 15, 2024 (accessed Apr 7, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/40977>>.