

## Objects. Between Absorption and Isolation (Florence, 16–18 Oct 24)

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz - Max-Planck-Institut, Florence, Italy, Oct 16–18, 2024

Deadline: Jun 14, 2024

Natalie Arrowsmith

Call for Papers: "Objects. Between Absorption and Isolation", October 16-18, 2024, at Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz - Max-Planck-Institut, Florence, Italy.

This Symposium is organized by the Lise Meitner Group "Coded Objects" (led by Anna-Maria Meister). "Coded Objects" as method of refraction questions any assumptions of "neutral" technology or immaterial bureaucracy. Instead, the Lise Meitner Group examines how processes form values through objects—and how objects inform processes in societies.

Objects might emerge from muddled contexts into crisp discreteness in a material, sensorial, epistemological and ontological negotiation—one with fuzzy edges and cracking seams. Taking this process as a question of figure and ground into three dimensions, during this workshop, we want to ask: when do objects come into being, and when are they recognized as such? How do they behave, get used, or get culturally coded and re-inscribed and how can they be perceived? What throws them into relief, what helps to see, grasp or make them? By investigating objecthood as a process of formation from (material, cultural, political or aesthetic) backgrounds as well as their potential decay, or dispersal, we want to carve out terms and concepts to describe and discuss objects anew.

Concepts like subjectivity and objectivity have long received critical attention, and the categories of their constitutive counterparts—subject and object—are no longer seen as sole agents operating in and on the world. Similarly, the understanding of the environment has been expanded to encompass 'vibrant matter' as integral part of networks between humans, objects, matter and non-human beings. At the same time, the perception of objects is still shaped by modern dichotomies. These divergences show that the question of objects and of their becoming is intrinsically linked to how (and whether) we know objects at all: attempts to map them onto reality on the one hand and the interpretations of their rendered presence on the other constantly undo and reconfigure each other.

Where the fields of art history and architecture history have artefacts at their disciplinary center, we want to expand that focus by adding the assumption of formal intent or consequence to other objects, as well as adding and testing methods from other fields. New materialism can help to understand objects as access to communities and practices around them; feminist and queer studies afford objects formerly excluded from canonical constructions other narratives or histo-

ries; post-colonial studies or anthropology help identifying the reinscription, projection or appropriation of forms and objects; media studies can assist in tracing aggregational processes and material translations between matter and objecthood (and reverse).

General Information:

This symposium will be framed by invited speakers who probe liminal cases of object-ness, and invites papers that take the material object as focus (or counterpoint) to map out the spectrum between the poles of absorption and isolation. We welcome papers from diverse disciplines, geographies and historical periods.

The conference language will be English. Presentations are to be made in person, unless urgent circumstances prevent attendance. We will pay for travel and lodging for all those contributors who do not have institutional funding available. If you need childcare or any other accommodations to enable you to participate, please let us know.

Submission:

Please send your abstract (max. 250 words) and a short CV (max. one page) to [coded.objects@khi.fi.it](mailto:coded.objects@khi.fi.it) by 14 June, 2024. We will send out notifications in early July.

We will all convene in Florence for the symposium from October 16 - 18, 2024. If circumstances will not allow it, the conference will be held online.

Website: <https://www.khi.fi.it/de/forschung/lise-meitner-group-meister/index.php>

Contact: [coded.objects@khi.fi.it](mailto:coded.objects@khi.fi.it)

--

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut

Via Giuseppe Giusti 44

50121 Firenze, Italia

+39 055 24911-1

[info@khi.fi.it](mailto:info@khi.fi.it)

Reference:

CFP: Objects. Between Absorption and Isolation (Florence, 16-18 Oct 24). In: ArtHist.net, May 4, 2024

(accessed Mar 26, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/41812>>.