

Precarity in Art History (Birmingham, 1 Jul 24)

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK, Jul 01, 2024

Deadline: Jun 3, 2024

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Precarity in Art History: Thinking with the Discipline's Past, Present and Future.

The challenges in art history are urgent, as the discipline faces an existential crisis due to recent developments in the sector. This call for papers frames the crisis through three interrelated developments. The first is the context of academic precarity within the sector. Precarity is a condition that currently shapes the discipline, particularly in the work done by doctoral and early-career researchers. It entrenches existing social inequalities and is connected to recent efforts to manufacture "culture wars" which are exacerbating and intensifying marginalisation. Second are changes in funding for the arts and heritage sector across the UK. This symposium will take place in Birmingham, a city which is facing a complete cut to council funding for the arts over the next two years (source). A similar situation exists for other local authorities and councils across the UK. Third is the brutal reality of conflict and genocide around the world, and the notable component of targeted "scholasticide" alongside the wholesale destruction of educational, religious and heritage sites and archival records.

With these developments and challenges in mind, this symposium will seek to explore the ways in which we can both navigate precarity in our work as art historians, whilst also historicising the way that precarity has shaped the production of art across periods assist us with the challenges of the present.

Call for Papers

We invite contributions from scholars whose work deals with the difficulties of practising art or art history within precarious contemporary or historical contexts, broadly defined. By bringing together the past and future of art histories in precarious worlds, we may seek to understand how it might be part of the resistance struggle today and how models and histories from the past might help us navigate the present. In particular we invite papers that deliberate on the following provocations:

How do we produce culture, memory and histories at a time of active erasure and unstable infrastructure?

What models and histories from the past, produced after or within precarious circumstances, can help us navigate the present?

In which ways has precarity been a generative condition for artists?

What kinds of practices of solidarity can or should be formed in our field and what is our role as art historians at this time of crisis?

What practical strategies can we generate for survival and resistance under these conditions?

Submission Information

The Early Careers Researchers Network/Doctorial Researchers Network (ECRN/DRN) Summer Symposium will take place on 1 July at IKON Gallery, Birmingham.

Papers will be fifteen minutes long with five minutes for questions. There is an honorarium available for speakers, which will be administered after the symposium. Travel expenses for speakers will also be reimbursed.

Please provide a two-hundred-word abstract and title, along with your name, email address and institutional affiliation via this Google form: <https://forms.gle/4ffm8KYAap4HjjvD6>. If you would like to offer a different type of contribution, please get in touch with us – we are open to diverse and novel formats.

If you have any questions or concerns, please get in touch with the network convenors: ecrn@paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk or drn@paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk.

Reference:

CFP: Precarity in Art History (Birmingham, 1 Jul 24). In: ArtHist.net, May 16, 2024 (accessed Apr 3, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/41882>>.