

## Bandung to Berlin (Princeton, 31 Oct – 1 Nov 24)

Princeton University Department of Art & Archeology, Oct 31–Nov 1, 2024

Deadline: Aug 12, 2024

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Bandung to Berlin: Art, Decolonization, and the Cold War.

Bandung to Berlin explores the radical imagination of the global Cold War, the aesthetics of Non-Alignment, and the role of art in the era of decolonization. Though these topics are often treated as separate paradigms, their points of interconnection are deeply entangled. As former colonies across Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean fought for and gained independence, new national agendas navigated the competing pressures of the Cold War and resisted a dichotomous world order. This conference will explore transnational artistic exchanges and cultural diplomacy in the years 1947-1989, especially across regions in the Global South. We hope to foster new conversations about the confluence of art and politics in larger cultural imaginaries.

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, political movements like Pan-Arabism and Pan-Africanism incorporated and were transformed by artistic and aesthetic forms such as free jazz, color field painting, and Pop art. The otherworldly flecks of red in Alma Thomas's 1972 *Mars Dust* suggest simultaneous wonder at the discovery of celestial bodies and the flicker of the television screen, through which news of such groundbreaking events was mediated. Artists like Thomas inspire a reconsideration of the Space Race, as technological 'progress' was refracted through lenses of dispossession and oppression. The graphic artist Emory Douglas, Minister of Culture for the Black Panther Party, created bright prints for *The Black Panther* newspaper in the US as well as the *Tricontinental*, a Cuba-based magazine. His bold style rendered complex political struggles legible to wide audiences, crafting a transnational iconography of resistance. After the 1955 Bandung Conference and the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement, various actors built transnational affinities, incorporating distinct cultural idioms into cross-cultural aesthetics.

Ibrahim El-Salahi of Sudan and Sadequain Naqqash of Pakistan, for example, incorporated the geometric forms of Islamic textuality with aesthetic developments of international avant-garde movements, forming what Iftikhar Dadi terms "calligraphic modernism."

This graduate conference will address comparable artistic practices that negotiated and remade subjective proclivities, nationalist pursuits, and cosmopolitan ideals. How did artists and political actors use aesthetics to negotiate nation-building? How did they address Cold War hegemonies, transform them to their own benefit, or refuse them altogether? How did socialist actors from Central and Eastern Europe support decolonial and postcolonial artistic projects? How have technological advancements, print culture, and mass media of the global sixties shifted the field of art history and aesthetics more broadly?

We welcome papers from graduate students at all stages in their careers which consider the above prompts or engage any of the following: the aesthetics of solidarity, fashion and self-fashioning, Third World feminisms, and Indigenous sovereignties. Art historical papers are preferred, but any proposals on the interface of visibility and politics are welcome.

Interested candidates should submit an abstract of approximately 350 words, a three-sentence bio, and a relevant artwork to [bandungtoberlin@gmail.com](mailto:bandungtoberlin@gmail.com) by Monday, August 12th. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Reference:

CFP: Bandung to Berlin (Princeton, 31 Oct - 1 Nov 24). In: Arthist.net, Jul 11, 2024 (accessed Dec 18, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/42321>>.