

Art and Migration in Times of Global Catastrophe (Iași/online, 14-15 Nov 24)

Iași, George Enescu National University of the Arts, Institute for Multidisciplinary Research in the Arts / Online, Nov 14–15, 2024
Deadline: Sep 30, 2024

Daniel Ungureanu

Nowhere at Home: Art and Migration in Times of Global Catastrophe.

Migration has been at the forefront of contemporary art, occupying a central place in its theory, history and criticism for more than three decades. In a way, it is consubstantial with the very idea of contemporaneity as a global, post-colonial condition, in which the circulation of ideas, people and objects have often been highlighted. Migratory routes, diasporic cultures, displacement and disruption, hybrid identities, creolization and cultural translation, as well as the cosmopolitan imaginary have become mainstream topics of art exhibitions, art historical treaties and curatorial discourses over the past decades. Nevertheless, an abrupt shift of perspective has taken place in European and US politics lately, where new, exclusionary forms of nationalism and populism are threatening the fabric of democracy as a global worldview predicated on diversity, tolerance and multicultural inclusion. It situates the migrant ontologically at a loss in the world, stigmatized by non-belonging. Therefore, the migrant appears as a double displaced being, ousted “temporally no less than spatially” (Ranajit Guha). While the precarious social condition of migrants, as well as the damnation and zombification of the migrant (especially in the form of war refugees), have also been present in mainstream curatorial discourses over the years, they have been certainly less explored in art historical scholarship.

The present conference aims to explore the representation and critical analysis of migration in contemporary art in the changing conditions of the present day global political turmoil, with competing ideologies clashing in popular media and violent conflicts erupting in many parts of the world, while the climate catastrophe is looming. The cry that “There is no Planet B” seems not to have been heard, and the notion of “home” has become increasingly difficult to define and defend, let alone to reimagine. How can visual arts contribute to the visualization of exclusion and at the same time how can they counter the stigmatizing effects of such representational practices? What forms and techniques of artistic production are more suitable for engaging politically with such topics? What role can contemporary art play in a cultural environment characterized by disjunction and opposition, as well as in our turbulent and increasingly violent social lives?

The conference invites papers that aim to address and reflect on the underside of the renewed cultural rhetoric of “othering”: precarious living, non-citizenship, outlaws, nomadism, cultural looting and historical justice, migrant workers, war refugees, threatened ethnic, sexual and cultural minorities, mis-translation, as well as the proper artistic forms that may address such topics and the ethical conundrums of contemporary artistic representation and research on the topic of social migra-

tion as an enduring political and cultural phenomenon.

Suggested conference topics may include:

Conceptualizing movement: migration, refuge, exile

Crisis as form: revisiting the ontology of precariousness in contemporary art

Cultural artefacts and colonial looting: decolonial epistemology and the politics of memory in contemporary museums

Migration of species: political ecologies in contemporary art

State of exception, bare life and humanitarian catastrophe today

Necropolitics and the zombie imaginary in contemporary art

Reimagining home: artistic practices of sheltering and care

The cosmopolitan imaginary in times of nationalist xenophobia

From the politics of representation to the representation of politics.

Nowhere at home: sites of conflict and sites of unrest in contemporary art.

Ethics of representation: suffering, terror and “othering” in contemporary photographic depictions of war refugees

Labor and economic migration in contemporary art: storytelling and the documentary form.

Keynote speakers:

Vivana USUBIAGA, Universidad Nacional de San Martin/UBA/CONICET, Argentina

Iro KATSARIDOU, Museum of Photography MOMus, Thessaloniki, Grece

We accept proposals, abstracts of no more than 400 words, and a short CV on the address maria-oana.nae@unage.ro, until September 30, 2024.

The accepted presenters will be notified no later than October 5.

The conference will take place in a hybrid format (both onsite and online). Proposals for online presentations are therefore welcome.

The conference is organized by the Institute for Multidisciplinary Research in the Arts, George Enescu National University of the Arts, Iasi.

Organizing committee: Prof. PhD. Cristian Nae, Assoc. Prof. PhD. Oana Maria Nae, Asst. Lect. PhD. Daniel Ungureanu.

Reference:

CFP: Art and Migration in Times of Global Catastrophe (Iasi/online, 14-15 Nov 24). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 4, 2024 (accessed Jan 28, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/42480>>.