

Session at ASESC (online, 28–29 Mar 25)

55th Annual Meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, online,

Mar 28–29, 2025

Deadline: Sep 20, 2024

Iris Brahms

The Art of Balance: Concepts of Equality and Democracy in Art and Visual Culture of the long 18th Century.

Elisabeth Fritz and I are delighted to solicit 20-minute papers for a panel we are co-chairing at the ASECS 2025 Annual Meeting. The conference is online and our panel is scheduled for the March 28/29 time block. We welcome submissions from scholars and graduate students at all stages. Please also consider sharing our CFP with those who may be interested.

The eventscloud portal should be used to submit proposals, which are due on September 20. Please reach out to Elisabeth Fritz (Elisabeth.fritz@fu-berlin.de) and Iris Brahms (iris.brahms@uni-tuebingen.de) with any questions.

The Art of Balance:

Concepts of Equality and Democracy in Art and Visual Culture of the long 18th Century [ID 78]

In Western politics and philosophy of the 18th century, concepts of balance, equality, and democracy experienced a groundbreaking contouring that continues to have an impact until today (see McMahon 2023). These issues were negotiated not least in the arts. Our thesis is that the parallelism and simultaneity of opposing views and ideologies led to a striving for equilibrium and harmony, and was articulated, for example, within the ideas of social justice and political equality, or the goal of levelling extreme economic and financial differences, an idealistic balance that ultimately paved the way for new concepts of societal order, respectively democracy.

There is no glossing over the fact that a certain degree of difference and hierarchy to guarantee the aesthetically “harmonic” order and balance was a persistent and prevailing ideal of the 18th century. Just as much, while aspiring for a newly balanced order within society, the dynamics of the socio-cultural developments of this period kept contributing to ongoing social injustices such as slavery or gender inequality. We decisively want include and discuss problematic strategies of appropriation and hegemonic agency and their paradoxical agenda in the names of equalization, modulation, normality, or assimilation, as well as non-Western concepts of equilibrium and collectivity. Our goal is to enter a fruitful debate and to develop a critical methodological approach, when we ask in which ways and to which ends the visual arts and their discourses helped to shape and spread the understanding of balance, equality, and democracy in the long 18th century.

More information and submission portal:
<https://asecs.org/meetings/asecs-2025-annual-meeting/>

Reference:

CFP: Session at ASESC (online, 28-29 Mar 25). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 15, 2024 (accessed Feb 7, 2026),
<<https://arthist.net/archive/42622>>.