

## 5 Sessions at AAH (York, 9–11 Apr 25)

Association for Art History Annual Conference, York St John University, UK, Apr 9–11, 2025

Deadline: Nov 1, 2024

ArtHist.net Redaktion

- [1] Images through words: the ethics of "reading"
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[1] From: Tilo Reifenstein

Subject: CFP: Images through words: the ethics of "reading"

The relationship of images and ethics is often mediated, intensified or otherwise altered by words. In a photographic context, Clive Scott (1999) has problematized the relationship between images and language. Susan Sontag (2004, p.80) argued that the photograph's inability to "make us understand" runs counter to "narratives". Yet, the writing of history, too, as Hayden White (1973, 2022) explored, emplots events into narrative representations of reality through rhetorical devices. Related questions of power that accompany image-and-text dynamics are weighted in Saidiya Hartman's (2008) and Ariella Aïsha Azoulay's (2019) approaches to the archive as a space that facilitates history. By embarking on this interdisciplinary context, this session seeks paper contributions that explore how the coexistence of words and works harbours the ethics of writing and "reading".

Whether spoken or written, fragmentary or longform, poetic or "factual", the occurrence of the verbal next to/around/about/in the work impacts our encounter with it. What are the ethical ramifications of this image-and-text relation, or with the "imagetext" as per WTJ Mitchell (1994)? How do viewers' ethical perceptions shift when they become readers? How do titles participate in the ethics of the work and how should we problematize cases where the language provision is beyond the creator's remit? Finally, from an art-historiographic perspective, how does our writing practice meddle (with) the ethical dimensions of the work? From photography scholarship to postcolonial studies and from queer theories to contemporary discussions of ekphrasis, this panel will consider such

questions of power, agency and translation positioned at the crossroads of words and images.

To offer a paper:

Please email your paper proposals direct to both session convenors:

Kyveli Lignou-Tsamantani, York St John University,

k.lignoutsamantani@yorks.ac.uk

Tilo Reifenstein, York St John University, t.reifenstein@yorks.ac.uk

You need to provide a title and abstract (250 words maximum) for a 20-minute paper, your name and institutional affiliation (if any).

Please make sure the title is concise and reflects the contents of the paper because the title is what appears online, in social media and in the digital programme.

You will receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your submission within two weeks.

[\[2\]](#)

From: Elizabeth Pugliano

Subject: CFP: Attention in Pre-Modern Art and Visual Culture

Session convenor: Elizabeth Pugliano, University of Colorado Denver

In today's world of perpetual digital connectivity and ever-evolving algorithms, attention is a precious, fervently sought commodity, at once carefully guarded and divided with abandon. While both the amount of imagery that endeavours to claim our attention and the pace of its change may well be at a never-before-seen pitch, concerns about attentiveness and distraction are not uniquely modern. Building on recent explorations of attention in pre-modern contexts such as Jamie Kreiner's *The Wandering Mind: What Medieval Monks Tell Us About Distraction* (2023), this session aims to probe issues of attention specifically in relation to the production, reception, experience and interpretation of ancient, medieval and early modern artworks, architectural settings and other forms of crafted objects and spaces. How did the design, iconography, materials or presentation of an artwork garner, hold or direct attention? To what extent did sensory enactment through the visual and the material serve to cultivate attention? How were tensions between attention and distraction navigated in the visual realm? How might modern understandings of cognition and behaviour be productively applied to visual production in the pre-modern world? In addition to generating new perspectives on pre-modern artworks, attending to historical approaches to and concerns about attention may beneficially expand how we understand the complex relationships between visual input and attention both then and now.

Please email proposals for 20-minute papers to

elizabeth.pugliano@ucdenver.edu. Proposals should include a paper title, abstract (250 words maximum), your name and institutional affiliation (if any).

[3]

From: Lee Ann Custer

Subject: CFP: Art Histories of the Urban

We are currently welcoming submissions for our upcoming session, "Art Histories of the Urban," scheduled for April 9-11, 2025 at University of York, England.

Please send paper proposals (title and 250-word maximum abstract) directly to session convenors (email addresses listed below). The deadline for submission is November 1 but we would welcome earlier submissions.

Lee Ann Custer, Vanderbilt University, leeann.custer@Vanderbilt.edu Joanna Grabski, Arizona State University, Joanna.Grabski@asu.edu

Cities offer paradigmatic spaces for artists to make and exhibit their works and to make and sustain their careers. From Europe to the Americas and Africa to Asia, artists represent, document, interpret, and intervene in the cities where they work and live. Not only do cities provide both subject and context for artistic propositions, they also create the conditions for art institutions and communities to thrive. Bringing together approaches and themes from art history and interdisciplinary urban studies, this session examines the relationship among artists, art production and exhibition, art institutions, art scenes and communities, and the urban environment. While previous studies address aspects of these topics, this session takes a comparative and comprehensive look at the mutual constitution of art and the urban—with its unique spatial proximities and juxtapositions.

We invite papers that consider from historical and contemporary vantage points how the urban environment's visual, material, spatial, and social resources are vital to artistic production. In what ways do artists engage with formal and informal structures to create their work and communities? How do art institutions such as schools, museums, and biennales emerge from cities, shaping opportunities for artists? How has the urban context catalyzed experimental approaches to making? Contributing to efforts to de-colonize the discipline, we ask how artists grapple with urban structures to explore power, identity, and the creation of just and sustainable futures. Finally, who is included or excluded from art histories of the urban? What are the possibilities and limits of this analytic approach?

[4]

From: Max Boersma

Subject: CFP: Abstraction, Artisanal Knowledge, and Craft Epistemologies

This session seeks to reexamine abstraction as a site of intersections and dissonances between modes of making, focused especially on those between the fine arts and so-called craft or artisanal practices. We aim to interrogate how and why abstraction functions as a vehicle for expanding notions of artistic making to include previously excluded techniques, media, skills, perspectives, and associated forms of embodied knowledge. As such, this panel invites papers that critically rethink abstraction as part of a broad, inclusive and intersectional history of modern and contemporary art.

Challenging Euro-American formalist narratives, recent studies by Sarah Louise Cowan, Philip J. Deloria, and Julia Bryan-Wilson—among others—have introduced new models for analysing abstraction within African diasporic, Native American, and feminist histories of making. Meanwhile, exhibitions such as *Woven Histories: Textiles and Modern Abstraction* have foregrounded the long relationship between modernist art and textiles. Building on these discussions, this session puts emphasis on the manual expertise and craft intelligence involved in such exchanges. How have artists channelled forms of embodied knowledge and specific epistemologies of craft in their engagements with abstract art? What opportunities has abstraction offered for elevating marginalised practices and surfacing lesser-known histories?

We welcome papers across all geographic contexts and diverse media that address abstract art in relation to forms of making occluded by material and cultural hierarchies, imperialism and colonialism, and racialised and gendered exclusions.

Organized by Cora Chalaby (University College London) and Max Boersma (Freie Universität Berlin). This session will be held on location at AAH 2025 at the University of York.

Submissions should include a title and abstract (250 words maximum) for a 20-minute paper, as well as your name and institutional affiliation (if any). Please email your proposals directly to the session conveners (corinne.chalaby.21 [at] ucl.ac.uk, m.boersma [at] fu-berlin.de).

[5]

From: Ceren Ozpınar

Subject: CFP: Community and Activism in the Global South

Ceren Özpinar, University of Brighton, c.ozpinar@brighton.ac.uk  
Eliza Tan, University of Brighton, e.tan@brighton.ac.uk

Art functions as a locus for exchange and organisation, where a sense of community is formed. Here, community is often characterised by tensions and

contradictions as individuals unite to achieve a common dream or an activist goal, driven by a feeling of incompleteness (Chan, 2010). Examples include Ruangrupa's artistic direction of documenta fifteen (2022), which drew on the Indonesian agricultural practice of the 'lumbang' or 'rice barn' to reimagine collectivity, collaboration, and sustainability. Nil Yalter's performance at Halkevi Community Centre in London (2024), organised with curator Övül Durmuşoğlu, aimed to ignite greater interest in solidarity within the art world through exposure to Kurdish music and culture.

This session welcomes papers that explore how artistic and curatorial practices can contribute to research on community and activism in the Global South, focusing on both connections and disconnections as key to building collectivity (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017). We seek to examine how existing social infrastructures are remade through practices which engage, for example, networks, space, data, embodiment, and affect to serve future life.

Contributions might address the following questions (but are not limited to): How do artists and curators create communities defined by ideas of 'being-in-common' (Nancy, 1991)? How do they engender alternative models of self-organisation? How can art and exhibitions prompt acts of generosity and sustainable resource sharing? How do spatial dynamics impact the formation and expression of communities in artworks and curating? How do embodied artistic experiences and performances shape community interactions and dissent?

Please email your paper proposals direct to the session convenor(s).

You need to provide a title and abstract (250 words maximum) for a 20-minute paper (unless otherwise specified), your name and institutional affiliation (if any).

Reference:

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