

1 Session at at AAH (York, 9–11 Apr 25)

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

Deadline: Nov 1, 2024

Anne Reimers and Stina Barchan

Subject: Fashionability and Temporality in Art Production, Reception and Historicization.

Fashionability in art (or its other, outdatedness) forces change, directs artistic agency, and amplifies the (modernist) imperative for innovation and originality. Indeed, in his Arcades Project (1927-40), Walter Benjamin identified the temporal dynamics that fashion commands as one of its most powerful and intriguing qualities. Theodor Adorno, following Benjamin, observed in his Aesthetic Theory how fashion and its commercial interests inevitably affect the production and perception of art: 'fashion', he wrote, 'is one of the ways in which historical change affects sensory apparatus and through it works of art.'

Building on Adorno's observation, this session seeks to explore fashionability not with a focus on sartorial fashion, but as a dynamic agent of temporality that impacts ideologically or aesthetically on the decision making-processes of artists; as a connoisseurial trope within the discourse surrounding art movements and artists to support quality judgments by art critics or art historians; or as a factor that impacts on the acquisition decisions by institutions and private art collectors. Papers can cover the period from the 1800s to the present in any part of the world. They could consider fashionability from a multitude of approaches, for example as a problem of 'contamination' or as a tool to undermine gendered and geographical hierarchies within artistic production, as a strategy of decentering or as an agent of rupture that challenges codes of quality and originality.

Format: 20-minute papers followed by 25-minute panel discussion.

Please send a 250 word proposal along with a brief CV to the session convenors: Anne Reimers, London College of Fashion (UAL) and Stina Barchan, Independent scholar
fashionabilityAAH2025@gmail.com

Reference:

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