

Cátedra del Prado Colloquium (Madrid/online, 18 Nov 24)

Madrid / Zoom, Nov 18, 2024

Registration deadline: Nov 13, 2024

Itziar Arana Cobos, Madrid

Cátedra del Prado Colloquium. The Museum's Times.

In museums, different times converge: the visitors' time, the personal time they bring with them; the time of the objects on display; and a third, often hidden time – the time when the museum's collections were formed. The colloquium explores the theme of temporality in museums and the time that shapes them: from debates over the ownership of antiquities to the performativity of temporary exhibitions of Old Masters and the lasting impact of object translocations.

PROGRAM

15.30 h. Accreditations

16.00 h. Welcome

16.15 h. The Museum and its Times

Bénédicte Savoy (Technische Universität Berlin)

The opening lecture focuses on the theme of temporality in museums and the aesthetic, political, and cultural interactions between different periods. The talk specifically delves into the hidden time within museums and the contemporary desire to reveal and better comprehend it.

17.00 h. Appropriating Antiquity: German-Ottoman Relations and the Relics of the Past, 1898-1918.

Sebastian Willert (Leibniz Institute for Jewish History and Culture - Simon Dubnow, Leipzig)

In June 1914, a telegram informed German Emperor Wilhelm II about the Sublime Porte refusing to permit the export of archaeological objects from the ancient site of Ashur to Berlin. Instead of calming the waves, the monarch reacted annoyed, demanding that Istanbul "[...] should hand over our property, which was acquired at great expense! This is not a quarrel! This is theft!" On the eve of the First World War, the German-Ottoman controversy over the translocation of archaeological objects escalated. Ever since Prussian-German archaeological undertakings began exploring and exploiting ancient sites in the Ottoman realm, scholars, diplomats, political and economic actors linked field research to the seizure of antiquities. Simultaneously, Istanbul defined antiquities as state property and opposed foreign archaeological objectives. Disputes simmered over issues such as the control over cultural assets, the dispossession of antiquity collections, the translocation of artifacts, a common understanding for collaborative archaeological activities, and even the protocols for protecting monuments.

Based on archival material from Turkey and Germany, the lecture investigates the construction of cultural property in Istanbul and Berlin, conflicts over the ownership of antiquities and its impact on bilateral relations

17.30 h. "Performing Italy". Art Exhibitions in London and Paris between Spectacle and Propaganda (1930-1935).

Matilde Cartolari (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität/Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, Munich)

In 1930 and 1935, two major international exhibitions of Italian art took place in London and Paris under the auspices of Italy's fascist government. By bringing together thousands of artworks and people, these exhibitions functioned as a powerful catalyst for fascist propaganda, while also providing cultural legitimacy to Mussolini's ambitions in international politics. In the presentation, I will take a close look at these exhibitions starting from their backstage, namely the different phases of preparation (e.g., gathering, restoring, transporting the exhibits) leading up to their final display.

By following the red thread of images, I aim to stress the performative character of exhibitions across an extended temporality that unfolds before, during, and after the exhibition itself. This extended temporality allows us to better understand the political use of exhibitions as an instrument of diplomatic rapprochement and ideological legitimation in the 1930s and beyond.

18.00 h. Flemish Primitives, 1939: Evacuation as a Musealization Force

Iñigo Salto Santamaría (Technische Universität Berlin)

The evacuation measures implemented across Europe at the outbreak of World War II to safeguard cultural artifacts marked the first time in centuries that many "immovable" pieces, long embedded in religious or princely institutions, were displaced. In the aftermath of the conflict, some of these artifacts did not return to their original locations, instead becoming part of museum collections and losing their long-established roles. Temporary exhibition loans, changing political regimes, foreign purchase attempts, and outright postwar plunder all contributed in varying degrees to shaping and ultimately altering the museological fate of these pieces at this critical time.

By exploring the safeguarding and circulation trajectories of three Early Netherlandish paintings – The Descent from the Cross (Van der Weyden, Madrid), the Greverade Altarpiece (Memling, Lübeck), and The Last Judgment (Memling, Gdansk) – I will present wartime evacuations and subsequent returns as pivotal forces in the musealization of cultural artifacts.

18.30 h. Discussion

ATTENDANCE

Face-to-face and remote attendance

Face-to-face attendance is possible subject to available seating. Remote attendance is possible; a Zoom link will be provided to registered attendees. Desired attendance mode must be indicated when registering.

There are no special requirements for registration. Attendants must fill in the form available on the website.

You can find all the information here:
<https://www.museodelprado.es/recurso/coloquio-de-la-catedra-del-prado-el-museo-y-sus/87df5ce7-2802-43a1-b825-c1e4dfb25276>

For further information, please email to: centro.estudios@museodelprado.es

Reference:

CONF: Cátedra del Prado Colloquium (Madrid/online, 18 Nov 24). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 4, 2024 (accessed Jul 30, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/43064>>.