Fruitful Failure (Bern, 5-6 Jun 25)

University of Bern, Switzerland, Jun 5–06, 2025
Deadline: Jan 31, 2025

Zuzanna Sarnecka

Fruitful Failure – Historical Perspectives, Technological Innovations, Resilience, and Ethical Implications.
Organisers: Marcella Boglione and Zuzanna Sarnecka.

Conference Rationale:
The International Conference on Fruitful Failure seeks to explore the constructive potential of failure within the realms of literature, art history, archaeology and the digital humanities. Rather than viewing failure solely as a negative outcome, this conference will investigate how failure has often been a catalyst for innovation, resilience, and ethical transformation. By examining the historical, technological, and ethical dimensions of failure, this interdisciplinary forum aims to redefine failure across several academic fields. The conference will foster cross-disciplinary dialogue, drawing on case studies and recent research to emphasize the role of failure in stimulating breakthroughs and challenging conventional narratives. We invite papers that explore the complex dynamics of "fruitful failure," addressing its implications for resilience, technological advancements, ethical dilemmas, and best practices across history, art, and literature.

Confirmed keynote speakers:
Prof. Dr. Mona Garloff (University of Innsbruck)
Prof. Dr. Tobias Hodel (University of Bern)
Dr. Cara Rachele (ETH Zurich)

We welcome submissions from scholars engaging with topics related, but not limited, to:
1. Miscommunication and Failures of Reception:
Exploration of miscommunication, mistranslations, and the reception of works in art and literature, and how such 'failures' have reshaped meaning or prompted alternative interpretations.
2. Material Failure:
The role of failure in material culture, including technological innovations, design flaws, and how such failures contributed to the development of new methodologies or artistic expressions.
3. Failure in Sustainability:
Investigating the failures of sustainability efforts across history and their ethical implications, along with the lessons learned from these attempts.
4. AI-Generating Knowledge:
How has failure in artificial intelligence led to novel insights and breakthroughs in knowledge production and dissemination?

Submission Guidelines:
We invite submissions of abstracts of 250-300 words for 30 minute presentations. Papers should address one or more of the conference themes, though innovative takes on the subject of "fruitful failure" are also welcome.
Submissions should include the following:
- Title of the paper
- Abstract (250-300 words)
- Author's name, affiliation, and contact details

Deadline for Submission:
Please submit abstracts by 31st January 2025.
Notifications of acceptance will be sent by February 28, 2025.

Target Audience:
This conference is designed for Early Career Researchers (doctoral candidates and postdoctoral scholars), as well as advanced master's students with an interest in exploring failure in art history, archaeology, and literature.
It will serve as a platform for fostering interdisciplinary networking and discussions. Scholars from all related disciplines are welcome to participate, and the event is open to the public.

Travel Grants:
Accepted Early Career Researchers will be reimbursed for their travel expenses(economy class) and accommodation costs for up to two nights in Bern.

Conference Format:
The conference will feature four thematic sessions with ample time for discussion at the end of each session to ensure an interdisciplinary exchange of ideas.

How to Submit:
Please email your abstract to marcella.boglione@unibe.ch and zuzanna.sarnecka@unibe.ch with the subject line "CFP Submission: Fruitful Failure Conference."

We look forward to your submissions and to welcoming you to the University of Bern for what promises to be an exciting and intellectually stimulating event.

Reference:
CFP: Fruitful Failure (Bern, 5-6 Jun 25). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 5, 2024 (accessed Nov 22, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/43097>.