

## Humanism between Ideal and Ideology (Florence/online, 28–29 Nov 24)

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut, Florence, Italy, Nov  
28–29, 2024

Natalie Arrowsmith

Humanism between Ideal and Ideology. Images and Notions of the Human after 1945.

Organized by Hana Gründler and Katharine Stahlbuhk.

How can we critically rethink the contested notion of Humanism, a concept integral to Western thought? What is its potential today? And how does it inform, if not transform, our understanding of the human, in a time in which a reconsideration of the relation to the “non-human” is essential? Starting with the ‘human human being’ or the ‘human being human’ (that is “der menschliche Mensch”, Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte, 1844) in Karl Marx’s early writings up to current discourses on neo-, post- and trans-humanism, this workshop is interested in both the reception of Humanism as well as the often contradicting images and notions of the human created and (still) influenced by its interpretations or formulated in opposition to them.

Significantly, some of the most influential and controversial contributions were written in the shadow of the darkest chapters of the twentieth century. The spectrum ranged from the interpretation of the humanist epoch – including the heroic image of the New Man – in the service of nationalism and totalitarianism both in the fascist as well as in the communist context to attempts of courageous opposition, but also of resignation in the face of advancing inhumanity.

The questions, ambiguities and expectations brought forward by the humanist epoch, and by its evolution over time, as well as the countless evaluations of Humanism as a figure of thought and a normative set of values are of unbroken topicality. To that end, we aim for a transdisciplinary discussion and seek to offer a differentiated look at Humanism and its reception and/or deconstruction within diverging ideological systems across different geographical areas.

Program

DAY 1, 28.11.2024

15.00 – 15.30: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION Hana Gründler and Katharine Stahlbuhk

RETHINKING HUMANITY

Chair: Virginia Marano

15.30 – 16.00: Humanism Today: Human Rights Principle of Equality as a New Foundation of Humanism? (Ekaterina Yahyaoui Krivenko, University of Galway)

16.00 – 16.30: UNESCO and New Humanism in Post-War Heritage Conservation (Jiayao Jiang, University of Cambridge)

BREAK

UN/OFFICIAL HUMANISM

Chair: Oliver Aas

17.00 – 17.30: Old Masters for a New Man: Humanism in Socialist Art and Visual Culture of the Fifties (Matteo Bertelé, Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia)

17.30 – 18.00: Contesting the Human Agent. Art and Socialist Humanist Philosophy in Yugoslavia 1960–1980 (Seraina Renz, Masaryk University Brno)

18.00 – 18.30: Cosmic Thought in Ilya Kabakov: An Alternative to the Ideological Humanism in Soviet Unofficial Art between 1960 and 1980 (Alessandra Franetovich, Università degli Studi di Firenze)

18.30 – 19.00: COMMON DISCUSSION

DAY 2, 29.11.2024

IDEOLOGY AND RECONSTRUCTION

Chair: Larissa Müller

9.00 – 9.30: Garin, Mattioli and the Making of the «Prosatori latini del Quattrocento» (Luca Boschetto, Università degli Studi di Firenze)

9.30 – 10.00: Between Fascist Ideology and Future Hopes: Francesco Arcangeli's Humanism (Lavinia Amenduni, Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte München)

BREAK

QUESTIONING HUMANISM

Chair: Rosa Sancarlo

10.30 – 11.00: Beyond the Individual, Towards the Communal: Reimagining Western Humanism through the Lens of Ubuntu (Adeyemi Johnson Ademowo, Afe Babalola University Ado Ekiti)

11.00 – 11.30: Echoes of European Conquest in the Hyperpresent Now: Land-Body Ecologies Beyond Liberal Humanism (Florian Carl, Scuola Normale Superiore Pisa)

BREAK

CRISIS AND DIVISION

Chair: Constanze Fritsch

12.30 – 13.00: Stavrogin's Demons: The Crisis of Humanism and Russia's Religious Far-Right (Ovanes Akopyan, Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia)

13.00 – 13.30: Humanity Divided: Global Civil War and Post-Human Partisanship in Bruno Latour and Hito Steyerl (Peter Metzger, The University of Chicago)

13.30 – 14.00: FINAL DISCUSSION

This will be a hybrid event.

VENUE

Palazzo Grifoni Budini Gattai

Via dei Servi 51

ArtHist.net

50122 Firenze, Italia

To participate online please register in advance via Zoom:

<https://eu02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5UodequrzspE93BC0ZyAwB07VqsDwNIMBJL#/registration>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Reference:

CONF: Humanism between Ideal and Ideology (Florence/online, 28-29 Nov 24). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 15, 2024 (accessed Mar 30, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/43165>>.