

Journal18, no. 21: Revolution

Deadline: Apr 1, 2025

Kristel Smentek, MIT

July 2026 marks the 250th anniversary of the United States Declaration of Independence, a turning point in the American Revolution (1775-1783). The French Revolution (1789-1799), the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), and the unsuccessful United Irishmen's Rebellion (1798) followed in quick succession. For this commemorative year, this issue of Journal18 proposes to examine afresh the material and visual cultures of what historians have termed the "age of revolutions."

Taking a cue from the Declaration itself—a document that interrogated the very practice (and malpractices) of representation—we invite new questions about familiar material. What images and objects, actors and artistic media, have been privileged and marginalized to date in art histories of revolution? How did visual and decorative images purporting to document the American Revolution both foreground and obfuscate the fundamental contradiction of a political freedom that depended on systems of enslavement, colonization, and Indigenous displacement?

The French revolutionary government officially promised liberty and equality for all, yet women were formally excluded from political life (while simultaneously benefiting from new measures that significantly increased their social welfare), and slavery continued until France was forced to end it, temporarily, in 1794. How were the asymmetries and inconsistencies of the French Revolution embedded or elided in its civic performances and its official and unofficial image-making campaigns, production of ephemera, and circulation of luxury goods? What about absences in the visual and material record?

How might new scholarship on the visual history of the Haitian Revolution—the most successful revolt of enslaved peoples in history—interrogate its comparative underrepresentation during the eighteenth century and within the discipline of art history, arguably contributing to what the Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot described as its historical "silencing"? How might art history stretch beyond the Atlantic rim to consider the global contexts of the age of revolutions and the manifestations of revolution beyond Euro-America during this period?

We welcome proposals for contributions that engage these questions and related matters of revolutionary memory, violence, justice, absence, and reinvention. Submissions may take the form of full-length articles, shorter pieces focused on single objects, photo essays, interviews, or other formats.

#21 REVOLUTION (Spring 2026)

Issue Editors

Wendy Bellion, University of Delaware

Kristel Smentek, MIT

Proposals for issue #21 Revolution are now being accepted. Deadline for proposals: April 1, 2025.

To submit a proposal, send an abstract (250 words) and a brief biography to the following email addresses:

editor@journal18.org and smentek@mit.edu. Articles should not exceed 6000 words (including footnotes) and will be due for submission by September 1, 2025. For further details on submission and Journal18 house style, see Information for Authors: <https://www.journal18.org/info/>.

Reference:

CFP: Journal18, no. 21: Revolution. In: ArHist.net, Dec 15, 2024 (accessed Sep 14, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/43559>>.