

The Collections of Teaching Institutes (Online, 10 Jun 25)

Online, Jun 10, 2025

Deadline: Apr 7, 2025

Society for the History of Collecting

Unveiling Hidden Histories, Creating New Narratives: The Collections of Teaching Institutes.

The Research & Development Committee of the Society for the History of Collecting is excited to announce a call for papers for an online seminar dedicated to unveiling innovative research patterns on artistic, cultural, and scientific collections preserved in universities, art academies, and other teaching institutions worldwide.

Around the globe, many teaching institutions (academies of fine arts, universities and colleges, conservatories, polytechnics, seminaries, research centers) safeguard collections that boast a variety of objects (artworks, natural history specimens, ethnography, archaeology, historical documents, books and many more), often housed together.

More than mere remnants of the past, these collections serve as living repositories, sparking creativity, fostering interdisciplinary research, and bridging academic and public communities. Despite their significance, many remain overlooked in scholarly discourse.

KEY DETAILS

Date of the seminar: 10 June 2025

Abstract Submission Deadline: 7 April 2025

Notification of Acceptance: 23 April 2025

Language: English

This seminar aims to:

- Emphasise the potential of collections held by institutions that have teaching as a core mission and thus the role these objects play in the institutes' educational curricula;
- Showcase underrepresented collections from lesser-known institutions or cities;
- Take a holistic approach to collection typologies to foster peer exchange on the various research questions, tools, sources, and methodologies for the history of collecting and display;
- Discuss challenges and opportunities in curating, preserving, and utilising these collections;
- Explore innovative approaches for research, education, and public engagement.

We welcome contributions on a variety of topics, including:

- Rediscovering Histories: How does recent research—on acquisitions, donors, display practices, or provenance—reframe the historical importance of these collections?
- Contemporary Relevance: How are the collections integrated into academic curricula or interdis-

ciplinary projects of these institutions? Can they offer new ways of teaching each relative subject?

- Decolonisation and Ethics: How do recent initiatives address pressing issues such as bias, provenance research, or decolonial approaches? What lessons can be learned from successful (or ongoing) projects?

- Expanding Impact: What strategies are in place (or needed) to make these collections more inclusive, accessible, and engaging to diverse communities?

We are particularly interested in contributions that highlight less-studied collections, that include, but are not limited to plaster casts, photographs, scientific instruments, natural history specimens, botanic and fossils specimens, ethnographic artefacts, archaeological objects, architectural drawings or 3D models, design samples, or student projects.

Format:

The seminar will feature brief case study presentations (10 minutes), followed by roundtable discussions to encourage informal and collaborative exchange.

The seminar will be held online on 10 June 2025.

It is designed as a platform for discussion and collaboration, using English as a common language.

Submissions:

We warmly invite submission from both professionals and scholars.

Early-career and Ph.D. students are especially welcome.

Please send to shc.seminar.2025@gmail.com by 7 April 2025:

- An abstract of your planned 10-minute presentation (ca. 150 words)

- A short bio (ca. 200 words)

- Accepted contributions will be notified by 23 April 2025.

Organizers

The Research & Development Committee of the Society for the History of Collecting: Dr Sarah Coviello (Russborough House, Dublin), Dr Valeria Paruzzo (University of Trento), Dr Giuseppe Rizzo (Ph.D. University of Heidelberg)

Reference:

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