

## Rethinking Art Historical Objects, Documents, and Materials (Helsinki, 11 Jun 25)

Ateneum Art Museum, Kaivokatu 2, Helsinki, Jun 11, 2025

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In recent decades, the scope of research objects, documents, and materials in the field of art history has expanded significantly. The emergence of visual culture studies and the social history of art, for example, have fed into this shift, and art historians are now engaging with a broader and more diverse array of research materials than ever before.

This symposium invites participants to explore the multifaceted ways in which art historians interact with their research objects. We will delve into the methodologies and approaches that shape our understanding of art history, asking critical questions about the types of objects and documents studied, and the knowledge they reveal. We are particularly interested in exploring the various ways in which art historians make their research materials resonate, and what kinds of practices and methods are employed to bring these objects to life. We also wish to address these issues from the perspective of cultural memory and forgetting: why certain objects, documents, and materials are preserved while others are forgotten or destroyed, and how this dynamic affects the construction of art historical narratives.

The symposium is organised by the Ateneum Art Museum (Finnish National Gallery), Society for Art History in Finland and the University of Helsinki, Faculty of Arts, Department of Cultures, Art History, in collaboration with the research project Cultural Amnesia and the 'Golden Age' of Finnish Art: Unravelling the Narratives of Finnish Art History, c. 1880s–1910s, funded by the Academy of Finland.

No registration necessary.

Program:

10:15 Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff (Ateneum Art Museum): Opening words

10:30–12:00 Session 1

Elina Räsänen: "Negative Spaces Meet Positive Forms – Tracing Lost Medieval Art"

Greta Koppel: "An Altarpiece as a Museum – The Case of the Passion Altarpiece in the Niguliste Museum, Tallinn"

12:00–13:30 Lunch break

13:30–15:00 Session 2

Amy F. Ogata: "Rethinking Decoration, Applied Art and an Aesthetic Infrastructure in the Second

## Empire”

Jordan Bear : “Blurred Signatures: Misunderstanding and Authorship in a Photographic Archive”

15:00-15:30 Coffee break

15:30-16:30 Panel discussion: “Material Memory: How Objects and Documents Shape Cultural Narratives”

Hosted by Marja Lahelma (Ateneum Art Museum) and Anna Ripatti (University of Helsinki)

Guest speakers: Jordan Bear (University of Toronto), Greta Koppel (Kadriorg Art Museum, Art Museum of Estonia), Amy F. Ogata (University of Southern California), Elina Räsänen (University of Helsinki)

### Reference:

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