Polyptychs' Fortune and Misfortune (Lucca, 7-9 Oct 25)

Scuola IMT Alti Studi, Lucca, Oct 7–09, 2025
Registration deadline: Jul 20, 2025

Ilaria Andreoli

"Polyptychs' Fortune and Misfortune. Provenance, Reconstruction, Restitution".
This conference taking place at Scuola IMT Alti Studi, Lucca, October 7-9, 2025, explores the themes of dispersion and unity in the context of artistic production, encompassing both the materiality of works and their contextual significance and reception. The altarpiece is selected as a case study to examine these questions across different centuries, geographical areas, and artistic techniques.

Selected papers will address the dismantling of altarpieces over time, the dispersion of their components, and the possibilities for their reconstruction. Contributions are invited that explore the methods of reuniting dispersed elements – whether physically or digitally – as well as the conservation challenges involved. The dismantling of altarpieces is indicative of intricate historical dynamics, encompassing shifts in artistic taste, fluctuations in market demand, and evolving practices in preservation and art management. Furthermore, it invites a reconsideration of the epistemology of art history.

The reconstruction of dismantled polyptychs necessitates an interdisciplinary approach, underscoring the need for collective reflection on the epistemological foundations of art history. Addressing the disintegrating unity of these objects necessitates multifaceted research, encompassing domains such as conservation and restoration practices, as well as the global geography of art. History of art exhibitions and artworks restitution offers opportunities for the temporary reconstitution of these fragmented works, further enriching the discussion.

Submissions that engage with epistemological questions alongside data-driven research in areas such as technical art history, connoisseurship, iconographic analysis, provenance studies, museum studies, collecting history and restitution are invited.

The organizers will provide accommodation for two nights.
Participants will be responsible for covering their own travel and meal expenses.

Contributors are requested to submit an abstract in Italian, English or French (maximum 300 words) and a brief CV by July 20th 2025 to:

giulia.puma@univ-cotedazur.fr
ilaria.andreoli@inha.fr
emanuele.pellegrini@imtlucca.it

Reference:

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