

13 Sessions at AAH (Cambridge, 8–10 Apr 26)

University of Cambridge / Association for Art History Annual Conference, Cambridge, UK, Apr 8–10, 2026

Deadline: Nov 2, 2025

ArtHist.net Redaktion

- [1] [The History of Museum Access](#)
- [2] [Learning to Look, Looking to Learn: The Power of Observation](#)
- [3] [A Call to Action: Transnational Artistic Solidarities and Decolonial Alliances, 1960s–1970s](#)
- [4] [How to Research Tapestries](#)
- [5] [Always Connect? Relational Paradigms in Art History](#)
- [6] [Confounding Images - Frustration as Art Historical Method](#)
- [7] [Art is Dead: Long Live the Artist – Creativity in the Times of AI](#)
- [8] [Indigenous Subversions: Counter/Retrocolonization in Artistic Practice](#)
- [9] [Reassessing Heroism in Medieval Art](#)
- [10] [Blue Aesthetics: Art and Aquatic Life](#)
- [11] [Environmental Approaches to the Eastern Mediterranean Landscape, 1750-1920](#)
- [12] [Questioning the Illusion/Materiality Polemics in a Transcultural Art History](#)
- [13] [British Art, Incorporated](#)

Call for Papers | Association for Art History 2025 Annual Conference

We are delighted to announce a Call for Papers for our next year's conference, which will be held in collaboration with the History of Art department at the University of Cambridge.

The Association for Art History's Annual Conference brings together international research and critical debate about art history and visual culture. A key annual event, the conference is an opportunity to keep up to date with new research, hear leading keynotes, broaden networks, and exchange ideas.

The Annual Conference attracts around 400 attendees each year and is popular with academics, curators, practitioners, PhD students, early career researchers, and anyone engaged with art history research. Members of the Association get reduced conference rates, and members and non-members are welcome to attend and propose sessions and papers. Convenors are limited to convening one session, and we ask that speakers give a paper in one session only.

We actively encourage applications from candidates who are Black, Asian, minority ethnic or from other groups traditionally underrepresented within art historical roles in the UK, as well as new partnerships from those representing these groups. We also welcome session proposals from art

associations, societies and networks.

[1] [The History of Museum Access](#)

From: Tobias Teutenberg

Date: 29 Sep 25

Half-day session at the AAH Annual Conference 2026, co-organised by Alexandra F. Morris (University of Lincoln) and Tobias Teutenberg (Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History)

In the late 20th century, museum spaces underwent significant changes as a result of the United States's Rehabilitation Acts of 1954, 1973, and the Disability Act of 1990. These laws sought to combat discrimination against disabled people in their use of public facilities. As a result, new forms of inclusion were tested in the museum landscape expanding worldwide. These laws led to the architectural redesign of buildings inside and out, the reform of existing displays, and the implementation of creative art education programmes. Based on the current debate on the topic of 'creative access' (Armanda Cachia), this session explores the historical foundations of museum inclusion programmes currently established. By critically analysing the emerging conditions which spawned exemplary access prototypes, we can methodically evaluate their continued relevance. The guiding question is: Can ideas for the present and future of museum access be developed from the conceptual repertoire of the past?

We invite contributions which present progressive inclusion concepts for disabled people developed and implemented institutionally since the post-war period. Or papers which deal with activist interventions in the museum space related to the topic of access. During this post-war period: what approaches were experimented with, what problems were overcome in the process, and what new ones were created? What controversies between curators, conservators and visitors accompanied the development of early inclusion programmes, and what potential do these experimental approaches hold for possible updating?

To submit a contribution, please follow the instructions on the official conference website.

<https://forarthistory.org.uk/the-history-of-museum-access/>

[2] [Learning to Look, Looking to Learn: The Power of Observation](#)

From: Susan Barahal

Date: 29 Sep 25

In this age of instant messaging and sound bites, slow and close looking seem antithetical to our fast-paced culture. Much of the information we receive is often quickly antithetical to our fast-paced culture. Much of the information we receive is often quickly perceived, reduced to catchy slogans, and lacks in-depth analyses. These speedy approaches do not address complex situations that require close and deliberate observation and scrutiny.

Close and slow looking involve developing the disposition to explore the world closely in a variety of settings and taking the time to observe details, move beyond first impressions, and be open to different perspectives. The ability to look slowly and closely can be learned and developed and offers transferable skills across disciplines; these tools are frequently used by doctors, scientists, and criminologists.

However, educators, researchers, and scholars often under-emphasize the benefits of slow and close looking and how these strategies can deepen and strengthen thinking, learning, and understanding. The connections between keen observation and learning are often overlooked and undervalued.

What impact can slow, and close looking have on teaching and learning across all disciplines and content areas? How can a slow and close looking approach to learning increase student engagement?

This session will explore the benefits, impact, and implications of slow and close looking across disciplines and in varied educational settings. We invite scholars, researchers, and educators to submit proposals that explore a variety of topics related to slow and close looking. We encourage proposal formats that offer participants some interactive participation in slow looking methods.

Submit your Paper via this form: <https://app.box.com/s/e1r529tdk6ef6yfc6gqkxnry9bn4e0u> Please download, complete and send it directly to the Session Convenor(s) below by Sunday 2 November 2025:

Susan Barahal, Tufts University, Susan.barahal@Tufts.edu

Elizabeth Canter, Tufts University, Elizabeth.Canter@tufts.edu

[3] A Call to Action: Transnational Artistic Solidarities and Decolonial Alliances, 1960s–1970s

From: Paulina Caro Troncoso

Date: 30 Sep 25

Founded in London in 1974, Artists for Democracy (AFD) brought together a group of international artists and activists, including Cecilia Vicuña, John Dugger, David Medalla, and Guy Brett. The collective aimed to support liberation movements across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, as seen in its first major project, the Arts Festival for Democracy in Chile, held at the Royal College of Art. This event was a direct response to the 1973 Chilean coup d'état and featured meetings, exhibitions, and other activities.

AFD embodies the ethos and sensibility prevalent among artists and cultural practitioners in the 1960s and 1970s. In dialogue with initiatives such as the 1974 Venice Biennale, CAYC in Buenos Aires, and FES-TAC '77 in Lagos, AFD proposed a vision of art rooted in exile, solidarity, and a decolonial imagination, contributing to South-South alliances and alternative circuits of cultural production that challenge institutional and geopolitical boundaries.

In what ways can these forms of artistic collaboration offer new frameworks for transnational approaches in art history? We invite contributions that investigate artistic practices, initiatives, and strategies that emerged in connection with anti-imperialist movements and solidarity with what was then referred to as the "Third World". Decolonial approaches focusing on marginalised epistemologies and counter-hegemonic forms of dissent are particularly encouraged. Papers exploring the intersection of art, migration, identity, and collective memory are also welcome.

Submit your paper using the form on the website. Please download, complete, and send it directly to the Session Convenors below by Sunday, 2 November 2025.

Paulina Caro Troncoso, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, pacarotroncoso@gmail.com

Roberta Garieri, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, robertagarieri.univ@gmail.com

Website:

https://forarthistory.org.uk/a-call-to-action-transnational-artistic-solidarities-and-decolonial-alliances-1960s-1970s/?fbclid=PAVERFWANHpeFleHRuA2FibQlxMQABpyCsbWIBioMQVSkxtO8j9ekYcv5TB-JadHk_MYGj_cSuC_IG6mR-9Izu-hCmw_aem_xN8D7QnJKe3VckuR1C2i4w

[4] How to Research Tapestries

From: Carlo Scapecchi

Date: 30 Sep 25

Tapestries have usually been approached and studied as “woven paintings”. However, these luxurious and complex artefacts are far more complex. Indeed, tapestries are the result of entrepreneurial efforts, materials, trade, crafts and manufacture. The session reflects on how to study and research tapestries as an independent and autonomous medium rather than “woven paintings”. It aims to bring together diverse and new theoretical approaches to study tapestries, including their production, manufacturing processes, and material culture. We encourage papers from different historical and geographical contexts.

Themes might cover:

approaches to tapestries studies

manufacturing history of tapestries

the choice of materials, weavers, entrepreneurs and tapestry workers

involvement of women weaving tapestries

the making of cartoons

-digital humanities and tapestries

The session invites papers of 20 minutes. A facilitated debate will follow the papers.

Submit your Paper via this form: <https://app.box.com/s/e1r529tdk6ef6ycfc6gqkxnry9bn4e0u> Please download, complete and send it directly to the Session Convenor(s) below by Sunday, 2 November 2025:

Carlo Scapecchi, Arden University, cscapcchi@arden.ac.uk

[5] Always Connect? Relational Paradigms in Art History

From: Christopher Williams-Wynn

Date: 30 Sep 25

Art history draws on a host of relational paradigms, from ecologies and networks to systems and webs, to frame its analyses of artistic production, circulation, and reception. Recent studies illuminate, for instance, how artworks have been embedded in systems of colonial oppression, are implicated in ecologies of environmental exploitation, and move through global logistical networks.

Far less attention has been paid to the implications of selecting one relational paradigm over another, even though that choice is decisive. Each paradigm carries its own presumptions and priorities and so privileges certain perspectives over others. This panel therefore asks: What is at stake in the ways that relations are posed and understood in art history? How do those paradigms define methods of inquiry and inform examinations of artworks? Which histories are invoked, explicitly or implicitly, in the choice of one over another? And under what conditions do attempts to connect encounter frictions and misalignments?

As the panel seeks a diverse range of positions, conceptually and geographically, papers may offer methodological reflections, theoretical interventions, or historiographic reappraisals as well as focused analyses of artworks. Of particular interest are papers that offer relational frameworks developed outside canonical European and North American contexts.

Organized by Christopher Williams-Wynn (Freie Universität Berlin). This session will be held on location at AAH 2026 at the University of Cambridge.

Submissions should include a title and abstract (250 words maximum) for a 20-minute paper, as well as your name and institutional affiliation (if any). The form for submissions is available at:

<https://forarthistory.org.uk/always-connect-relational-paradigms-in-art-history/>

To submit your proposal, please complete the form and email it directly to the session convener (chrislww [at] zedat.fu-berlin.de).

[6] Confounding Images - Frustration as Art Historical Method

From: Millie Horton-Insch

Date: 30 Sep 25

If the mission of Art History is to make sense of visual and material cultures, then what can be learned from objects that resist art historical study?

This panel invites contributors to reflect on pre-modern artworks that they find compelling, but which they feel they have 'failed' to satisfactorily engage in art historical study. We encourage contributors to consider objects and images that they find confounding, have struggled to write about, have abandoned study of, or which they have found resistant to art historical methodologies. We also invite papers which consider methodological 'failings': art historical theories that present significant challenges when applied to pre-modern art.

In reflecting on encounters with the limits of art historical research, we hope to provoke generative discussion about what can be learned from this friction, about both these objects and Art History as a discipline. In doing so, we conceive frustration as a productive method in the study of material culture.

This panel discussion will consist of 10-minute presentations followed by a round table discussion and Q&A. We therefore invite 10-minute presentations that reflect on: a single pre-modern artwork, object, image or method. Papers should raise issues which will form the basis of a broader conversation between panellists and with the audience. We welcome papers which consider pre-modern objects from across periods and geographies, including those related to the 'afterlives' of pre-modern objects.

Please submit an abstract using the form on the AAH website

(<https://forarthistory.org.uk/confounding-images-frustration-as-art-historical-method/>) by Sunday 2nd November 2025.

Contributing panellists will have the opportunity to submit their paper for publication in a special issue of the open-access journal, *Different Visions*, titled 'Points of Friction' and coedited by Millie Horton-Insch and Lauren Rozenberg. More details may be found here:

<https://differentvisions.org/special-issue-points-of-friction/>.

[7] Art is Dead: Long Live the Artist – Creativity in the Times of AI

From: Kanwal Syed

Date: 30 Sep 25

Since history, artists have transformed technological “threats” into opportunities for creativity and critique. This panel asks: What new forms of authorship, authenticity, or resistance emerge when artists collaborate with machines?

Themes may include:

Historical responses to technology in art

Authorship and authenticity in digital art

Artistic resistance and subversion

Technology as a platform for marginalized voices

Given its importance in contemporary debates, this session will be convened as an extended session (either a half-day or a two-hour panel) to allow for deeper discussion.

Please follow the link below to download the proposal form and send your completed submission directly to me at ksyed@aud.edu

<https://lnkd.in/dZpNzr4r>

[8] Indigenous Subversions: Counter/Retrocolonization in Artistic Practice

From: Caroline Menezes

Date: 1 Oct 25

This panel explores the shift from decolonisation to counter- and retrocolonisation, analysing how Indigenous and minoritarian art traditions, practices, symbols, and materials worldwide have responded to, influenced, appropriated, and subverted colonising cultures—both historically and in contemporary practice. What strategies are used to implement a counter- or retrocolonial approach? How do these methods allow us to reframe the history of art in new, diverse, and plural ways? What does it mean to engage with these claims?

We invite proposals for papers that examine how artistic practices serve as a means to ‘turn back’ on colonial pasts, presents, and futures within a global comparative framework and discuss how artists from Indigenous and marginalised communities, including Amerindian, African, Afro-diasporic, Aboriginal, and Roma, seek visibility and voice in the global artistic scene. What are the most effective tools and urgent questions in efforts to redefine power relations? How do the experiences and aesthetics of marginalised peoples influence or reshape mainstream cultures? The panel will discuss both the potential and limitations of decolonial discourse, in line with calls for counter- and retro-colonisation from Indigenous and marginalised communities. We encourage collaborative processes that actively involve scholars and artists from Indigenous and marginalised backgrounds, through artistic residencies, fieldwork, partnerships, and shared-making practices.

Please email your proposal (max. 250 words, including a title and a short bio) to the session convenors:

Paride Bollettin – paridebollettin@sci.muni.cz

Caroline Menezes – caroline@carolinemenezes.net

Julia Secklehner – secklehner@phil.muni.cz

For more details and the paper proposal form, please visit the Association for Art History 2025 Annual Conference website: <https://app.box.com/s/rsyr7tsfwxwvaguqaw0yqdpk0grc>

[9] Reassessing Heroism in Medieval Art

From: Elizabeth Pugliano

Date: 1 Oct 25

This session seeks to interrogate the concept of heroism in medieval culture through exploration and (re)evaluation of the forms and motifs associated with the heroic in the art of the Middle Ages.

Deeply rooted in ancient and medieval literary sources and frequently enmeshed with concurrent ideas of virility, chivalry and sanctity, notions of heroism have long served as the bedrock of both popular and academic formulations of medieval culture. Moving beyond representations of heroes or renderings of heroic texts, what configurations of heroic ideals did medieval viewers encounter and how did such depictions impact their various audiences? To what extent was heroism contextually constituted, and how did visual expressions adjust to contextual requirements? How were common visual strategies such as juxtaposition, repetition or typology used in service of communicating heroic ideals, teaching lessons or imparting warnings?

Studies engaging any aspect of medieval visual or material culture are welcome. This session embraces a global Middle Ages and an expansive chronology, spanning late antiquity to early modernity. Especially encouraged are papers that consider issues of heroism in relation to gender, race and/or religion, explore aspects of the heroic beyond or as a foil to western European traditions, follow the transformations and mutations of "medieval" heroism in postmedieval artistic movements, or reflect on the impacts of medieval revivalism in shaping early scholarship on the heroic in medieval art.

Please email proposals for 20-minute papers to elizabeth.pugliano@ucdenver.edu. Proposals should include a paper title, abstract (250 words maximum), your name, institutional affiliation(s) (if any), email address, and social media handles (if any).

Session questions may be directed to session chair Elizabeth Pugliano (University of Colorado Denver). For general information on paper proposals, please see the 2026 Paper Proposal Form linked on the conference website or contact conference2026@forarthistory.org.uk.

Deadline for submissions: 2 November 2025

[10] Blue Aesthetics: Art and Aquatic Life

From: Jessica Ullrich

Date: 1 Oct 25

In an era of ecological crisis, multispecies entanglements, and heightened awareness of planetary interdependencies, we invite critical inquiries at the intersection of art history, artistic practices, blue humanities and animal studies. We seek to create a forum for reflecting on how artistic engagement with aquatic animals shape aesthetic discourse. Thus, we encourage contributions that examine the role of visual art, film, and music in articulating fluid ecologies and relational ontologies within oceanic and aquatic contexts. Of particular interest are submissions that challenge disciplinary boundaries and propose new conceptual

frameworks for thinking across water, more-than-human life, and the arts.

Topics may include analyses of the representation of aquatic animals in art and aesthetics, as well as investigations into how art engages with climate change and animal ethics in relation to water. We welcome decolonial, Indigenous, and ecocritical explorations on marine life, alongside inquiries into water as an aesthetic and epistemological medium through which interspecies relations are imagined and mediated. Contributions might also consider aesthetic dimensions of marine archives, ocean memory, and what has been termed "Blue Extinction". Situating these themes within art historical and aesthetic inquiry, the session aims to open new avenues for understanding how the arts not only reflect but actively shape our relations with watery worlds and their more-than-human inhabitants.

Please download, complete and send the form provided on the website directly to the Session Convener(s) below by Sunday 2 November 2025:

Jessica Ullrich, University of Fine Arts Muenster, ullrichj@kunstakademie-muenster.de

Martin Ullrich, Nuremberg University of Music, martin.ullrich@hfm-nuernberg.de

Tabea Sabrina Weber, University Bielefeld, tabea_sabrina.weber@uni-bielefeld.de

[11] Environmental Approaches to the Eastern Mediterranean Landscape, 1750-1920

From: Sebastian Marshall

Date: 3 Oct 25

For centuries, the territories of the eastern Mediterranean were home to the ethnically, religiously, and culturally diverse communities that comprised the Ottoman Empire. These territories simultaneously served as travel destinations for artists, antiquarians, and archaeologists seeking out the region's ancient ruins, Biblical heritage, and 'Orientalist' exoticism. For insiders and outsiders to the region alike, the land of the eastern Mediterranean itself had long been a site of significance, whether as contested territory in trans-imperial and nationalist conflicts or as the source of valuable commodities, such as antiquities, agricultural products, or geological matter. While scholars have explored travellers' desire to assimilate the region into sublime or picturesque frameworks, there has been less critical study of how the region's landscapes have been represented visually, particularly in the case of vernacular image-making traditions. Art and visual culture witness the complex ways that human labour and territorialization shaped the eastern Mediterranean through a broad array of cultural and aesthetic tropes pertaining to land, landscape, and 'nature'.

We invite papers that approach artistic representations of eastern Mediterranean landscapes through an environmental lens, focusing on the period 1750-1920. The panel welcomes papers on topics including but not limited to: micro-ecologies; animal-human relations; agricultural labour and resistance; agroecological continuity/transformation; infrastructural/industrial impacts on landscape (e.g. railways, urbanisation); intersections of extractive practices (e.g. mining, archaeology); state/private/common land ownership; territories contested by local/national/imperial actors; landscape and tourism; landscapes as sites for mythology and history; (dis)continuities between ancient and modern land use; rivers, coasts, deserts, mountains; and images which conform/subvert pastoral/picturesque/sublime tropes.

To view the listing for this panel on the Association for Art History's website, please follow this link:

<https://forarthistory.org.uk/environmental-approaches-to-the-eastern-mediterranean-landscape-1750-1920/>

To submit your title and abstract (250 words maximum) for a 20-minute paper, please download the sub-

mission form available via the listing. Once completed, please send the form directly to the Session Convenors below by Sunday 2 November 2025:

Sebastian Marshall, University of St Andrews, sam66@st-andrews.ac.uk

Alexandra Solovyev, School of Advanced Study, University of London, alexandra.solovyev@sas.ac.uk

[12] Questioning the Illusion/Materiality Polemics in a Transcultural Art History

From: Ang Li

Date: 5 Oct 25

We invite paper proposals for the panel “Questioning the Illusion/Materiality Polemics in a Transcultural Art History” at the upcoming Association for Art History Annual Conference 2026, to be held at the University of Cambridge from 8 to 10 April 2026.

Ever since the establishment of the perspectival system in Western art, pictorial illusion has been pitted against materiality. Seminal works such as Erwin Panofsky's *Perspective as Symbolic Form* and Hubert Damisch's *A Theory of /Cloud/* have helped to solidify this dichotomy. Panofsky's Eurocentric perspective may have prevented him from engaging with non-Western examples, while Damisch's limited references to Chinese painting, though commendable, lack historical rigour.

More recently, scholars have begun to challenge the perspectival paradigm by addressing the so-called ‘ground’ problem—arguing that the material ground of a picture often contradicts the illusionistic space constructed by linear perspective. However, these scholarly interventions have been largely confined to the European examples so far, with only a few specimens from the East, which, nonetheless, are not in critical dialogue with their Western counterparts. Not to mention the lack of three-dimensional art or the absence of African art, Islamic art, ancient American Art and the art from the rest of the world. Rather than upholding an unexamined dichotomy between illusion and materiality, it is urgent and necessary to re-address this question in a global and transcultural framework.

This panel welcomes proposals that actively forge connections, confrontations, or convergences between European and non-European examples in addressing the relationship between illusion and materiality. Topics of particular interest include, but are not limited to, the figure/ground, background, and surface of paintings and beyond.

Submit your Paper via this form (<https://app.box.com/s/e1r529tdk6ef6ycfc6gqkxnry9bn4e0u>). Please download, complete and send it directly to the Session Convenors below by Sunday 2 November 2025:

Ang Li, China Academy of Art, 0124032@caa.edu.cn

Sumihiro Oki, Kyoto University, iplayski@gmail.com

[13] British Art, Incorporated

Form: Tobah Aukland-Peck

Date: 6 Oct 25

In recent decades, protests against corporate patronage have erupted in the galleries of Britain's museums, making international headlines. Interventions by groups such as Art Not Oil, Liberate Tate, and Pre-

scription Addiction Intervention Now have demanded that institutions confront the relationship between art and harmful corporate practices. These demonstrations are just the latest responses to British art's long historical entanglement with private enterprise. As Philip Stern and others have demonstrated, modern Britain was shaped by the power of its corporations. This panel interrogates the place of the arts in that narrative, from the formation of early modern joint-stock companies like the Royal African Company and East India Company to the banking conglomerates of the present day. While histories of church and government patronage have long structured art historical discourse, we suggest that corporations in Britain and the British Empire were similarly influential, commissioning and funding major institutions, artists, and exhibitions.

We invite papers from a broad geographic and chronological scope that investigate how corporations shaped the visual arts in Britain and the British Empire. How have these businesses influenced what is depicted and what remains outside of the frame? What corporate histories can we discern in studies of artistic materials? How do companies use the arts to facilitate their capitalist, colonialist, extractive, and industrial objectives, and how do the arts collaborate with or challenge those missions? And how are the institutions of art history—including museums, publishing, and universities—implicated in these corporate projects?

Please submit abstracts of 250 words (see AAH website for formatting details) to Zoë Dostal (adostal@amherst.edu) and Tobah Aukland-Peck (tauklandpeck@gmail.com) by November 2, 2025.

Reference:

CFP: 13 Sessions at AAH (Cambridge, 8-10 Apr 26). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 6, 2025 (accessed Apr 3, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/50756>>.