

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

University of Cambridge, UK, Apr 8–10, 2026

forarthistory.org.uk/events/cfp-association-for-art-history-2026-annual-conference/

ArtHist.net Redaktion

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Association for Art History (AAH) 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] Practice Research at 100: Writing the long history of practice research in the art school

From: Sian Vaughan

Date: Oct. 13, 25

"Practice Research at 100: Writing the long history of practice research in the art school".

The emergence of practice research in art schools in the UK is frequently traced to early definitions of practice-led research (e.g. Frayling 1993) or the inclusion of 'practical outputs' in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise (HERO 1999). However, the first recorded creative practice PhD dissertation in the United States was awarded in 1929, and subsequent to this US education leaders debated the role of practice doctorates at regular intervals (Fanning 1940; Koch 1941; Huntly 1941; Weller et al 1960; Gertler and Meltzer 1970), alongside occasional calls to 'express research as art' (Jeffers 1993). These periodic returns suggest that there is a richer and deeper international history to be written on the emergence of the idea of creative practice as research in art, and on the conditions that led to the flourishing of ideas and opportunities in the 1990s and early 2000s.

This session invites papers that contribute to the longer history of practice research in the art school up to the 1990s. Suggested areas of focus include (but are not limited to):

- early debates in international higher education;
 - international and transnational emergence of theories of practice or creative research;
 - the impact and influence of structural changes in the educational landscape for art schools;
 - the influence of key theories, texts, events and dialogues;
 - case studies and examples of practice research before the 1990s;
- and
- the changing role of the art professor

Particularly encouraged are papers that explore the longer history of practice research beyond the Anglophone.

To submit your paper please complete this form:

<https://app.box.com/s/e1r529tdk6ef6ycfc6gqkxnry9bn4e0u> and send it directly to the Session Convenors below by Sunday November 2, 2025:

Damian Sutton, Coventry University: ac2719@coventry.ac.uk

Sian Vaughan, Birmingham City University: Sian.Vaughan@bcu.ac.uk

[2] Africa, Art History, and the (University) Museum: approaches to object-led teaching and display

From: Teresa Soley

Date: Oct. 13, 25

"Africa, Art History, and the (University) Museum: approaches to object-led teaching and display".

African artworks, makers, and narratives are increasingly – if belatedly – a focus of British, European and American art markets and exhibitions, with attendant increases in the number of books focused on African art, and aspirations to create more undergraduate and postgraduate teaching courses around this area. At the same time, African material culture remains largely relegated to archaeological, ethnographic or anthropological museum collections, perpetuating their marginalisation within the history of art. Art history departments and museums are challenged to meaningfully integrate African visual and material culture into a broader array of university curricula and displays.

We invite proposals for 20-minute papers that explore issues and themes such as:

- How might more accurate conceptions of African art be embedded in university teaching and museum displays?

- How might African collections, especially in local museums, be better utilised in history of art pedagogy?
- How can archaeological and anthropological collections be integrated into a more complex understanding of African artistic societies?
- How can universities upskill teaching staff in the necessary intellectual frameworks to ensure that the study of African art is not limited by unsuitable art historical approaches and epistemological frameworks?
- What resources are needed for researching and teaching African art?
- Whose voices need to be heard in any such endeavour?
- How can universities ensure that the teaching of African art does not further embed notions of 'otherness' or 'exoticness'?
- What creative methods can we use to teach African art?

We welcome submissions from museum professionals and educators, and are open to alternative formats for contributions, including creative responses and/or practice-based approaches.

To submit your title and abstract, please download and complete the paper proposal form:

<https://app.box.com/s/e1r529tdk6ef6ycfc6gqkxny9bn4e0u> and return it to the Session Convenors below by November 2, 2025:

Eva Namusoke, The Fitzwilliam Museum: enn21@cam.ac.uk

Teresa Soley, University of Cambridge: ts992@cam.ac.uk

Neal Spencer, The Fitzwilliam Museum: nas1003@cam.ac.uk

[3] [Wildfires in Contemporary Art: New Directions for Eco-Aesthetics](#)

From: Alexandra Karl

Date: Oct. 14, 2025

"Wildfires in Contemporary Art: New Directions for Eco-Aesthetics".

This panel seeks to survey artistic responses in contemporary art to the increasing emergence of wildfires. While a range of visual motifs can signify climate change and environmental upheaval, wildfires are 'burning bigger, hotter, faster and more often' writes the journalist Edward Struzik. In recent years, several cities around the world, from Paradise CA to Lytton BC to Varnavas GR have been scorched and razed, in addition to extensive swaths of wildlands and the animals they contain.

This panel will look at how contemporary artists have responded to this phenomenon and what visual vocabularies have emerged. The panel will ask whether it is enough to depict forest landscapes with fluorescent palettes, as we see in paintings by Kim Dorland? Or to salvage charcoal fragments from burn sites, as Cara Despain does for her carbon drawings? How do visual artists think about the impact of particulates on air quality and human breathing, as we see in Wanda Koop dystopian scenes. Do they address the olfactory effects of ashes in their installations and videos? The panel seeks new iconographies and experimental thinking in media as wide ranging as traditional easel painting to digital technologies. Independent scholars and curators, along with gallerists and artists are invited to contribute.

Building upon Malcolm Miles' 2014 book 'Eco-Aesthetics: Art, Literature and Architecture in a Period of Climate Change' (Bloomsbury Academic), the panel will adopt a critical approach and seek to showcase iconographically rigorous art that demonstrates new directions for eco-aesthetics, allowing us to rethink this urgent topic.

The session format will be three 20-min research paper and three artist lightning talks via video link, and Q&A.

Please submit your paper via this form: <https://app.box.com/s/e1r529tdk6ef6ycfc6ggqkxnry9bn4e0u>

Please download, complete and send it directly to the Session Convenor below by Sunday November 2, 2025:

Alexandra Karl, PhD (Cantab), Independent: akarl@uoguelph.ca

[4] Transcultural Abstraction, Colonial Histories

From: Max Boersma

Date: Oct. 14, 2025

"Transcultural Abstraction, Colonial Histories".

Bringing together scholars across geographic subfields, this panel seeks to develop more expansive histories and methodologies for abstract art, centred on the intersections between abstraction, nationalism, colonialism, and coloniality. Focused particularly on the formative decades of the practice's "invention," we aim to probe anew the power relations, aesthetic motivations, and transcultural connections undergirding abstract art's early development and global dissemination. We seek to ask: How did abstraction index the political, technological, racialized, and socio-economic divisions that shaped artmaking in different localities across the globe? What opportunities did the practice offer for resistance and solidarity? And how might attending to overlooked or marginalized epistemologies and positionalities – including visual traditions and cultural practices outside of modernist painting – be central to a renewed history and historiography of the topic?

This session invites contributions that critically interrogate abstract art within an interdisciplinary frame; examine distinct conceptual and philosophical bases for non-mimetic form; foreground local invocations and alternative genealogies of abstraction from Indigenous and non-Western contexts; and challenge the coloniality of Euro-American narratives. We are especially interested in papers that directly engage relations between abstract art and the colonial and imperial histories of Europe, Russia, Japan, and the United States.

Submit your paper via this form: <https://app.box.com/s/e1r529tdk6ef6ycfc6ggqkxnry9bn4e0u>

Please download, complete, and send this form directly to the Session Conveners below by Sunday November 2, 2025.

Max Boersma, Freie Universität Berlin: m.boersma@fu-berlin.de

Yiqing Li, University of Macau: lesleyli@um.edu.mo

Stephanie Su, University of Colorado, Boulder: Stephanie.Su@colorado.edu

[5] Performing Otherness in Contemporary Art

From: Assel Kadyrkhanova and Mehmet Berkay Sülek

Date: Oct. 16, 2025

"Performing Otherness in Contemporary Art".

In today's globalised contemporary art, more artists from marginalised, formerly colonised territories are gaining global visibility. Yet, the asymmetric relationship persists, resulting in a condition where institutional power structures, often situated in the Global North, continue to dominate the production and validation of art, and what art historian Piotr Piotrowski (2008) called "vertical art history" continues to persist. In some cases, it leads to what Lisa Lau (2009) termed "re-orientalism", or the tendency of native cultural producers to comply with and perpetuate orientalist stereotypes themselves. This, in turn, leads to reinforcing the dynamics between centres and peripheries. Similar tendencies could be found in art historical discourse, which led Eric Michaud (2019) to consider whether the growing ethnicization of contemporary art differs from the nation-state discourse that fuelled the emergence of art history as an academic discipline.

This panel raises questions on identity politics in contemporary art in the wake of growing importance of indigenous art and seeks to reconsider the potential of transcultural or transnational discourses in the context of institutional demand to perform cultural difference. It examines how artists, curators, and scholars navigate this condition, addressing the potential effects of over-employing the ideas of cultural identity, authenticity and ask questions such as: What are the opportunities and challenges that artists and cultural practitioners face when they raise questions on such notions? How can we use these to rupture the centre-periphery relation and find cross-border solidarities?

We invite papers from a range of geographic contexts and inter-disciplinary perspectives, particularly encouraging submissions by artists and curators.

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 November 2, 2025:

Assel Kadyrkhanova, University of Amsterdam: a.kadyrkhanova@uva.nl

Mehmet Berkay Sülek, University of Amsterdam: m.b.sulek@uva.nl

[6] This Was Tomorrow: Reframing Pop

From: Ed Kettleborough

Date: Oct. 19, 2025

2026 marks the seventieth anniversary of *This is Tomorrow*, the seminal exhibition held at the Whitechapel Gallery in August 1956, and widely cited by scholarship as a definitive moment in the development of Pop Art.

The 'Pop' on show in *This is Tomorrow* shared little in common with the later strategies of Warhol, Lichtenstein et al., instead being marked by what Lawrence Alloway described as the 'ethnographic' approach of the Independent Group. This localised fracturing and difference is matched by the painterly, abstract, or Kitchen Sink inflected approaches of other British 'Pop' artists. These anomalies mirror the heterogeneities of global responses to mass media in the post-war era, as well as the radically different subjectivities displayed in the art of women 'Pop' artists such as Evelyn Axell and Rosalyn Drexler. In short, for all Pop's importance to our understanding of contemporary art, there is precious little agreement on precisely what the term delimits.

We thereby invite papers that subject both the specific histories of *This is Tomorrow* and the wider history of Pop Art to critical examination. Does 'Pop' remain a useful analytical framework and term for art histo-

rians? How is its efficacy determined by local and global contexts? What new narratives can we create when we challenge its familiar tropes and strictures?

This CfP is for a panel which will take place as part of AAH 2026 at the University of Cambridge. More details and submission link available here: <https://forarthistory.org.uk/this-was-tomorrow-reframing-pop/>

To submit your title and abstract, please download and complete the paper proposal form:

<https://app.box.com/s/e1r529tdk6ef6ycfc6gqkxnry9bn4e0u> and return it to the Session Convenor below by November 2, 2025:

Ed Kettleborough, University of Bristol: e.kettleborough@bristol.ac.uk

Reference:

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