

The Art History of Art Therapy (Rome/online, 4-5 Nov 25)

Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History / online, Nov 4–05, 2025

Tobias Teutenberg

The Art History of Art Therapy

The term ‘art therapy’ was coined in mid-twentieth century Europe, but its history reaches back into the nineteenth century. Its development as a clinical practice was as diverse as it was discontinuous: in different contexts, art therapy could serve as a means of healing and transformation, or as a tool of discipline and pathologization. Over the course of the twentieth century, the methods and institutions of art therapy have spread globally, intersecting with developments in modern aesthetics and art history in ways that remain largely unexplored.

This interdisciplinary workshop brings together scholars in the history of art and the history of the ‘psy’ sciences to examine the historical practices of art therapy and their relation to art history and art education. Under what circumstances have the production and reception of artworks been deemed therapeutic, and for whom? How has the diagnostic value of art been established in clinical and education settings? What consequences did this have for patients? And how has art therapy developed also in informal, self-guided, or anti-institutional contexts?

By placing focus on the ‘art history of art therapy’, we aim to illuminate how non-normative modes of perceiving and experiencing the world—particularly those historically excluded from mainstream art historiography—have shaped modern ideas of creativity, embodiment, and perception. It is equally crucial to recognize when and how these histories were enabled by coercive and exploitative structures. The workshop particularly emphasizes the historical agency of disabled and neurodiverse individuals and communities in the elaboration of aesthetic theories and practices.

Scientific Organization: Tobias Teutenberg (BHZ), Matthew Vollgraff (University of California, Berkeley); a cooperation between the Bibliotheca Hertziana and the NOMIS project “Depicted Worlds: The Perceptual Power of Pictures” (<https://nomisfoundation.ch/projects/depicted-worlds-the-perceptual-power-of-pictures/>)

Please follow the Workshop also online on Zoom.

Zoom Day 1: <https://eu02web.zoom-x.de/j/7475586652?omn=68285688908>

Zoom Day 2: <https://eu02web.zoom-x.de/j/7475586652?omn=66151695128>

Meeting ID: 747 558 6652

Workshop Program

Tuesday, 4 November 2025

9:15-9:30 Tobias Teutenberg (BHZ), Matthew Vollgraff (University of California, Berkeley): Introduction

I. EXHIBITIONS

Chair: Elisabetta Rattalino (BHZ)

09:30-10:15 Suzanne Hudson (University of Southern California): "Margaret Naumburg, Curator"

10:15-11:00 Lara Demori (BHZ): "Art and Mental Health in Modern Brazil: The Centro Psiquiátrico Pedro II in Rio de Janeiro"

11:00-11:45 Sara Laribi (University of Montreal): "Exhibiting Madness: Therapeutic Insights from the 1950 Psychopathological Art Exhibition at Sainte-Anne Hospital in Paris"

11:45-12:15 BREAK

II. ARTISTS

Chairs: Tobias Teutenberg, Matthew Vollgraff

12:15-13:00 Mariagrazia Muscatello (University for the Arts, Sciences, and Communication, Santiago de Chile): "Franco Basaglia and Roberto Sambonet: An Anti-Psychiatry Approach to Art and Culture in Brazil"

13:00-13:45 Anna Kipke (Leuphana University Lueneburg/Free University Berlin): "Emma Kunz. Therapeutic Line(s) in the Art of the 20th Century"

13:45-14:45 LUNCH (BHZ; Villino Stroganoff)

14:45-15:30 Pepper Stetler (Miami University; Oxford, Ohio): "Art Against Therapy: Judith Scott and the Creative Growth Art Center"

15:30-16:15 Tanya Sheehan (Colby College; Waterville, Maine): "The Fugitive Art of Therapy: Looking for Jacob Lawrence in the Zierer Archive"

16:15-16:45 BREAK

KEYNOTE

16:45-18:15 Whitney Davis (University of California, Berkeley, and Distinguished Scientist and Scholar, NOMIS Foundation, Zürich): "Projection and Pictures"

Wednesday, 5 November 2025

III. INSTITUTIONS

Chairs: Tobias Teutenberg, Matthew Vollgraff

10:15-11:00 Susan Hogan (University of Derby, Professor of Arts & Health and Professorial Fellow, IMH, University of Nottingham): "The History of Therapeutic Arts in Britain"

11:00-11:45 Imogen Wiltshire (University of Lincoln): "Art Therapy at Northfield Military Hospital (1944–1946)"

11:45-12:30 Clara Masnatta (Berlin): "Psicocine': Filmmaking as Therapy for Psychiatric Inmates in Buenos Aires in the 1970s"

12:30-13:30 LUNCH

IV. COLLECTIVES

Chair: Giulia Beatrice (BHZ)

13:30-14:15 Deianira Amico (Politecnico di Milano): "Beyond Art Brut: Trajectories of Public-Space Reclamation in Post-Basaglian Northern Italy"

14:15-15:00 Janina Klement (UCL): "From the Margins of the Avant-Garde: Lettrism's Radical Vision of Art Therapy After 1968"

15:00-15:30 BREAK

V. DIAGNOSTICS

Chairs: Tobias Teutenberg, Matthew Vollgraff

15:30-16:15 Katrin Luchsinger (Zurich University of the Arts/freelancer): "The Beginnings of Art Therapy with Children: Examples from the 'Journal of Child Psychiatry', Published by Psychiatrist Moritz Tramer from 1934 to 1963"

16:15-17:00 Jacob Stewart-Halevy (Tufts University, Medford, MA): "TAT Aesthetics"

17:00-17:45 Jelena Martinovic (EDHEA, HES-SO Valais-Wallis): "One's Brain Damage is Another One's Creativity: The Biologisation of Artistic Expression in Post-War Art Therapy"

Reference:

CONF: The Art History of Art Therapy (Rome/online, 4-5 Nov 25). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 22, 2025 (accessed Apr 6, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/50967>>.