Methodology Seminars for Art History in Ukraine (Rome, 27-31 Oct 25)

Bibliotheca Hertziana, via Gregoriana 22, Rome, Oct 27–31, 2025

Oleksandra Osadcha

The Methodology Seminars for Art History in Ukraine: Epistemologies, Agencies, and Margins is a first edition of a two-year scholarly initiative committed to rethinking methodological approaches and future directions of art history within Ukraine. Designed for early-career researchers from Ukraine it encourages critical, collaborative, and practice-oriented reflection on art historical methodology and the development of own research projects.

From August to October, 12 Ukrainian art historians participated in the weekly deep-reading methodological webinars and peer-to-peer consultations with experts, while developing their own research projects in art history.

In the last week of October, they will gather in Bibliotheca Hertziana to present their work-in-progress and take part in a series of intense workshops with renowned scholars.

PUBLIC PROGRAM

Monday, October 27, 18:00–19:30
Olenka Pevny. Between Theory and Practice: Studying Medieval Monuments of Kyiv
This talk explores the medieval visual inheritance of Ukraine and the coloniality of knowledge that continues to shape the study of Kyiv's sacred monuments. Through close consideration of three key sites—the eleventh-century Cathedral of St Sofiia, the twelfth-century Church of St Cyril of Alexandria, and the Church of the Saviour in Berestovo, restored in the seventeenth century—it examines how these monuments have been interpreted, restored, and appropriated within imperial and national frameworks. Ultimately, the talk calls for an epistemic decolonisation of medieval and early modern Central-East European studies—inviting us to see Kyiv's cultural landscape not as a reflection of imposed narratives, but as a vibrant nexus of multiple identities, transcultural connections, and historical continuities.

Tuesday, October 28, 14:30–16:00
Edit Andras. Region or not Region, that is the question
The lecture explores the shifting meanings of Central and Eastern Europe's regional identity from the end of the Cold War to the present. It traces how post-socialist optimism and European integration gave way to nationalist revivals, political dissonance, and new alignments amid global tensions—particularly Hungary's hinge toward illiberalism and Eastern alliances. Through examples from politics, art, and cultural diplomacy, the text reveals how unresolved historical losses, collective trauma, and the "fear of disappearance" continue to shape regional narratives and artistic

expression. Ultimately, it argues that transnational and regional approaches in art history can serve as antidotes to nationalism, offering a shared framework for solidarity and critical reflection across the fragmented post-socialist landscape.

Thursday, October 30, 14:00–15:30
Oksana Barshynova. The Archive and the Afterlife of Images
In the lecture we explore the archive as a dynamic site where preservation, erasure, and reinterpretation intersect. Rather than a neutral repository, the archive functions as a locus of power that determines which images endure and how they are framed within art-historical discourse. By tracing the afterlives of images—how they circulate, are reactivated, or suppressed in shifting cultural and political contexts—the theme foregrounds questions of memory, authority, and historiographical responsibility in transcultural art history.

Friday, October 31, 18:00–19:30
Mateusz Kapustka. Burckhardt's Demons: Contesting Visuality in Transcultural Art History
The lecture explores the potential for broadening the notions of image and visuality within the framework of contemporary transcultural art history. It specifically analyzes how the image cultures of the Indian subcontinent were addressed in early academic art history, particularly by Jacob Burckhardt. The discussion will take a dialectical-historical approach to explore how the European canon of visuality and the aesthetic validation of images in art history have been overdetermined by alienating discursive preconceptions.

SPEAKERS

Edit András is a Hungarian art historian, an independent scholar. She holds a Ph.D. in art history from Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. She is a senior member of the HUN-REN, Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Art History, Budapest. Her main interest concerns Eastern and Central European modern and contemporary art, gender issues, socially engaged art, public art, critical theories, post-socialist condition, and nationalism in the region.

Dr. Mateusz Kapustka is a Privatdozent at the Art History Institute of the University of Zurich (UZH) and, since 2025, the PI of a DFG research project at the Freie Universität Berlin (FU). His research interests include image conflicts, visual anachronism, idolatry and iconoclasm, images of protest, transcultural art history, and early modern intersections of knowledge and visual propaganda (focus Central and Eastern Europe).

Oksana Barshynova, deputy director of the National Art Museum of Ukraine, is an art historian, curator, and researcher studying contemporary art and the history of Ukrainian art in the second half of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century. She is codeveloper of the new concept for exhibiting modern and contemporary art at NAMU and the author of many articles on the history of Ukrainian art.

Dr Olenka Pevny, Associate Professor in Ukrainian Studies and in Medieval and Early Modern Slavonic Studies, University of Cambridge. She studies the art and culture of Kyivan Rus' and Ruthenia. She is particularly interested in the reception and acculturation of the Orthodox tradition in Eastern Slavic lands and in the place of visual culture in narratives of national, regional, religious, and gender identity.

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