AIWAC: Reframing methodologies (Rome, 15-17 Oct 26)

Rome, University of Arkansas Rome Center, Oct 15–17, 2026
Deadline: Apr 30, 2026

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Sixth Edition of AIWAC (Annual International Women in the Arts Conference): Reframing methodologies. Women Artists in Italy from 1607 to the Italian Unification.

Following the two exhibitions “Roma Pittrice. Artiste al lavoro tra XVI e XIX secolo” (Rome, Palazzo Braschi, 25/10/2024 - 04/05/2025) and “Donne nella Napoli spagnola. Un altro Seicento" (Naples, Le Gallerie d'Italia – 20/11/ 2025 – 22/3/2026), this conference seeks to foster critical reflections on methodologies for the study of women artists. More than fifty years after Linda Nochlin’s seminal question, “Why have there been no great women artists?”, we aim to reassess and critically examine the current state of scholarship on women and gender in the arts.
We invite scholars to present papers addressing any aspect of women artists and their participation in cultural discourses from the early modern to the modern period. The goal is to reconsider and reframe methodological approaches within the discipline. While the field has made significant advances, it has also perpetuated certain narratives and myths that have shaped—at times uncritically—the rhetoric of feminist art history. This conference aims to interrogate these assumptions and to reassess the historiographical and philological foundations of the field.
The year 1607 marks a significant turning point: the Accademia di San Luca in Rome opened its doors to women for the first time, contributing to the professionalization of women artists. In the decades that followed, other Italian cities adopted similar practices. Alongside academies, artistic training was also provided through workshops, which functioned as de facto private academies.
Although only a limited number of women were admitted to official institutions—such as the Accademia di San Luca, where women were documented as members from 1607, albeit excluded from life drawing and governance—many women accessed professional training through alternative structures. These included art schools founded by women artists themselves, such as Elisabetta Sirani’s school in Bologna and Virginia da Vezzo’s in Paris. Artemisia Gentileschi likewise maintained a workshop in Naples, where she trained her daughter Prudentia as well as several male artists.

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:
- Methodological approaches to the study of women artists (past, present, and future)
- Revisiting canonical narratives and persistent myths in feminist art history
- Archival, philological, and historiographical challenges in reconstructing women’s artistic production
- Women artists and artistic training: academies, workshops, and alternative pedagogies
- Professional networks, patronage, and mobility (local, national, and transnational)

- Women artists as teachers, workshop leaders, and agents of artistic transmission
- The role of institutions (academies, courts, convents) in shaping women's artistic careers
- Gendered access to artistic genres (portraiture, history painting, still life, etc.)
- Women artists and the art market
- Self-representation, authorship, and artistic identity
- Women artists in relation to family workshops and dynastic practices
- Cross-cultural exchanges and the presence of Italian women artists abroad or expatriate women artists in Italy.
- The reception and historiography of women artists from the 17th to the 19th century
- Rethinking periodization: from early modern to modern frameworks
- Digital humanities and new tools for researching women artists

Publication
Selected conference papers will be published in the AIWAC Acta Colloquia post-print series, in collaboration with Brepols Publishers, following a peer-review process.

Submission Guidelines
To submit a proposal, please ensure the following requirements are met:
- Abstract: Submit an abstract in English (Word format), with a maximum length of 500 words (excluding author name(s) and contact details).
- Short Biography: Include a brief biographical note of no more than 150 words.
- File Format and Naming: Save the proposal as a .doc file (PDF files will not be considered), using the following naming convention: AIWAC6_Surname.doc
- Curriculum Vitae: Include a short CV.
- Submission Method: Send all materials via email to:
clollobr@uark.edu
amodesti@unimelb.edu.au

Practical Information
- Submission Deadline: April 30, 2026
- Notification of Acceptance: July 18, 2026
- Presentation Format: Accepted papers will be allocated a maximum of 20 minutes for presentation.
- Funding: Please note that the organizers are unable to provide financial support for travel and/or accommodation expenses for speakers or attendees.
- Participation Fee: A conference participation fee will be required. Details regarding the fee will be communicated upon acceptance of proposals.
- Notification Policy: Due to the high volume of submissions, only successful applicants will be notified.
- Conference Venue and Format: The conference will take place at the University of Arkansas Rome Center and will feature a combination of selected paper presentations and keynote lectures.
- Final Program: The complete conference program will be circulated by the end of September 2026.

Reference:

CFP: AIWAC: Reframing methodologies (Rome, 15-17 Oct 26). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 29, 2026 (accessed Nov 13, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/52072>.