

How Art History Teaches (Toronto, 16 Oct 26)

University of Toronto, Oct 16, 2026

Deadline: May 15, 2026

Heath Valentine

How Art History Teaches: Images, Infrastructure, Cognition.
University of Toronto Department of Art History Symposium.
Friday, October 16, 2026

Convenor: Joseph L. Clarke

Symposium coordinator: Heath Valentine

Description:

In 1926, the Carnegie Corporation began donating art history teaching materials, including books, prints, mounted photographs, and textile samples, to universities across the United States and the British Commonwealth. One such set became foundational for teaching art history at the University of Toronto, helping lay the groundwork for Canada's first academic art history program.

A century later, the discipline's teaching materials have changed dramatically, but the underlying questions remain: How do our infrastructures of image reproduction shape the way art history is taught? How do these approaches align with what we know about how students learn?

This international symposium examines art history pedagogy as both a historical formation and a living practice. Bringing art historians into dialogue with cognitive science, it invites participants to reflect on the media, formats, and habits through which the discipline has taught students to look, remember, compare, and interpret.

Confirmed speakers:

Zeynep Çelik Alexander (Columbia University), author of *Kinaesthetic Knowing: Aesthetics, Epistemology, Modern Design* (2017)

Christy Anderson (University of Toronto), former Editor-in-Chief of the *Art Bulletin*

Matthew Lincoln, Manager for Software Engineering, JSTOR Labs

Daniel Willingham (University of Virginia), author of *Outsmart Your Brain: Why Learning is Hard and How You Can Make It Easy* (2022)

In addition to the confirmed speakers, we will select approximately five presenters from this open call. The symposium will be accompanied by a curated exhibition of Carnegie art history teaching materials.

Submissions:

We welcome submissions from all interested scholars that bring historical and empirical perspectives on art history pedagogy into dialogue.

Topics might include the evolution of teaching infrastructures in relation to educational outcomes, the effectiveness of common pedagogical formats (comparison exercises, slide-based lectures, object-based assignments) examined in light of their origins, or criteria for evaluating improvement in art historical learning.

Accepted presenters will give 25-minute papers. We are currently seeking funding to cover travel and accommodation costs for all speakers.

Please send a title, 500-word abstract, and CV to convenor Joseph L. Clarke (joseph.clarke@utoronto.ca) and coordinator Heath Valentine (heath.valentine@utoronto.ca) by May 15, 2026.

Reference:

CFP: How Art History Teaches (Toronto, 16 Oct 26). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 28, 2026 (accessed Apr 29, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/52095>>.