

Art and Dissent (New Brunswick/online, 30 Apr – 1 May 26)

New Brunswick, Rutgers University, Zimmerli Art Museum / Online, Apr 30–May 1, 2026

Katerina Romanenko

Art and Dissent: The Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection of Nonconformist Art from the Soviet Union and Its Global Legacy.

The conference marks the launch of Dodge Collection website—a new open-access digital platform designed to expand scholarly engagement with the Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection—the world’s most comprehensive archive of Soviet nonconformist art. Featuring more than 25,000 works, the collection documents the diverse unofficial artistic practices that developed in response to the cultural and ideological constraints of Soviet society. As it develops, the platform aims to provide progressively expanded access to the full corpus, along with research and pedagogical tools intended to support interdisciplinary study.

The two-day program brings together scholars in thematic sessions that foster dialogue across regions, methodologies, and generations. Scholars contributing to the digital platform—and serving as the digital platform’s national research managers for the Baltics, Belarus, Ukraine, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Russia—will present their research and participate in discussions highlighting both the collaborative work behind the platform and the evolving role of the Dodge Collection in contemporary scholarship.

Panels will examine strategies of nonconformity shaped by Soviet cultural policy; the ways artists navigated institutional constraints and forged networks that challenged center–periphery models; and the methodological challenges of writing polycentric art histories of the Soviet Union.

Two roundtables anchor the program. “Teaching in the Age of the Digital Museum” considers how increased digital access to collections—including the Dodge Collection—reshapes pedagogy, scholarship, and curatorial practice. “Perspectives on Decolonization” explores the conceptual and institutional implications of decolonizing post-Soviet art histories, highlighting both shared concerns and region-specific debates.

Program highlights include a keynote lecture by Madina Tlostanova (Linköping University) and a demonstration of the Dodge Collection website, showcasing emerging tools for research access and public engagement.

Researchers in art history, visual culture, Slavic and Eurasian studies, museum studies, and related fields are warmly invited to attend.

Conference Schedule:

Day One—April 30, 2026

10:00 AM – Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Maura Reilly (Zimmerli Art Museum), Julia Tulovsky (Zimmerli Art Museum)

10:30 AM – Presentations by the scholars of Baltic states

Liisa Kaljula (Art Museum of Estonia), Maija Rudovska (Estonian Academy of Arts), Julija Fomina (Vilnius Academy of Arts)

Moderator: Jane Sharp (Rutgers University)

12:00 PM – Lunch Break

01:00 PM – Presentations by the Scholars of Belarus and Ukraine

Tatsiana Zhurauliova (independent scholar), Alisa Lozhkina (independent scholar)

Moderator: Sophio Kavtaradze (Rutgers University)

02:30 PM – Roundtable: Teaching in the Age of the Digital Museum

Emily Van Buskirk (Rutgers University), Yasha Klots (City University of New York), Mark Lipovetsky (Columbia University), Amy Bryzgel (Northeastern University)

Moderator: Jane Sharp (Rutgers University)

04:30 PM – Keynote Presentation

Madina Tlostanova (Linköping University)

05:30 PM – Opening Reception

Day Two—May 1, 2026

10:30 AM – Opening Remarks

Olena Martynyuk (Zimmerli Art Museum), Vassili Schedrin (Zimmerli Art Museum)

11:00 AM – Presentations by Scholars of Armenia and Georgia

George Papashvili (Rutgers University) and Sopio Gagoshidze (Rutgers University), Lilit Sargsyan (Institute of Contemporary Art, Armenia)

Moderator: Armen Yesayants (Cafesjian Center for the Arts, Armenia)

12:00 PM – Lunch Break

01:00 PM – Presentations by Scholars of Central Asia and Russia

Valeria Ibraeva (independent scholar, Kazakhstan), Nigora Akhmedova (Academy of Arts of Uzbekistan), Nikolai Malinin (independent scholar)

Moderator: Christiana Bonnin (American University of Sharjah)

03:00 PM – Demonstration of the Website
Elizaveta Yuzhakova (Zimmerli Art Museum)

03:30 PM – Roundtable: Perspectives on Decolonization
Christiana Bonnín (American University of Sharjah), Liisa Kajula (Art Museum of Estonia), Olena Martynyuk (Zimmerli Art Museum), Julia Tulovsky (Zimmerli Art Museum), Armen Yesayants (Cafesjian Center for the Arts, Armenia)

Moderator: Jeremiah William McCarthy (Zimmerli Art Museum)

05:30 PM – Closing Reception

Location

Zimmerli Art Museum

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

71 Hamilton Street

New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1248

The event will be held both in person and online and is free and open to the public. To learn more and [register](https://zimmerli.rutgers.edu/event/international-academic-conference-art-and-dissent-norton-and-nancy-dodge-collection) visit: <https://zimmerli.rutgers.edu/event/international-academic-conference-art-and-dissent-norton-and-nancy-dodge-collection>

Reference:

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