

The Internationalisation of African Art (London, 15–16 Oct 26)

Loughborough University, London campus, Oct 15–16, 2026

Deadline: Jun 15, 2026

Kathryn Brown

The Internationalisation of African Art

Organizers: Dr Jonathan Adeyemi (J.O.Adeyemi@lboro.ac.uk) and Dr Kathryn Brown (k.j.brown@lboro.ac.uk)

We are witnessing unprecedented interest in African modern and contemporary art through surging sales, increased institutional recognition, and the emergence of new collectors. The significant growth of auction sales, art fairs, and biennales is matched by enhanced museum attention to art and artists connected to Africa. This conference explores the epistemic cultures and collecting infrastructures pertaining to African art that are emerging from contemporary market activities. The aim of the conference is to stimulate new academic discourses about African modern and contemporary art and to consolidate the growing academic focus on emerging art markets in the global south. We welcome proposals for 20-minute presentations on topics relevant to these themes, including, but not limited to:

- Alternative systems of validation and valuation: The roles and approaches of alternative agents (both historic and contemporary) in driving attention towards hitherto neglected forms of creativity from Africa.
- State Policy: State policies play a fundamental role in the production, visibility and circulation of art. Yet policies for art and culture have not always been a focus of interest within African states. Presentations might examine the impact (of absence) of state policies on the production, visibility, circulation and validation of art in Africa.
- Markets and collectors: This theme seeks papers that explore the history, role, and agency of institutions and collectors in directing attention to the arts of Africa.
- Decolonisation and financialisation: Issues concerning decolonisation have engendered a broader cultural shift towards recognising and appreciating cultural production by the global majority. At the same time, the challenge of decreasing public funding is shifting art world power towards the market. We seek papers that explore relationships between decolonisation and financialisation in a global art world.
- Mobility and the advantage of place: Theorists have emphasised the impact of location on the production and valuation of art, including the idea that diaspora African artists enjoy advantages over those based in Africa. In what ways have mobility and place differentiated the practices, experiences and careers of artists working in and outside Africa?
- Digital Shifts: Since the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been an increasing use of online platforms

and digital technologies in the advertising, sale, and mediation of art. We seek papers that explore the impact of such technologies on the circulation of African modern and contemporary art.

- Adaptation of exogenous models: Art market models are often adapted from international to local art worlds. What models and supporting theoretical frameworks have been adapted from the West in the development of local markets for art in Africa?

Please send an abstract of around 250 words and a short biography to Jonathan Adeyemi (J.O.Adeyemi@lboro.ac.uk) and Kathryn Brown (k.j.brown@lboro.ac.uk) by 15 June 2026. Notification of acceptance will be sent by 1 July 2026.

This conference is generously supported by the Leverhulme Trust and Loughborough University.

Reference:

CFP: The Internationalisation of African Art (London, 15-16 Oct 26). In: ArtHist.net, May 9, 2026 (accessed May 9, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/52418>>.