

Marking Completion (Florence, 22–23 Sep 26)

The Medici Archive Project and the Kunsthistorische Institut in Florenz – Max Planck Institute, Sep 22–23, 2026

Deadline: Jul 10, 2026

Rebecca Arnheim, Boston University

International Workshop: Marking Completion: The Status and Circulation of Drawings from the 15th Century to Today.

Organized by Karina Pawlow (Saarland University / KHI), Rebecca I. Arnheim (Tel Aviv University), the Lise Meitner Group “Coded Objects” at the Kunsthistorische Institut in Florenz – Max Planck Institute and the Medici Archive Project.

When is a drawing complete, independent, or “finished”? Is the concept of completion a conscious decision made by the artist, or something that happens later, in the hands of collectors, dealers, curators, or algorithms? The aim of this workshop is to investigate when and whether drawings were considered “finished” and how that sense of completion is frustrated as drawings move between contexts from the fifteenth century to today. The workshop treats drawings as independent objects that circulate and accrue economic and emotional value, and generate knowledge across art, science, design, and technology. Thus, drawings are understood here as sites of ongoing inquiry, experimentation, and reasoning, capable of generating unique forms of knowledge, visualization, and conceptual connection.

Developed in dialogue with the research trajectories of the Medici Archive Project and the Lise Meitner Group “Coded Objects” and their focus on processual and methodological approaches, this workshop treats “completion” not as a final state, but as a series of active thresholds. This workshop intends to focus on those moments when a drawing is judged, classified, circulated, or stabilized. The organizers invite proposals that address how drawings shift status as they move between studios, museums, archives, markets, and digital platforms from the 1400s to today. How and when do drawings exceed their initial roles as studies, models, technical records, or designs to be treated as finished works or circulating images in their own right? What forms of knowledge, agency, gaps, new connections or authorship do drawings perform when disentangled from the artistic, technical, or scientific processes they were meant to support or contexts they emerged from? How do these shifting roles reshape the criteria by which a drawing is recognized as “complete”, or even as a drawing?

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- In/Completion: Shaping criteria of in/completion and shifting status of drawings, and the connoisseurial judgment, technical imaging, and AI-assisted analysis in attribution, cataloguing, and assessments of “finish.”

- Epistemic Practice: Drawing in knowledge production (art, science, design), including intersections with coding and proto-algorithmic representation
- Collecting and markets: how preservation, display, and recontextualization shape value systems.
- Archives: when drawings count as documentation, records, or evidence

We welcome proposals from scholars at all career stages whose work engages with the material, epistemic, or institutional dimensions of drawing. Please submit a paper title (max. 15 words), a 250-word max. abstract, and a short biography (1 page max.) to karina.pawlow@khi.fi.it and education@medici.org by July 10. Notifications will be sent by the end of July.

The organizers are currently exploring possibilities for supporting participants' travel and accommodation expenses. As the availability and extent of such support remain uncertain at this stage, applicants who would require financial assistance are invited to include a brief statement outlining their motivation and funding needs (and those who have research funds available are asked to let us know, so we can funnel potential funding to those who need it most).

Reference:

CFP: Marking Completion (Florence, 22-23 Sep 26). In: ArtHist.net, May 31, 2026 (accessed Jun 1, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/52603>>.