

AAH Summer Symposium 2026 (London, 13 Aug 26)

The Gallery, 70 Cowcross Street, London, UK, EC1M 6EJ

Deadline: Apr 5, 2026

Christina Bradstreet, Association for Art History

"The Fragment – Form, Method, and Meaning" –

The Association for Art History's Summer Symposium is a one-day annual event that highlights current postgraduate and early career research.

Symposium date: Thursday, August 13, 2026, 10:00-18:00

Location: The Gallery, 70 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6EJ

The 2026 Summer Symposium will explore the fragment as a critical and creative paradigm across art history, artistic practice, and visual culture. From broken antiquities to glitch aesthetics, from archival lacunae to AI-generated imagery, the fragment has long occupied a generative tension between loss and possibility, between desire and fear, between the partial and the whole.

We invite contributors to consider

- how researchers work with fragments of historical objects and images?
- how artists engage with incomplete, damaged, or dispersed visual and textual material?
- how writers adopt fragmentation as both method and form?

- In turn, what assumptions about wholeness, origin, and authenticity are unsettled by the fragment?
- How have artists exploited, lamented, or celebrated incompleteness as an aesthetic strategy?
- In what ways do AI-generated images, deepfakes, glitch aesthetics, and database cultures produce new kinds of fragments – and what material conditions or visual regimes do they bring into being?
- What does it mean to practise fragmentation as a mode of art writing or art-historical inquiry?

Through these questions, the issue seeks to explore how fragmentation – as material condition, aesthetic strategy, and interpretive problem – shapes the ways objects, images, texts, and bodies are produced, encountered, and understood across different historical and cultural contexts.

We also welcome contributions that examine how fragmentariness is understood within non-Western traditions on their own terms, resisting the assumption that the fragment is primarily a Western art-historical category.

Broader topics may include, but will not be limited to:

- The fragment and the body
- Non-Western perspectives on fragmentariness

- Fragments and gender politics
- The ethics of violence and material destruction
- Digital and algorithmic fragments
- The fragment in performance and time-based media

We welcome proposals from doctoral researchers and early career scholars working across art history, visual studies, practice-based research, and curatorial studies. By providing a platform for discussion across disciplinary lines, we hope to cultivate a deeper understanding of how the fragment functions not merely as a remnant, but as a site of meaning-making, resistance, and reinvention.

How to Apply:

To apply, please send your application by Sunday, July 5, 2026 (23:59 BST) to Ed Kettleborough: e.kettleborough@bristol.ac.uk – cc-ing: events@forarthistory.org.uk

Your application must contain:

- Name, email and institutional affiliation
- Title of your 15-minute paper
- 250-word abstract
- 150-word biography

If accepted, you will be invited to deliver a 15-minute presentation.

We also welcome alternative formats using multimedia, audio, video, film, photographs and beyond.

Speakers will be expected to attend the full-day programme in support of their fellow researchers' work.

No remote or pre-recorded papers will be accepted.

If you have any questions, please write to us at Ed Kettleborough e.kettleborough@bristol.ac.uk and events@forarthistory.org.uk

Eligibility:

This conference will be for current or recent PhD students, and early career researchers in the arts, humanities, and museum sector and disciplines beyond these. We will prioritise and encourage emerging scholars including students, independent scholars and those in temporary or contractual employment. Experienced and non-experienced speakers are welcomed to apply. As it might be the first-time researchers have spoken at a conference, speakers will receive a guide on presenting at an academic conference. The Summer Symposium is a warm and welcoming place where we can practice presenting our research publicly.

DECR Committee:

This symposium is organised by the Doctoral and Early Career Researcher Committee Members, Edward Kettleborough, Man Li and Isaac Nugent.

The DECR Committee is a volunteer board that drives the Association for Art History's doctoral and early career research events and initiatives. Find out more here <https://forarthistory.org.uk/about/who-we-are/committees/doctoral-and-early-career-research-decr-committee/>.

Reference:

CFP: AAH Summer Symposium 2026 (London, 13 Aug 26). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 16, 2026 (accessed Jun 16, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/52733>>.