

5 Sessions at RSA (Philadelphia, 11–13 Mar 27)

Philadelphia, PA, Mar 11–13, 2027

ArtHist.net Redaktion

[1] Fifteenth-Century Problems.

[2] Negotiating Artistic and Artisanal Authority.

[3] Pecunia non olet: Visualizing the Architecture of Indebtedness.

[4] Hegemonic Futures: The Ecologist, the Eschatologist, the Parasite.

[5] Dealers, Museums, and the Postwar Market for Medieval and Renaissance Art.

--

[1] Fifteenth-Century Problems

From: Larisa Grollemond

Date: 29 Jun 26

The fifteenth century occupies an uneasy place in art history: simultaneously ‘medieval’ and ‘early modern’, yet also suspended somewhere in between, it is overburdened with paradoxes and inherited assumptions about artistic practices during a transitional century. Art historians construct narratives on the artistic personalities of largely anonymous “masters” from scant documentary evidence and surviving examples. Workshops are imagined as neatly ordered around masters, pupils, followers, and circles, even as we possess little concrete evidence for how fifteenth-century workshops actually functioned. Fabricated names (the Master of the Legend of St. Lucy, the Masters of the Dark Eyes, the Imperialissima-Meister, and so many more) and intricate webs of attribution place fifteenth-century artistic production uncomfortably between medieval models of anonymous collaboration and early modern notions of authorship. Simply put, approaches to understanding fifteenth-century artists weirdly straddle two worlds—and trying to make sense of it is even weirder.

This session invites papers that interrogate the methods and assumptions shaping the study of fifteenth-century art in all media. How might we define the fifteenth century on its own terms, rather than through early modern standards? We welcome contributions that address problems specific to the study of fifteenth-century artistic production, especially those that can reflect on the structures that led us here, as well as new directions that resist the status quo:

- Reflect critically on historiographical and methodological structures that have shaped periodization (simultaneously medieval & early modern), labels of convenience, workshops, and artistic personalities
- Expose the limits of traditional methods on causality, influence, & style
- Propose new approaches that reconfigure our old assumptions (e.g., AI attributions)

If you have fifteenth-century problems, please send an abstract (max 200 words) and short 2-page C.V. to Larisa Grollemond (LGrollemond@getty.edu) and Laura Tillery (ltillery@hamilton.edu) by 15 July.

--

[\[2\]](#) Negotiating Artistic and Artisanal Authority

From: Stella Wisgrill

Date: 30 Jun 26

As workers, late medieval and early modern artists occupied a peculiar position: they had desirable skills and abilities others, including most nobility, lacked, but the want of pay and the needs of their markets often shaped their work in dynamic tension to ideals of artistic license. Some may have been praised for quasi-divine abilities or applied particular talent in building lucrative relationships, but, like all humans, they were constrained by fortune, death, and providence. The goal of this panel is to showcase new art historical research about works of art in which are constituted artists' and artisans' bids for authority, or their failure to secure it. Contributions may reveal something about artisanal crafts as products of labor, or concern art as a reflection of the human condition as understood at the time. They could address what erasure, anonymity, and subservience on the one hand and visibility, authorship, and status on the other teach us about contests for power. Or they might concern images that reveal the differences between representing power itself and representing those who possess it. All will address how the creation of works of art, and the effects of those objects, reflect the decision-making privileges or struggles for autonomy inherent to creative participation in Renaissance society.

We welcome submissions about material from any culture, nation, and geographic location made in the period 1300–1700, including work made in colonial, collective/workshop, or other contexts that disrupt the paradigm of heroic artistic genius.

Please send proposals for 20-minute papers to Sarah Rosenthal (scr875@g.harvard.edu) and Stella Wisgrill (stella.wisgrill@khm.at) by July 15th. Proposal should include full name and affiliation (if applicable); paper title (max. 15 words), abstract (200 word maximum); brief CV (max. 2 page); (expected) year of PhD completion. Speakers will be asked to confirm their participation in late July.

--

Pecunia non olet: Visualizing the Architecture of Indebtedness

From: Fabio Gigone

Date: 30 Jun 26

In contemporary capitalist societies, debt stands out as one of the most pervasive forces shaping the lives of states, institutions, and individuals alike. Architecture can be understood as a material apparatus of debt: it translates abstract obligations into spatial relations of power. Produced within –and actively productive of– regimes of indebtedness, the built environment mobilizes aesthetic and formal strategies that render specific configurations of capitalism both operational and legitimate.

As a transcultural phenomenon, debt has never been historically confined to the economic sphere. Predating modern financial systems, it has long been embedded in religious, moral, and socio-political frameworks. From ancient societies to medieval theologies, debt operated as both an economic mechanism and as a symbolic construct, shaping hierarchies, social bonds, and collective imaginaries. Its ambivalence persists: morally, it signals gratitude (Benveniste, 2016) and obligation (Mauss, 1923); theologically, it affirms faith (2 Cor. 6:10) while masking exploitation (Matt. 18:25–35); debt is central to modern democ-

racies (Ferguson, 2008) and foundational to global economic history (Stasavage, 2003). However, architectural history has rarely addressed debt as an analytical category beyond the buildings that house financial institutions.

This session explores how the multifaceted phenomenon of debt shaped architectural and urban formations in the Early Modern period on the global scale (13th–18th centuries).

How did systems of credit, obligation, and moral economy inform the design, construction, and maintenance of buildings? In what ways did religious conceptions of debt materialize in modes of urban governance? How did public and private debt regimes contribute to urban reinvestment, real estate practices, and spatial ordering? What spatial strategies or urban ceremonies were devised to redeem debt?

We invite contributions that examine architecture as both a material and symbolic site of indebtedness, revealing how debt operated as a spatial force shaping urban imaginaries and architectural constructs across confessional and political divides.

Proposals for 20-minute papers should be sent to Fabio Gigone (fgi@teol.ku.dk) and Angela Gigliotti (angela.gigliotti@ost.ch) by Monday July 27, 2026 and should include the following:

- Author's name and affiliation
- The email address associated with your RSA profile (which should be up to date)
- Paper title (15-word maximum)
- Paper abstract (200-word maximum)
- PhD completion date (past or expected)
- A brief CV (2 page maximum)

Notifications regarding acceptance in the panel will be communicated to applicants by Friday, July 31, 2026.

--

[\[4\]](#) Hegemonic Futures: The Ecologist, the Eschatologist, the Parasite

From: Maria Vittoria Spissu

Date: 1 Jul 26

The colonization of the future is inextricably bound to the production of prophetic and apocalyptic images and texts. Political and religious authorities have long interpreted cataclysms and natural disasters—whether historically real, feared, or merely imagined—to their own benefit.

This panel interrogates how artists, acting as agents, either represented these hegemonic visions or sought to decolonize the utopias of Salvation, Fertility, and Productivity. It examines how early modern images and texts offered conceptual frameworks for environmental transformations, eschatological visions, and colonial extractivism, especially in the Iberian Americas.

Inspired by Michel Serres' philosophical work *The Parasite*, this panel encourages critical reflections on parasitic power—exerted through visual and textual media—to colonize the future, as well as the interpretation of historical events, the production of utopias, and the exploitation/dispossession of resources.

Furthermore, it aims to shed light on the role of (Indigenous) artists as relational figures in introducing disturbance and insurgency, resistant and divergent counter-narratives, and in reconquering spaces of Survival within the host's body, as well as their involvement in sustaining hegemonic futures through the representation of the end of the world, divine punishments, or the perceived inevitability of a "parasitized" nature.

The panel welcomes proposals from art history, history of early modern illustrated printed books, history, literature, history of science, history of ideas, eco-critical studies, cartography, and beyond, exploring the representation of environmental upheavals, hegemonic futures, and Indigenous perspectives on ecology, eschatology, and cosmology.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, deluges, floods, and all forms of challenges;
- The exploitation of natural resources (especially minerals and waterways) and environmental transformations;
- Images and texts envisioning human beings, the more-than-human, and power dynamics as catalysts for change and producers of meaning;
- Studies on the Last Judgment and the representation of utopias and dystopias;
- Studies on the fertility and productivity of nature and the colonies, especially in the Iberian Americas;
- Indigenous perspectives on the nature of change, chaos, conquest, pacification, harmony, and the future;
- Decolonizing visions regarding the agency of nature itself;
- Inquiries into the spaces of hope, sympoiesis, care, healing, and reconciliation with the world and its remainders.

Submission Guidelines:

Please send paper proposals to Maria Vittoria Spissu, Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna (mariavittoria.spissu@unibo.it) by August 1.

Your submission must include:

- Title (15-word maximum);
- Abstract (200-word maximum);
- Brief CV or bio, including PhD completion year (past or expected);
- Name, affiliation, and e-mail address.

Notifications of acceptance will be sent by August 4, 2026.

--

[\[5\]](#) Dealers, Museums, and the Postwar Market for Medieval and Renaissance Art

From: Gloria de Liberali Taylor

Date: 1 Jul 26

The decades following the Second World War transformed the circulation, collecting, and interpretation of medieval and Renaissance sculpture in the United States. As European collections were dispersed, rebuilt, or reconfigured in the wake of war, dealers, collectors, museum professionals, scholars, auction houses, and other intermediaries facilitated the movement of sculptural works into American private and public collections. These transfers affected not only the location of artworks, but also their attribution, display, conservation, scholarly reception, and historical meaning.

This session invites papers that examine the postwar market for medieval and Renaissance sculpture as a site where connoisseurship, provenance, collecting, institutional identity, and transatlantic cultural exchange intersected. We welcome object-based studies as well as research grounded in dealers' archives, auction records, museum files, collectors' papers, exhibitions, photographic archives, and provenance-research methodologies.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- The activities, networks, and archives of dealers, especially émigré dealers and intermediaries
- Auction houses, commercial galleries, and other mechanisms of postwar circulation
- Individual sculptures, groups of objects, and newly reconstructed provenance histories
- American private collectors, donors, and the formation of museum collections
- The role of dealers, curators, and connoisseurs in shaping taste and attribution
- Exhibitions, publications, photographs, and other media that influenced the reception of Medieval and Renaissance sculpture
- The effect of postwar collecting on the canon and historiography of medieval and Renaissance sculpture in the U.S.

Please send a paper title (maximum 15 words), an abstract of no more than 200 words, and a short CV (.pdf or .doc, maximum 2 pages) to Christine Brennan (Christine.Brennan@metmuseum.org) and Gloria de Liberali (deliberaligloria@gmail.com) by July 27, 2026. Please include "RSA 2027 session proposal" in the subject heading of your email.

Notifications of acceptance to the panel will be sent the week of August 3, 2026. Final Notification of acceptance at the conference: November 2, 2026.

Reference:

CFP: 5 Sessions at RSA (Philadelphia, 11-13 Mar 27). In: ArtHist.net, Jul 3, 2026 (accessed Jul 3, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/52890>>.