

4 Sessions at CAA (New York, 3–6 Feb 2027)

115th College Art Association (CAA) Annual Conference 2027, New York, Feb 3–06, 2027

Deadline: Aug 31, 2026

www.collegeart.org/programs/conference/proposals

ArtHist.net Redaktion

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[4] Artists Off the Clock: Biographical Sprawl and the Art Historical Container

[1]

Title: Textile Imaginaries: Cloth in Mediterranean Visual Cultures.

From: Daniel Tischler

Date: 16.07.2026

The Mediterranean is a woven world. Across its interconnected landscapes, textiles have served as threads binding people, beliefs, climates, and aesthetics. Cloth is neither merely a functional object nor decorative flourish—it is a charged cultural signifier. Its material mobility made it integral to the interregional infrastructure of economic and cultural exchange; the sun-soaked climates of the region rendered fabric essential to daily life and urban aesthetics; and the techniques, materialities, and traditions index regional, social, and religious identities. Across Christian, Islamic, Jewish, and secular contexts, the Mediterranean material culture is saturated with textile production and consumption—and so is its imagery.

This session explores the representation of textiles in Mediterranean art and architecture. Whether draped across mosaics, frescoes, manuscripts, or contemporary visual forms, depicted textiles encode histories of trade, mobility, devotion, and power. How do iconographies of textiles operate within transregional networks of meaning? How do visual representations of cloth transform its tactile and ephemeral qualities that counter monumentality? How do they mediate ritual and intimacy, identities and the ideological texture of everyday life?

We welcome contributions that explore the depiction of textiles as narrative devices, ritual markers, spatial agents, and carriers of material memory across periods and media. We encourage studies that address non-canonical materials and adopt interdisciplinary approaches drawn from fields such as art history, architectural history, material and visual culture, anthropology, or cultural studies.

Chairs:

Damla Göre, Koç University (ANAMED-IAE)

Daniel Tischler, ETH Zurich

Submission:

Please submit your presentation title, an abstract (250 words maximum), and your CV through the CAA submission portal, which will be open from July 27 to August 31:

<https://collegeart.org/programs/conference/proposals#>

Contact:

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Damla Göre (damlagore@gmail.com) or Daniel Tischler (tischler@arch.ethz.ch).

[2]

Title: Looking at Writing

From: Tilo Reifenstein

Date: 16.07.2026

(Affiliated Society: International Association of Word and Image Studies)

Recognising the image in or of the text necessarily blurs the identity and task of the reader-viewer. Different approaches to reading, including close reading, surface reading (Best & Marcus 2009), and slow reading (Newkirk 2012) not only affirm their participation in looking, but raise questions of how they relate to their image-bound counterparts: close looking, gazing, viewing.

Looking at the image of text has recently received renewed scholarly attention, especially in view of a re-invigorated interest in writing's material qualities. Juliet Fleming (2016), for example, outlined a cultural graphology that pays attention to spaces and ink, while Anne Royston (2019) drew out the proximity of artist's books and theory. Artists who write and writers attuned to the image of/in their texts enable us to explore the effects of reading as a form of looking and vice versa. Can we also transpose these conditions of looking to our encounters with others, whose faces and actions we read (or misread)? Our concepts and approaches to looking, like reading, are shaped by conventions of normativity. But what sort of looking-reading emerges from feminist, postcolonial, queer or crip perspectives? Who is the reader-viewer if we suspend the distinctions and assumptions of literacy and sightedness?

Through what Mieke Bal (1991) described as 'beyond the word-image opposition', this panel engages with acts of looking at/with/in written texts and explores experiential, ethical and methodological consequences of reading-looking and looking-reading. It considers how acts of looking provoke or perpetuate asymmetries and tensions between the looker and the looked-at.

KEY DATES:

31 August: Deadline to submit your presentation title, 250-word proposal, 2-page CV (max) to the session using the "Submit an Abstract to this Session" button at

<https://collegeart.org/programs/conference/proposals> (from 27 July onwards)

Note that you're required to have a CAA account, though membership is not necessary at this step. Please see the useful submission information offered at the above link.

16 September: Deadline for session chairs to finalize session and inform submitters of decisions via email. Accepted submitters will receive an email to access their own SC after 25 September.

Please don't hesitate to direct any queries to Tilo or Avril.

Tilo Reifenstein, York St John University, UK, t.reifenstein@yorksj.ac.uk

Avril Tynan, University of Turku, Finland, avril.tynan@utu.fi

[3]

Title: Dispersal and Afterlife: Reconstructing Art Collections

From: Fulvia Zaninelli

Date: 16.07.2026

Despite the centrality of collections to the writing of art history, their dispersal remains one of the field's under-theorized yet structurally decisive conditions. Rather than viewing dispersal as mere loss, this panel seeks to explore how fragmentation is a constitutive condition that actively reshapes attribution, value, and knowledge production. From aristocratic inheritance divisions and estate sales to wartime looting and market circulation, the breaking apart of collections has profoundly influenced how artworks are classified, interpreted, and valued. This panel seeks papers that challenge the notion of collections as stable entities, instead framing them as historically constructed assemblages whose meanings emerge through relationships among objects. Drawing on theoretical frameworks such as Walter Benjamin's "constellation" and Arjun Appadurai's "social life of objects," dispersal is positioned as a generative process in which artworks both lose and acquire meaning as they move across contexts. This is especially significant for works dependent on grouping and comparison, such as copies, workshop productions, and "school of attributions" where fragmentation directly impacts interpretation. The session asks how dispersal reshapes attribution, authorship, and interpretation. The panel also foregrounds the legal, political, and economic structures that drive dispersal, including inheritance laws, property regimes, restitution debates, and shifting tastes, alongside the art market's central role in redistributing objects. Bringing together theoretical and object-based approaches, the panel seeks to explore the temporal life cycle of collections from dispersal to potential reconstruction reframing fragmentation as a central condition in the history of collecting.

Topics may include (but not limited to):

- Auctions and markets in redistributing collections
- Legal and economic frameworks drive dispersal
- Colonial and wartime displacement of cultural property

Submit proposals during the Call for Participation (CFP) via the link on the CAA website between July 27 and August 31.

<https://www.collegeart.org/programs/conference/proposals>

[4]

Title: Artists Off the Clock: Biographical Sprawl and the Art Historical Container

From: Tracee Ng

Date: 16.07.2026

The Catalogue Raisonné Scholars Association (CRSA) is now welcoming proposals for "Artists Off the Clock." This panel will take place at the 2027 College Art Association Annual Conference in New York (Feb. 3–6).

"Artists Off the Clock: Biographical Sprawl and the Art Historical Container"

Since biographical embellishment goes back to the dawn of the field, perhaps it should come as no surprise that art histories often read as if the lives of the most excellent artists were wholly separate from the hoi polloi. While the idea that artists live solely in their studios is fictional, their life stories can also be rather arbitrarily ransacked. So let's go there. Let's discuss the obscure something that fired the imagination once upon a time. Maybe it was a side hustle as a set designer or moonlighting as a jazz musician. We want to hear about the not so secret lives of artists and all of those extracurricular activities that have been wrapped in camouflage, but which may have played a role in the production of the tours de force we've come to know and love.

Comparing biographers to detectives or "voyeurs who enjoy being privy to secrets," the author of a lengthy biography of Rothko admitted in an afterword to finding "great pleasure in knowing certain things about Rothko that only I know" (Breslin 1993). What to do with the guilty pleasures that end up on the editor's cutting room floor? What balance can be gained from the de-sanitized treatment of artists' lives?

Artists and creative cluster subjects from any geographical region or time period are welcome. Abstracts must be submitted by Monday, August 31, 2026 through CAA's website at the following link:

<https://collegeart.org/programs/conference/proposals>

NOTE: the CAA submission portal will not be accessible until Monday, July 27, 2026.

For more information about CRSA, please visit <https://www.catalogueraisonne.org/>

Reference:

CFP: 4 Sessions at CAA (New York, 3-6 Feb 2027). In: ArtHist.net, Jul 20, 2026 (accessed Jul 21, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/53522>>.