

Session at CAA (New York, 3–6 Feb 27)

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

Deadline: Sep 11, 2026

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Thinking Exhibitions: University Galleries as Knowledge Laboratories in Times of Crisis.

At a moment marked by global instability—political upheaval, ecological crises, and challenges to the authority of institutions—this panel reconsiders the university museum and gallery as distinctive sites of knowledge production, asking how exhibitions function as epistemic practices within, and beyond, the academy. Situated at the intersection of research, creativity, pedagogy, and public engagement, university art institutions are uniquely positioned to operate as experimental laboratories in which knowledge is not only displayed but actively produced, tested, and contested.

We invite papers that examine how university galleries respond to, and intervene in, the shifting conditions of knowledge-making. How do exhibitions within academic settings mobilize both research and practice? In what ways do they differ from public or private museums in their capacity to curate uncertainty or promote critical inquiry? And how might they reconfigure relationships between scholarship, teaching, and methods of curating and artmaking? We seek contributions from art historians, curators, and cultural practitioners that explore university exhibitions as sites of research-based practice, pedagogical innovation, and critical experimentation. Topics may include, but are not limited to, the historical formation of university collections, exhibition-making as a mode of inquiry, technological and methodological innovation, and the role of university galleries in addressing contemporary social and political crises. By foregrounding the exhibition as a thinking process, this panel aims to map the evolving role of university art institutions in shaping new and productive junctions between knowledge and creation.

To propose a paper, please send an abstract of no more than 300 words and a short bio (max. 70 words) directly to the session chairs, Tamar Mayer (mayertamar@gmail.com) and Ronit Milano (ronitmilano@gmail.com), by September 11, 2026. Notification of acceptance will be sent by September 20, 2026.

Reference:

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