Stoke's Objects (York, 20-21 Nov 26)

Henry Moore Institute / University of York, Nov 20–21, 2026
Deadline: Oct 5, 2026

Kirstie Gregory, Henry Moore Institute

This international conference invites historians of Renaissance art, sculptural practice, and critical thought to engage with key objects of Adrian Stokes's criticism, and especially with his career-long fascination with the sculptural practices of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy and its afterlives, from Agostino di Duccio's carvings for the Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini to the late work of Michelangelo and beyond, to Mickey Mouse and the Russian ballet. The event seeks to stage asynchronous dialogues between Stokes's complex framings of specific sculptural artifacts and specialists who normally do not engage with Stokes, alongside other contributions addressing the many facets of his career.

The conference concludes a research season at the Henry Moore Institute, 'Adrian Stokes, Inside Out', that centres on the critic's compelling and idiosyncratic sculptural imagination. A key voice in mid twentieth-century sculptural and architectural criticism, Stokes uniquely combined a disparate set of compelling concerns: modernist values of direct carving, speculative psychoanalytic thought, a sensitivity to the vitality of natural materials, and a deep understanding of pre-modern artmaking in its continual reanimation.

We invite contributions that address any aspect of Stokes's wide-ranging interests across the visual arts, dance, psychoanalysis, and social criticism, and especially those that engage with the sculptural and architectural objects that grounded his thought.

Topics might include:

-Renaissance sculptural practice
-the afterlives of premodern art and architecture
-materiality of art
-the relation between sculpture and dance
-the conception of real and psychic space
-the poetics of art criticism
-psychoanalysis and the visual arts
-geology and culture
-the relation between artmaking and art writing
-scholarly networks of the twentieth century
-Stokes's reception within and beyond the anglosphere

We welcome submissions from a broad spectrum of critical and creative practice. Applicants are kindly asked to submit:

• a brief abstract (no more than 250 words)
• a short biographical note (100 words)

The deadline to apply is 5pm, Monday 5 October.

Please email your proposals to: research@henry-moore.org

We seek to reimburse travel and accommodation costs within the UK, based on need.

The Research Season Adrian Stokes, Inside Out has been conceived and organised in collaboration with Dr Ruth Ezra (University of St Andrews) and Dr Jeremy Melius (University of York). The conference Stokes's Objects is generously supported by a Lila Wallace – Reader's Digest Grant from Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies.

Reference:

CFP: Stoke's Objects (York, 20-21 Nov 26). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 12, 2026 (accessed Nov 24, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/54222>.