Migratory Aesthetics (Amiens, 17 Dec 26)

Université de Picardie Jules Verne, Citadelle Campus, Amiens, France, Dec 17, 2026
Deadline: Oct 5, 2026

Schütz

International Conference /
Migratory Aesthetics: Silences of Memory, Material Culture, and the Politics of Ornament.

This symposium examines how migratory aesthetics reconfigure the relationships between art, craft, and material culture. Western modern history has drawn enduring boundaries between theory and practice, technique and expression, artisan and artist, producer and user. These divisions continue to shape hierarchies of value within the artistic field. Long relegated to the margins of "high art," craftsmanship, handmade practices, and traditional forms of knowledge are now experiencing a significant revival in contemporary artistic production, revealing forms of memory, knowledge, and resistance embedded in gestures, techniques, and materials.
The symposium seeks to explore this renewed interest by situating aesthetic practices within the broader context of the migration, whether voluntary or forced, of people, languages, techniques, and artistic traditions. Migrants carry with them aesthetic vocabularies, ancestral skills, and symbolic worlds that interact, sometimes through friction and sometimes through creative exchange, with those of their host societies. As Homi Bhabha argues in his text "DissemiNation", the figure of the migrant embodies the return of a repressed colonial history, a return that unsettles the nation and transforms it into a space of postcolonial hybridity. Migratory aesthetics thus invite us to understand mobility, displacement, and cultural hybridity not as marginal phenomena but as constitutive conditions of contemporary artistic production.
Rather than reproducing fixed and hierarchical categories, this perspective foregrounds the circulation of ideas, forms, materials, and gestures, while proposing radical hospitality as a critical horizon. It also encourages a reassessment of objects that have long occupied a marginal position within art history, including textiles, ceramics, ornaments, amulets, and, in particular, jewellery. Special attention will therefore be devoted to the politics of ornament and to jewellery as a site of memory, resistance, and transmission. Following Ariella Aïsha Azoulay's La Résistance des bijoux (The Resistance of Jewellery), which approaches jewellery as a political, affective, and historical object, we will examine how ornament can simultaneously function as a form of protection, an embodied archive, and a vehicle for diasporic imaginaries.
Afro Brazilian jewellery, such as the pencas de balangandã, crafted and worn by women who had been reduced to slavery, as well as by free women after abolition, will constitute a particularly significant case study. Situated at the intersection of African cosmologies, Indigenous techniques, and materials shaped by the colonial economy, these hybrid objects bear witness to the violence of the transatlantic slave trade while expressing remarkable resilience, creativity, and cultural continuity. They exemplify migratory aesthetics in which memory, spirituality, agency, and syncretism

converge.
How do jewellery, ornaments, and objects of adornment challenge the boundaries between art, craft, design, and material culture? How do they carry memories otherwise erased or silenced by colonial modernity, while simultaneously creating spaces of transmission, protection, and relationality? What do they reveal about the circulation of techniques, materials, beliefs, and forms of knowledge that accompany migration across time and place? In what ways do contemporary artists reactivate these legacies to reflect on displacement, plural identities, diasporic belonging, and forms of resistance to hegemonic narratives? More broadly, how do these objects invite us to rethink the very categories of art history by blurring the distinctions between artwork and use, aesthetics and politics, creation and transmission?
Bringing together scholars, artists, craftspeople, curators, and theorists, this symposium seeks to reconsider the place of material culture, and particularly jewellery, within contemporary aesthetics. It will explore how migration, circulation, and cultural hybridity generate new artistic languages, and how these languages invite us to rewrite the history of art from the perspectives of mobility and relationality.

Key note speaker
Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, Brown University, États-Unis

Ariella Aïsha Azoulay is Professor of Modern Culture and Media and Comparative Literature at Brown University, United States, and holds the Chair of Excellence Inhabiting the Ruins of the Jewish-Muslim World at Aix-Marseille University.
She is also a film essayist and curator of archives and exhibitions.

Organisers
Androula Michael, Université de Picardie Jules Verne (UPJV) Amiens,
and CERI Sciences Po, Paris, France and
Joaquín Barriendos Escuela de Arquitectura, Arte y Diseño (EAAD) Tecnológico de Monterrey-Mexico.

Submission Guidelines
Paper proposals (maximum 250 words), accompanied by a short biographical note, should be sent no later than 5 October 2026 to the following email addresses:
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Scientific Committee
Androula Michael, Professor of Contemporary Art History, Université de Picardie Jules Verne (UPJV), Director of the Centre de recherches en arts et esthétique (CRAE, UR 4291), Amiens, France, and Associate Researcher at the Centre for International Studies (CERI), Sciences Po, Paris, France.
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Mônica Zielinsky, Full Professor of Visual Arts, coordinator of the research line Images, Cultures and Memory, Graduate Program in Visual Arts, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Porto Alegre, Brazil.
Abdelaziz El Idrissi, Head of the Museums Department, National Foundation of Museums (FNM), Rabat, Morocco.

Maya Derrien, Heritage Curator, Musée de Picardie, Amiens, France.
Lise Lerichomme, Associate Professor of Visual Arts, Université de Picardie Jules Verne (UPJV), Amiens, France.
Marine Schu□tz, Associate Professor of Contemporary Art History, Université de Picardie Jules Verne (UPJV), Amiens, France.
Fabiana de Moraes, Independent Researcher, Cultural Heritage and Cultural Affairs Officer, Amiens Métropole, Amiens, France.
Pascal Neveux, Director, Frac Picardie (Regional Contemporary Art Collection), Hauts-de-France, Amiens, France.

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