The Artist as an Art Historian (Madrid/online, 5-26 Nov 26)

Madrid, Auditorium Museo del Prado / Online, Nov 5–26, 2026
Deadline: Oct 26, 2026

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Academic Chair Museo del Prado 2026.The Artist as an Art Historian.

The role of the artist as an art historian, well known thanks to contributions as renowned as those of Giorgio Vasari's "Lives…", which condense the entire Italian 16th C. Renaissance, or Antonio Palomino's 18th C. contributions to the historical Spanish Baroque in his "El Museo pictórico y escala óptica…", is long-standing and auspicious, overcoming major transformations ensuing the configuration of the history of art into a discipline — this happening in the 19th C. The artistic historiography that was shaped throughout the 19th C. established its epistemological and institutional autonomy, especially in the divide between past and present. The scientific history of art developed in the late modern era was to be inaccessible to artists, as it presupposes working with the primary sources, a systematic knowledge of the works, and the competencies and skills necessary to attribute and date the artistic goods in question. The "XV Cátedra del Prado", under the guidance of Greek historian Maria Stavrinaki, will scrutinize the modern discourse of artists as art historians, focusing especially on cultural events that came to pass after World War II and the effects of which on today's understanding of art is, even now, notable.

The "Cátedra" is addressed to a general audience as well as to researchers-in-training and to a specialized audience. It will take place during the month of November and comprises three different activities. The core element is a four-conference cycle, programmed on Thursday afternoons at the Auditorium of the Museo del Prado. The secondary element is a seminar for young researchers under the guidance of the "Cátedra's" lead, scheduled on Friday mornings. The work carried out in this intensive seminar allows for an in-depth exploration of the issues addressed in the conferences and provides insight into resources available for research purposes. Finally, a colloquium has been timetabled which will consist of a lecture by the "Cátedra's" lead followed by another three lectures delivered by three researchers. These lectures will have been prepared with the aim of ensuring that optimum conditions are in place to facilitate a broad academic debate on the main issue at hand.

Program

Nov 5 2026, 18.30 h
Auditorium Museo del Prado or online

The Artist as Art Historian: From The Norm to Global

This first conference concentrates on some key moments in the evolution of the discourse on the past of art, from the Renaissance to World War II. The aim of this quick journey spanning Vasari, the Royal Academies, artists, and art historians of the 19th C. and the first years of Modernism, is to grasp the new singularity of the figure of the artist as an art historian that surfaces after 1945 and to propose a new charting of cases.

Nov 12 2026, 18.30 h
Auditorium Museo del Prado or online

The Post-Historians of Art

Unlike the theory upholding “the end of art,” Post-History is built to last.
In terms of art, Post-History totally blurs boundaries between art and history. What kind of discursive and visual appropriation techniques do Modernist painter Ad Reinhart and Postmodernist Appropriationists Sherrie Levine and Louise Lawler use? What do these uses tell us about the historicities taking shape in a world where everything is constantly present?

Nov 19 2026, 18.30 h
Auditorium Museo del Prado or online

The Investors of the Art of the Past

Modernism, far from being a tabula rasa, has engaged complex and dense relations with the past of art — sometimes a haven, other times the cradle of utopia and novelty. In taking over the field of the history of art, artists added additional reflexivity to their relationship with the past. What did Asger Jorn do with the “humanist discipline” that was the history of art? And Frank Stella, how did he deal with his cardinal stylistic categories — such as the Baroque? Finally, how did Sigmar Polke turn the entire history of art into the subject matter of his art?

Nov 26 2026, 18.30 h
Auditorium Museo del Prado or online

The Museographers

In the 17th C., Cassiano dal Pozzo’s paper museums, David Tenier’s Teatrum Pictorium, and other collections put together by artists on behalf of different kings and countries represented the two poles within which the relationships of artists with the museum is made. The museum may be a fixed location or a cognitive model, a movable piece; it may be a closed space or an entity multiplied on a global scale, a medium in its own right, or an imperceptible object of interrogation: in any case, the museum will be the final issue we will take up, analysing practices engaged in, among others by Lina Bo Bardi and Marcel Broodthaers, Art & Language, Andrea Fraser, Fred Wilson and Juan Muñoz.

Practical Information

The registration period for the lecture programme of XIV Cátedra (14th Chair of the Prado Museum) is from September 14th to October 25th 2026. Registration must be made through the online form available on the MNP website during the indicated period. Applications will be dealt with on

a first-come, first-served basis. A certificate of attendance will be awarded at the end of the course (after confirming attendance at the four lectures)

Recipients: University students, researchers, professionals and the general public

In- person and online attendance: Participants can register online for both the conferences and the colloquium. They can be attended live via Zoom. However, the seminar sessions will be held on-site only.

Link to register: https://www.museodelprado.es/formulario/conferencias-de-la-catedra-del-prado-2026/b587fcb9-516b-6439-5e17-ef05d0686ea9

Contact: centro.estudios@museodelprado.es
Language: French. Simultaneous interpretation into Spanish available

Reference:
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