

Exploring hierarchies within the historiography of the fine and decorative arts

AAH London, Royal College of Art, Apr 10–12, 2014

Deadline: Nov 11, 2013

Marie-Therese Mayne

Association of Art Historians 40th Anniversary Conference, Royal College of Art, London, 10-12 April 2014

Museums & Exhibitions Group Annual Session

Challenging conventions: Exploring hierarchies within the historiography of the fine and decorative arts.

This session explores hierarchies within the discipline of art history, tracing the separation of the 'fine' and 'decorative/applied' arts and examining the impact of this division on the research, display and use of art objects within academic and museum contexts. Even before Kant subdivided the arts into 'mechanical' and 'aesthetic' groupings, the 'decorative' arts were somehow deemed lesser due to their inherent functionality, allied to base manual labour and divorced from the purity and higher appeal/role of the 'fine' arts. This approach was perpetuated throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, and continues to influence modes of practice to the present day.

Within this session questions may include, but are not limited to, exploring how these historiographies affect perceptions within the study of art history and the presentation of objects within museums. Have they actively shaped the way we research, collect and display objects? Have these exclusions/inclusions limited or facilitated ways of working within the discipline generally, or affected the way specific fields have been shaped more particularly? And what impact has this legacy had on contemporary practice, in modes of working, forms of display or the evolution of funding streams?

The Museums & Exhibitions Group represents a wide range of practitioners, including art historians, curators and artists/makers, from all eras and cultures, and invites a similarly wide range of responses. Papers may examine specific areas within this topic, examples of interdisciplinarity or case studies within museum/gallery or academic contexts.

Please send proposals (maximum 250 words) to the session convenors Dr Marika Leino, Oxford Brookes University <mleino@brookes.ac.uk> and Marie-Therese Mayne, Laing Art Gallery, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums <marie-therese.mayne@twmuseums.org.uk> by 11th November 2013.

For further details please see <www.aah.org.uk/annual-conference/2014-conference>

Reference:

CFP: Exploring hierarchies within the historiography of the fine and decorative arts. In: ArtHist.net, Jun 24, 2013 (accessed Apr 6, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/5645>>.