

Session at NORDIK (Reykjavík, 13–16 May 15)

Reykjavik, University of Iceland and The Nordic House Reykjavík, May 13–16, 2015

Deadline: Sep 25, 2014

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Session

EXPANDING PERSPECTIVES IN THE STUDY OF ART HISTORIOGRAPHY

Organzier:

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Since the study of art historiography was first formulated as a field of research in the 1980s, an underlying aim has been to turn attention to unconsidered methods, practices and ideologies. As an investigation into the past of the discipline, the core of art historiography has since then been an exploration of scholarships, conceptual foundations and institutional history. Today, we can see an expansion of possibilities in contemporary research, reflecting different conceptual, theoretical and contextual perspectives. The aim of this session is thus to explore what kind of critical examination of the historiography of art history exists and operates in recent research, and what they embrace.

Since the study of art historiography was first formulated as a field of research in the 1980s, an underlying aim has been to turn the attention into the by then unconsidered methods, practices and ideologies. Historiography has shown that every approach has a history. As an investigation into the past of the discipline, the core of art historiography has since then been an exploration of scholarships, conceptual foundations and institutional history.

Today, research in art historiography has become an institutionalized part of the discipline. Institutionalization brings possibilities as well as challenges. Critical voices have been raised (eg. Dana Arnold, *Art History* 2009) that Art historiography would then imitate the development of art history in the 19th century, by moving from mapping and exploration into processes of constructing a canon of linear progression, hereby reinforcing a heritage of 'old masters' and geographical limits set by national borders / (national restrictions). On the other hand, the scope of research has also been widened – from centering almost exclusively on the foundation and early history of the discipline in German-speaking languages, 'peripheries' such as the Nordic countries has now been wider acknowledged in international research (see for example Matthew Rampley etc. eds., 2012). Writings in art historiography have also turned to new contexts of research, such as popular cul-

ture and cross-readings with critical theory (Frederic J. Schwartz 2005, Karen Lang 2006), recent theory (Michael Ann Holly 2013, Keith Moxey 2013) and ideology and politics (Christopher Wood 2000 and Rampley 2013). These are but a few examples of an expansion of perspectives in contemporary critical art historiographical research, whose objective is not to preserve a canonical narrative of the history of art history but rather to explore and move beyond such a narrative.

Here you can also tell a difference between center and periphery, where the historiographic research in the Nordic countries for example, may present a slightly different approach to the canonical narrative. In the past some parts of this field of research have strived to map and create awareness of national scholarly traditions in relation to an international context, when other parts has conducted critical surveys in the aftermath of New Art History. But where are we today? Is it possible for Nordic scholars to make use of the semi-peripheral position to open up new perspectives in the art historiographic research?

Thus, the question is how do we comprehend such a multivalent development ourselves today? What kinds of alternative critical examination of the historiography of art history exist and operate today and what do they embrace? Do they involve interdisciplinary readings, studies in global art historiography, the history of feminist art historiography, the specific conditions of the semi-periphery (i.e. the art historiography of the Nordic countries), the unwritten practices of art historians as a profession outside the university – or something completely else? This session, thus, would like to gather papers that represent different methodological, theoretical and contextual perspectives of contemporary critical historiography of art history.

Please submit a 1–2 page abstract, brief c.v. (two pages max.), and full contact information by September 25, 2014.

Please direct your communication to the two chairs at the e-mail addresses above and to the conference organisers at papers.nordik2015@listfraedi.is

Reference:

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