



Art history for artists: interactions between scholarly discourse and artistic practice in the 19th century

<http://arthistoryforartists.com/>

International Conference

Berlin, July 8-9, 2016

Call for Papers

Deadline for submissions: March 1, 2016

The conference seeks to examine the shaping of art history as a discipline during the 19th century in relation to artistic training and exchanges between artists and scholars. The development of art history has been associated with an array of socio-political and economic factors such as the formation of a bourgeois public, the politics of national identity and state legitimacy or the needs of an expanding art market. This conference aspires to explore yet another, less studied dimension: the extent to which the historical study of art was also rooted in an intention to inform contemporary artistic production.

The scholarship produced by the first generations of art historians in this period was intertwined with their interest in the art of their time, its quality and future development. Throughout the century many art historians made studies entirely dedicated to contemporary art and sought to provide artists with new ideals. The connection between scholarly discourse and artistic practice was also validated at an institutional level. Since the late 18th century courses in art history, along with courses in history, archaeology, art theory and aesthetics, had been systematically incorporated into the curricula of art academies, schools of design, academies of architecture and polytechnics. These spaces of art education were among the first institutional homes of art history, and played an important role in the shaping of the discipline well before the establishment of autonomous university chairs - a development largely overlooked in the history of art history, but also in the history of art education.

The historical study of art questioned academic normativity and multiplied the aesthetic models available for artists. Reacting against the growing commodification of art, many artists claimed a new role as creators for art history and for the museum, as an alternative to the market. At the same time, the influx of empirical knowledge on past art was often seen as a burden for artistic creativity. The overall reflective turn upon art and its past, tainted by the Hegelian announcement of the end of art, influenced the work of artists in multifarious ways that remain to be explored.

Three main axes of inquiry will be privileged:

1. Scholarly courses in art education: institutional frameworks.

Based on concrete cases, papers may address the training in art history, archaeology, art theory and aesthetics offered in institutions of art education and consider the artistic, political or economic considerations linked to its introduction to the curriculum. Topics of interest may include teaching approaches and goals, the media and technologies of illustration (prints, casts, museum collections, photography), or the profile of professors.

What was the impact of a systematised art historical and theoretical knowledge on academic doctrines, practical training and the overall objectives of art education? How did the particular institutional framework of art education and exposure to the problems of artistic practice affect the scholarly discourses produced in this context? Did teaching artists, architects or craftsmen generate different objects of study, focuses, methods and ultimately a different kind of scholarship to that produced at universities or in museums?

2. The art historian and the present.

Based on case studies, papers may explore the changing attitudes of art historians, archaeologists and art theorists towards their engagement in contemporary artistic production. From the 1870s onwards, primarily in Germany, such an engagement was downplayed in the name of objective and unbiased scholarship detached from practical considerations, alongside the growing academic recognition of art history and other art-related disciplines and their presence in the university. Nonetheless, the complex entanglement of scholarly discourse and contemporary art never really abated even well after this date.

A main focus of the conference is also on the extent to which contemporary artistic experimentations provided art scholars with new perspectives for evaluating past artistic achievements or for studying aesthetic experience. Papers exploring cases of fertile interactions or conflicts between artists and art scholars are particularly welcome.

3. The artist as producer of art discourse.

This section seeks to explore the reactions of artists to the emergence of a community of professional specialists claiming control over art discourse and the formation of parallel or counter discourses by art practitioners. In focus here are the reformulations of art-historical canons by artists in their works, writings or teachings, as well as their contributions to art theory, aesthetics and criticism. Especially welcome are papers that look at artists' attempts to visualise art history and explore the concerns shared by artists and historians about the various ways of representing history.

The conference will cover the period from the mid-18th century to the first two decades of the 20th century. Cases of peripheral, extra-European or colonial contexts, as well as contributions focusing on the circulation of teaching models, discourses and actors across institutions or national boundaries are particularly welcome.

The conference languages will be English and German.

The deadline for proposals is **March 1st, 2016**. Candidates will be informed within two weeks from this date on the outcome of their application.

25 minutes will be allowed for each paper.

Please send proposals (max. 500 word abstract and short cv) to Eleonora Vratskidou: evratskidou@gmail.com.

Accommodation, and travel costs up to 100€ will be covered for all speakers. Full coverage of travel expenses may also be available, subject to grant approval.

Convenor:

Eleonora Vratskidou, Alexander von Humboldt Postdoctoral Fellow-TU Berlin

Scientific Committee:

Heinrich Dilly, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg

Pascal Griener, Université de Neuchâtel

Hubert Locher, Philipps-Universität Marburg

Olga Medvedkova, CNRS-ENS (Centre Jean Pépin)

Michela Passini, CNRS-ENS (IHMC)

Matthew Rampley, University of Birmingham

Bénédicte Savoy, TU Berlin

Eleonora Vratskidou, TU Berlin

Key dates:

Deadline for submissions: March 1, 2016

Reply to participants: March 15, 2016

Conference: July 8-9, 2016

<http://www.kuk.tu-berlin.de/>
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