



36th Congress of German Art Historians University of Stuttgart, 24-28 March 2021

Call for Papers

FORM FRAGEN

The question of form is one of the most fundamental of our discipline and at the same time one of the most contentious. Is form the nucleus of every work of art and should it therefore also be the focal point of art history? Or does the focus on form lead to a voiding of content and to a reduction to mere questions of form? Such questions have accompanied the discipline of art history since its inception. The 2021 Congress of German Art Historians would like to use the topic of form as an opportunity to take stock of our discipline, since form is not only a core concept of art history, but also goes far beyond disciplinary boundaries, given that forms are never created outside social contexts. Forms stand in relation to norms and thus to ideology, politics, society, science, technology and aesthetics. Against this backdrop, the 36th Congress of German Art Historians aims to stimulate a revision of the concept of form.

The German motto of the 2021 Stuttgart Congress, **FORM FRAGEN**, also alludes to the exhibition *Die Form* organised in 1924 in Stuttgart by the Deutscher Werkbund. While in the 1920s hope prevailed of founding a new art and even more of shaping a new society through "good design", the social place of art and art history is less certain today. For this reason, the intention of the 2021 Congress of German Art Historians is neither to re-define the notion of form nor to deal with "mere matters of form", but to use the critical potential of the concept to fuel the discussion about art and society. Whereas formal analysis was accused in the past of leading *per se* to a politically dangerous essentialism, the question today is how the relationship between issues of form and politics - and the concomitant notions of "natural" and "artificial" forms - is to be conceived. In times of social tensions and divisions, do we instead need a new sensibility for form? What does the increasingly informal communication in digital media signify for the status of the artistic form? As the venue for the forthcoming Congress, the technically oriented University of Stuttgart offers an ideal place to reflect, too, on the conditions of production and functioning of forms.

The sessions explore the question of form in historical and systematic breadth. They discuss the history of the concept of form and its relevance for art-historical methods and practices, and look at concrete problems of form. They ask what impact artistic procedures of very different kinds, such as printmaking, design and computational architecture, as well as materials and media have on forms

and their concept; how the notion and meaning of form are deployed in different language and cultural areas; how concepts of form have changed from the Middle Ages to the present; and what expectations and challenges, but also what criticisms were bound up with them. Alongside their explicit orientation in terms of content, the sessions are intended to illustrate as broadly as possible the current academic discourses within the various art-historical professional groups (at museums, in the field of heritage conservation, at universities and research institutions, and in the freelance professions), and at the same time contribute to the exchange between institutions and networks and their actors.

Together with the Institute of Art History at the University of Stuttgart and its partners, the Institute of Architectural History and the Stuttgart Academy of Fine Arts, the board of the Verband Deutscher Kunsthistoriker e.V. (hereafter: Association of German Art Historians) looks forward to welcoming colleagues from all fields to an intensive discussion at the 36th Congress of German Art Historians. The sessions that have been chosen promise to inject fresh stimuli into the debate surrounding the question of form.

Interested colleagues from all fields of art history are warmly invited to submit their proposals for individual papers to be delivered at the sessions given below, at the meetings of the professional groups and in the meeting of the *Digital Art History* working group.

Applications can be made **solely via the online application portal on the Congress website** (www.kunsthistorikertag.de).

An abstract of **max. 2,500 characters** (incl. spaces) may be submitted for each proposal. You will also be asked to enter a short biography in tabular form. In addition, you may also list up to five areas of research focus and five titles of publications.

The selection of papers for the sessions (four 30-minute presentations per session) and for the meetings of the professional groups will be made by the session leaders, the board of the Association of German Art Historians and the local committee in a joint meeting. The selection of papers for the *Digital Art History* working group will be made by its chairs.

The speakers selected to deliver papers at the sessions and to the professional groups are expected - provided that they are art history graduates and are resident in Germany - to be members of the Association of German Art Historians at the latest at the start of 2021.

In view of the steady increase in the number of **specialist forums** in recent years and the continuously growing demand, we invite short applications, in the form of concept papers, to organise such forums at the Congress. Members of the Association who are interested in chairing a specialist forum are warmly invited to send an **abstract** (1-2 pages as a PDF file) by e-mail to the Association's office.

If you have any questions about your application, please contact the Association of German Art Historians in Bonn (info@kunsthistoriker.org).

The deadline for all submissions is 17 June 2020, 18:00 CET.

Sessions

1. Re-form. Form and changes in form in medieval art

Did questions of form in the Christian Middle Ages have their place solely in philosophy and theology? *Forma* was understood in the antique sense not only as the outer shape of things, but as the metaphysical basis of all being - *materia* as the "capacity" to be something (*possibilitas, potentia*), *forma* as the "act" (*actus*) of realization. Thomas Aquinas, for example, defined the soul as the form of the body and God in turn as "pure form" and thus as "pure act" (*actus purus*).

For the culture of the Middle Ages, however, the speculative concept of form was less important than that of reform (*reformare, reformacio*). Taking up the idea of renewal preached by St Paul (Rom. 12:2; Phil. 3:21), cultural activities and religious conversion efforts were essentially understood as a work of reform and as a constant endeavour to advance form. In this context we may think not only of the ambitious educational reforms introduced by Charlemagne, but also the monastic renewal movements of the High and Late Middle Ages. The idea of reform thereby implied not only change and renewal, but invariably, too, a return to an earlier state or archetype imagined as ideal.

This session will examine these simultaneously dynamic and anachronistic facets of the concept of reform and discuss their significance for the visual arts and architecture of the Middle Ages. In order to be able to grasp operations on images and reformulations, we shall focus on significant aspects of political, theological and societal shaping processes and upheavals. We shall ask how visual forms, and especially visual formulars, as the object of aesthetic or theological discourses, or discourses intent on asserting power, were cited, formulated anew or adapted according to context in transformation processes. Lastly: to what extent did the return to old forms function as a driver of artistic innovation?

Tobias Frese, Heidelberg / Anselm Rau, Stuttgart

2. Gesture, mark and line. On the relation of form and technique in the printmaking processes of the early modern period

Is there a form appropriate to the printmaking processes of relief and intaglio printing? A form that "corresponds" to the woodcut, the copperplate engraving or the etching? If yes, how might this correspondence be described? In terms of a particularly economical or a particularly virtuoso use of the means? Via a semanticisation of the techniques and materials or via their transcendence? How strongly do technical factors dominate the creative design? Can technique and artistic design be negotiated separately? What scope for design do the different processes open up and what reciprocal effects thereby result?

In this session we would like to take a fresh look at these by no means new questions. We are concerned, firstly, with answers that appear in the works of printmaking themselves - whether via the development of specific lineaments, via the stark contrast between black and white and its expansion with "grayscale" and colours, via the accentuation of the plane or via the concepts of sculptural modelling. But we shall also examine the potent art-historical narratives of a congruence of form and process that have accompanied the reception of prints, in par-

ticular, right up to the present. The focus here is on models that explain the development of new techniques out of the search for new forms of artistic expression, and which define points of culmination for individual processes.

Magdalena Bushart, Berlin / Henrike Haug, Dortmund

3. Realism as a problem of form

The session investigates the status of form for the practice of Realist art. Gustave Courbet's revolutionary rejection of the tradition of conceptual art resulted not just in the laying bare of the empirical object from beneath its mythological wraps. Courbet's realism was founded above all on a critical reappraisal of early modern painting and an anti-academic revision of its formal laws: the relief of the paint counters the idealistic with a materialistic understanding of art; the use of the palette knife discloses the production process; the chiaroscuro denies sculptural volume and depth; and the large format of the everyday scene dispenses with the narrative focal point and thus the general ethical content. What contemporary critics considered an infringement of *disegno* and thus a defective artistic form, is today recognized as the point of origin of the historical avant-gardes. Courbet's tactile handling of his paint medium is taken up by Impressionism and abstraction. The absorption of his figures and their a-perspectival "montage" leads the way for the Surrealist interest in the reality of dreams. Even in our own day, Gerhard Richter has sited himself in Courbet's lineage. Cinematic art, too, has developed realist methods, which largely define themselves in terms of formal methods of alienation that disrupt the conventional understanding of meaning. Conversely, in 2017 documenta 14 invoked Courbet's model for the directly political goals of contemporary participatory art. In the documentary, performative art practice currently emerging under the label of realism, therefore, is the problem of form that was still under discussion in the debates over realism of the 1930s and after 1968, now obsolete?

The session interrogates the history of modern and contemporary art, usually divided in dichotomous fashion into abstraction and figuration, formalism and realism. It is envisaged that papers will discuss the realisms of the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first century in their relationship to the problems of aesthetic form described above, including independently of Courbet and fundamentally extending to all media, including the history of theory.

Regine Prange, Frankfurt am Main / Christine Tauber, Munich

4. Formation - Activation. Reference to form in the art of modernism

The session investigates the reference to form in art from the beginning of modernism to the present. The presentations are intended to shed light, from different perspectives, on how form as a fundamental principle is emphasised, thematised or queried in works of art, in art criticism and art history.

This enquiry is based on the understanding that form itself in art does not represent a constant, timeless principle, but rather is to be regarded as the result of different relationships: internal relationships within the artwork, as articulated by materiality, content and aesthetic appearance; external relationships of the

work to its conditions of production and reception; and last but not least, discursive relationships between artistic practice, art criticism, historiography and art theory.

The focus therefore lies on the one hand on processes of *formation* and their respective specific material, social and discursive conditions, and on the other hand on processes of *activation* attributed to the form of artworks, e.g. of changing perception, of acting through expression and excitation, and of suggesting actions and practices.

The presentations in this session will look at these different aspects of the reference to form. Papers that discuss the conscious use and more specifically the impact of colour, material and technique, and of constellations such as rhythms, movements and contrasts, are of particular interest. So, too, are papers that focus on these at the theoretical level: for example, by responding with their own close readings to the art historical reconstruction and critical reformulation of the modern concept of form; by confronting the claim that form should have a universal meaning/denotation as an analytical category with its use in specific social and ideological contexts (as in particular those of colonialism and decolonisation); or by examining the material, media-related and institutional conditions of the reference to form (e.g. through the exhibition, reproduction and cataloguing of works). The time frame is thereby confined to modern and contemporary art in different regions and cultures.

Kerstin Thomas, Stuttgart / Ralph Ubl, Basel

5. Comparing and interpreting: The meaning of form

Decoding the meaning of form is a key issue for art history. Connoisseurial practice even at an early date held out the prospect of rendering artefacts legible, recognizable and decodable, in a universally valid manner, through the comparative analysis of forms. Johann Joachim Winckelmann deduced cultural-historical meanings from formal characteristics and thereby borrowed from the theory of physiognomy so influential in the eighteenth century. Heinrich Wölfflin oscillated all his life between a strict formalism and an interpretation of forms from the perspective of cultural history. Powerful stimuli for an interpretation of forms came from the Viennese School with Max Dvořák and Hans Sedlmayr. Right up to day, however, a consistent method of interpreting form has yet to take shape.

In this session we would like to examine questions such as the following: what concrete practices and strategies have art history and connoisseurship developed hitherto in order to make forms describable, classifiable and interpretable? What tools, adjustments and abstractions have been used to re-visualise forms and to instrumentalise them for argumentative ends e.g. in art-historical publications? And above all: on what methodological basis do we “read” forms today? Practices of comparing and “reading” forms need to be scrutinised particularly with regard to pre-modern arts: here, the modern paradigm of expression, according to which characteristics of form are interpreted as the expression of the artist, does not necessarily apply. What can we learn from the art theory at the time? How does it treat form? Does it offer starting points for concrete semantics of form?

We invite papers that reflect and revise practices of attributing meaning of form, or which present concrete suggestions on how, for example, open brushwork, precise outlines, rough surfaces or other problems of form can be contextualised and interpreted.

Daniela Bohde, Stuttgart / Joris Corin Heyder, Bielefeld

6. "Combat bad taste in all areas". Aesthetic education as the task of the museum?

Many art historians and museum professionals in the Europe of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were agreed: in questions of form, museums had an educational mission and should formulate this mission clearly and organise their collections and exhibitions accordingly. The Stuttgart Landesgewerbemuseum and its predecessor institutions were themselves, too, a formative site of discourse with regard to the shaping of taste around 1900. Museum director Gustav E. Pazaurek (1865-1935) had even built up a collection illustrating "lapses in taste". Art historians such as he saw it as the task of museums to "combat bad taste in all areas".

But what did the situation look like after the era of National Socialism? What part did aesthetic education play in the exhibitions of the post-war period? Can exhibition formats such as *documenta*, or phenomena such as the boom in Pop Art exhibitions in the post-war era, be read as a form of "social education"? While concrete formal developments in the sphere of design are now shaped primarily by commercial awards such as the Red Dot Award, the "educational work" of museums increasingly seems to be concerned less with questions of form and more with socio-political developments.

The session on the role of museums in "shaping the taste" of society is explicitly concerned with a museum perspective and invites papers on questions relating to the educational role of museums from historical and contemporary perspectives. These may be papers on concepts behind historical collections of examples in form and design, or equally on examples of collections and exhibitions whose aspiration was and is to educate society and shape its taste. A look at the present and the future is intended to spotlight what, in the work of museums today, is the equivalent of the education of the past in matters of design, whether and how this education takes place and is reflected, and to what extent aesthetic education corresponds to the tasks of today's museums at all.

Irmgard Müsch, Stuttgart / Maaïke van Rijn, Stuttgart

7. "Die gute Form" - Outdated dogma or proven paradigm in design?

The concept of "gute Form" (good design) seems obsolete in design today, debunked as an ideological education of taste and an untenable formal doctrine. Yet "gute Form" - after its heyday in the 1950s and 1960s, when it defined an entire style, and its decline in the 1970s and 1980s - lives on right up to the present. Its enduring influence ranges from the discourse on simplicity and reduction in design to the rhetoric of function and minimalism.

"Die gute Form" was first popularised as a term by the exhibition of the same name organised by Max Bill in 1949 in Basel. In his own words, Bill wanted "to

show the simple, the authentic - [i.e.] the good". This formulation alone shows that the exhibition's aspiration went far beyond purely formal considerations. Simplicity and authenticity allude to design and material, and here Bill is drawing upon the tradition of the Werkbund. The word "good", however, contains an ethic: a "Good" was to exert its influence upon society through design and was also translated into educational programmes (e.g. in the *Werkbundkiste* boxes).

From today's perspective, the actionism around "gute Form" at that time is undoubtedly problematic. Yet it shaped the post-war period in Germany like no other paradigm. Precisely because the term was invariably understood in a political sense, too, namely as overcoming Nazi propaganda and Nazi dictatorship, it contributed significantly to the self-image of the young FRG. The construction of a new society with the means of design was likewise a concern in the newly founded GDR, whereby here the term "gutes Design" was preferred. It is all the more astonishing that almost no research has been conducted on this important design topos, or corresponding literature published. Solely the history of the founding and influence of the Ulm School of Design is well documented. We still know little, however, about the impact of "gute Form" in everyday culture and about its perception as an ideology and lifestyle. This session aims to contribute to closing this gap in the scholarship.

Annette Geiger, Bremen / Anneli Kraft, Erlangen-Nuremberg

8. Analysis and creation of form in times of computational architecture

The session looks at current trends in architecture that is conceived and produced in completely novel ways, though seemingly following the tradition of the "organic constructions" by Frei Otto and others. By using computation no longer simply for imaging and step-by-step procedures, but for its integrative and morphogenetic capacities, the foundations of art-historical description and analysis of such architecture have most probably changed as well.

Descriptive and comparative seeing as the scholarly basis of any analysis of architectural form is shaped by and dependent upon linguistic prerequisites, which differentiate themselves less along the boundaries of language than through technical development. Only rarely do analyses of buildings pay tribute to the constructive, manual, material and conceptual processes and their reciprocal effects in such a way that critical account can be taken of these, too. A consideration of form is called upon to give these design and production processes new expression at the level of language, whenever that form resulted from a series of technical, digital or computational actions in any executed project. Appropriating such novel forms as mimesis, in line with our European, largely figural tradition of interpretation, and thus normalising them, raises questions about the suitability of traditional analysis of form. What new methods would need to be applied? Will new analyses of form, to give an example, only be possible within cooperative data networks?

The session wishes to pursue, from as many different angles as possible, the question of digital specificity throughout the processes of design, planning, production and possibly also utilisation. The focus should lie on digital processes in the design, planning and production of architecture since the 1960s. Papers on early mathematical or geometrical rationales for architecture, from Durand to Le

Corbusier, are also conceivable, as are computer-based reviews of pre-digital processes and comparisons with other arts.

Klaus Jan Philipp, Stuttgart / Christian Vöhringer, Stuttgart

9. Formlessness ... with consequences: Eccentric Abstraction, Anti-form, Post-Minimalism, *informe* and their (re-)readings

The session takes the current (re-)conceptualisations of the concept of the formless as an opportunity to critically reflect on its (re-)readings. Over the past decades, formlessness has been variously connoted with socio-political aspects (as in Eccentric Abstraction, Abject Art and Entropy, right up to the current New Materialism) or conceived in structuralist formalistic terms (*informe*, R Krauss, Y-A Bois). The thinking on formlessness was thereby taken significantly further by approaches issuing from the sphere of Gender Studies, with feminist approaches joined in the 1990s by those from the perspective of queer theory. These associations with concepts of gender are a main feature of so-called "Anti-form". In 2000, for example, David Hopkins judged Lucy Lippard's Eccentric Abstraction and Robert Morris's declaration of "Anti-form" to be a "soft" response to "hard masculine" minimal art and as the "feminisation" and "desublimation" of this latter. This conventional assessment of Post-Minimalism as a "soft" reaction against the rigid forms of Minimalism - so often found in the readings of Louise Bourgeois, Eva Hesse and Lynda Benglis - deserves revision.

The writing of post-war art history is traditionally dominated by (in particular American) Minimal Art, since Post-Minimalism is perceived for the most part exclusively against the backdrop of Minimal Art or as a subcategory of it. In order to relativize this dominance, it is envisaged that the session should also offer the opportunity to take a look at other manifestations, e.g. in Asia, Eastern Europe or South America, as well as non-canonical artists.

In recent years, renaissances of the Abject, the tactile and the concept of Entropy have met in a reappraisal of matter, along with their new discursive ramifications in the field of enquiry of New Materialism, as can be found e.g. in the reception of the works of Olga Balema or Marlie Mul. These debates go hand in hand with alternative ways of conceptualising the human subject. The session thus provides an opportunity to reflect on a concept that is still not clearly recorded in art history, but is highly topical. We invite papers that take up the themes outlined above, but which also not only localise the concept of the formless geographically more closely, but also discuss it in its historical depth.

Valeria Schulte-Fischedick, Berlin / Elena Zanichelli, Bremen

10. Is form already determined in advance?

What approach should be adopted to interventions on monuments is a question that has been debated for as long as heritage conservation has existed. Sometimes it is a matter of repairs and additions, sometimes of more extensive changes and updates. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, much scope was granted to interpretive and creative conservation. Today the Venice Charter (1964) lays down a framework, but this, too, allows some leeway in day-to-day conservation practice - not least since every monument is unique. When confronted with the need for repairs, renovations, additions and new buildings for

new functions or expanded uses, therefore, what position does heritage conservation adopt today and what forms does it find?

Conservators enter the life of a monument at a random point in its history. Their task is to accompany it with their expertise on its continuing path and thereby to orientate themselves towards its heritage value. Is it conceivable that the form of any measures to be taken is already determined in advance? This seems too simplistic. It may be true for components that require straightforward replacement, but what about structural additions that (must) have their own design? Monuments are continually being confronted with new requirements that could play no role when they were first built. The external glass elevator on historical masonry is a glaring example. Where it is a matter of introducing new forms into a monument, conservators sometimes have to request them, sometimes authorise them – and sometimes, too, refuse them.

The session opens up a broad forum for questions of form in heritage conservation: when are reconstructions meaningful, and when is it appropriate to find a new language of form? Does something new need to be reversible, and does it always need a join to characterise separation? What does the so-called “bound contrast” mean today? Does it only apply to large-scale projects or also to the minor works on the house around the corner? How can we deal with extensions at all? What about new materials, which in turn have an influence on design? What about the twentieth-century buildings based on reproducible components? And what will be the outcome of the discussion surrounding the roof of Notre-Dame in Paris, where the important roof framework is to be given a new form, but the spire its “old” form?

These are just a few possible questions. Alongside concrete examples, it is envisaged that topics will also include the methodology and the discussion within the field. The session invites all interested parties from the fields of heritage conservation, restoration and research to explore “form”.

Martin Bredenbeck, Brauweiler/Koblenz / Ulrike Plate, Esslingen

Professional Groups

Universities and Research Institutes Professional Group

Does the form still fit? On the situation of university teaching in art history

The broadening of art history to include new subject areas and regions of the world has led to a pronounced diversification of the courses offered at universities and colleges. For some time now, the boundaries of our discipline have no longer been defined by such standard works on art history as the *Propyläen Kunstgeschichte* and the *Belser Stilgeschichte*. Non-European art, non-artistic images and artefacts from the most diverse social and cultural contexts are becoming objects of art-historical teaching; at the same time, once formative subject areas are waning in significance. Practices in university teaching, too, are changing – among other things, in the wake of digitalisation. And last but not least, the course reforms introduced following the Bologna Process have brought to light

how differently the structure, content and core competencies of art history studies are conceived in different places.

Taking up the motto of the 2021 Congress, this professional-group forum will explore the form of courses of study in art history from a number of angles. Do the different degree programmes exhibit sufficient commonalities to be able to be grouped together under the common heading of “art history”? Are the teaching programmes still able to ensure that we provide adequate training for the various art-historical professions (museums, heritage conservation, academia, art trade, etc.)? What role does the transmission of formal analytical skills play in this context? And given that the subject areas of art history are so highly differentiated and extend far beyond Europe, can the aspiration to impart a would-be universal expert ability to describe and analyse images, artefacts and buildings still be considered worthwhile?

We invite short, pithy presentations (of up to 15 minutes) that spotlight the current situation and provide a basis for a broad discussion of the questions outlined above.

Johannes Grave, Jena / Iris Wenderholm, Hamburg

Museums Professional Group Challenges and perspectives

Following the success of its first forum at the 2019 Congress of German Art Historians in Göttingen, the *Museums* professional group will once again be holding a forum in Stuttgart.

On this occasion, too, it aims to offer a very wide choice of topics and to attract the participation of colleagues from different types of museums and from the various professional groups. Fundamental questions and problems of current and future museum practice once again may and should be addressed: what does the situation look like for the traditional museum tasks of collecting, preserving and last but not least research? What forms of display and mediation are contemporary and appropriate? What structural and new challenges do museums face? And under what conditions will and can the multitude of traditional as well as newly added tasks be carried out in the various institutions?

It goes without saying that reference may also be made to the Congress’s overarching theme: how can museums take up the complex and challenging issue of “form”? How can “questions of form” be thematised and negotiated? How can form as a constitutive element of art and a core concept of our discipline be exhibited, and above all communicated?

In the work of museums, in the presentations of museum collections and in special exhibitions, our subject and not least academic scholarship make themselves public and reach a wide audience. The position of the Association of German Art Historians with regard to the above-mentioned and many other key issues is therefore of great importance. We are namely able discuss these questions from the immediate perspective of the art historians who work at museums in various capacities. To this should be added presentations by colleagues at universities and in the freelance professions, which combine to form a differentiated body of opinions.

Marcus Dekiert, Cologne

Heritage Conservation Professional Group

Forms - questions - paths. Current positions and challenges facing the Heritage Conservation professional group

With their forum at the Congress of German Art Historians, colleagues from the *Heritage Conservation* professional group have the opportunity to present and discuss current issues. Aspects of theory and practice can be addressed in specialist papers, and discussions can also be launched on research and other projects. The results will be presented at the general meeting of the Association of German Art Historians and published on the website, in order to further raise the Association's profile as a professional association for those working in heritage conservation.

The broad professional field of heritage conservation is characterised by interdisciplinary working. The professions involved in heritage conservation have very different approaches to the topic and to the exploration of the concept of cultural heritage, just as their approaches to the substance itself are very different. Interdisciplinary exchange and joined-up thinking are helpful.

The tasks of heritage conservation today are by no means easy. Limited resources, legislative changes, diminishing public consensus on the issues concerning the heritage sector, investment pressure, investor projects and climate and barrier debates are just some of today's challenging factors. For all our idealism, these can represent a real burden. At the same time, the ideal of permanent employment is no longer necessarily the path laid out ahead and it makes sense to look for alternative career paths and forms of collaboration. What can such paths look like and what discussions of the discipline do they necessitate?

Suggestions for short papers are invited. In order to allow as many aspects as possible to be addressed, the length of the papers selected will depend on the number of submissions. The forum will conclude with an open discussion.

Martin Bredenbeck, Brauweiler/Koblenz / Constanze Falke, Bonn

Freelance Professions Professional Group

Salaried with self-employed: Collaboration between institutions and freelancers

Freelance art historians often work together with institutions. Their professional services are highly valued and frequently sought by museums, heritage agencies, universities and other institutions. The forum wishes to focus on collaborations between individuals working on different employment bases and to initiate a discussion on how such cooperation can remain constructive in the future. The Congress is thereby seen as an opportune occasion to engage in dialogue with different professional groups. The forum would like to examine the following questions: What benefits are offered by the collaboration between freelancers and permanent staff? What forms does such collaboration take at institutions? Which form fits which kind of project? What perspectives can freelancers bring to projects at institutions? What requirements must be met in the case of both parties for the project to succeed? What legal specificities have to be considered?

This focus is highly topical against the backdrop of the debate surrounding bogus self-employment, which has created a great deal of uncertainty among institutions and agencies in recent years. Institutional funding bodies warn against cooperation with freelancers, and the spectre of bogus self-employment has already threatened the livelihood of some. At the same time, there are now a greater number of permanent jobs - but is that sensible and fair in every case? A constructive dialogue is urgently needed here - not primarily in order to secure freelancers an economic basis in future, but above all because cooperation is enriching for both sides and ultimately also brings advantages for its addressees: for visitors to exhibitions, for participants in teaching events or for the owners of historical monuments.

The Freelance Professions forum invites representatives of institutions and freelancers to speak jointly - as a pair - on their collaboration. The programme aims to encompass the widest possible range of professional spheres (in particular museums, universities and research institutes, heritage conservation) as well as a variety of forms of employment (job contract, engagement for the duration of a project, lectureship). Experts in labour law will also be invited to the forum to comment on the presentations and contributions to the discussion from their point of view.

Ruth Heftrig, Halle (Saale) / Holger Simon, Cologne

Working Groups

Art History and Education Working Group

QUESTIONS OF FORM in art-historical education

The meeting of the *Art History and Education* working group within the Association of German Art Historians is devoted to questions of form in art-historical education: from a historical perspective, in textbooks and in current educational contexts. The working group is not participating in the call for papers this time but invites colleagues to a joint discussion.

**Martina Sitt, Kassel / Barbara Welzel, Dortmund /
Andreas Zeising, Siegen/Dortmund**

Digital Art History Working Group

Digital formalism - patterns, taxonomies, standards

The concept of form is once again being increasingly perceived as the foundation of the discipline of art history. The current discussion surrounding the concept also raises the question of the relationship of form to digitally based methods, since the digital processing of art-historical objects has been suspected of formalism from the very beginning.

Digital technologies for the documentation and analysis of works of art and cultural historical events in general aim in the first instance to allow simplified ac-

cessibility that is largely independent of place and time, together with the handling of large volumes of data. A structured - “formalised” - description and recording of artworks, as well as search and filter functions, allow faster and more flexible access to large corpora. Comparison, grouping and typological classifications are computer-aided. In a further step, machine learning develops its own parameters for defining similarities based on pattern definition and matching.

Even if such operations are based on quantitative parameters and are performed using arithmetic operations, their application is only meaningful within the framework of a broader historical world model. The same is true of the “traditional” (art-)historical way of working, in which isolated items of information from written sources, photographs or the scholarly literature likewise cannot stand alone. Broader concepts such as the historical development of forms make up the necessary background, which equally can be related to digital data and the results of analyses with a view to gaining knowledge. The *Digital Art History* working group at the 36th Congress of German Art Historians would like to explore in particular what a promising combination of computational and hermeneutic procedures, going beyond simplistic accusations of formalism, might look like.

We invite submissions of proposals on the topics of form, formalisation and patterns (talks of 20 minutes in length). Three papers will be selected and combined into a lecture and discussion panel at the working group's meeting. The proposed papers may be theoretical or project-related and may include examples from research practice. Papers that represent and reflect on the interplay of hermeneutic and digital methods are particularly welcome.

Peter Bell, Erlangen / Lisa Dieckmann, Cologne / Georg Schelbert, Berlin

#arthistoCamp

On 23 March 2021, the day before the opening of the 36th Congress of German Art Historians, the *Digital Art History* working group is organising the 2nd arthistoCamp (10am - 6pm).

We invite you to the arthistoCamp - the unconference for art history - to talk about current topics in the Digital Humanities from the perspective of art history. Of interest are findings from national and international research projects on Digital Art History, issues relating to new infrastructures for research, practical solutions for using and improving data, and the question of the extent to which fields of research are changing as a result of digital methods. From pitching ideas and hands-on sessions to round-table discussions - all formats that fit into the given time frame are possible at the arthistoCamp.

At unconferences, the programme and the content of the individual sessions are only decided on the day by the participants themselves. The unconference format is particularly suitable for exploring a topic in breadth and for starting from the needs of attendees. Refreshments, rooms and facilitator materials will be provided. Registration is required for organisational reasons and opens at the end of 2020.

Specialist Forums

Specialist forums have been an integral part of the Congress programme since 2007 and primarily offer interested colleagues a networking opportunity. In addition to internal exchanges, the opportunity also exists to talk about specific topics with a wider circle of colleagues.

The offer by the Association of German Art Historians to put on specialist forums as part of its Congress has proved so popular that the logistics of hosting them is approaching its limits. For this reason, we ask that **to organise a specialist forum, you submit short applications in the form of concept papers.**

It is anticipated that each meeting will have a time slot of just under two hours. The Association is neutral as to the organisation of the content. For a second time, it is planned to offer a discussion lounge, which will serve outside meetings as a contact point for interested parties, and especially for young attendees, at agreed times. Two members of each of the specialist forums should be available in the lounge as contact persons.

Abstracts to be submitted should consist of a brief summary of the planned content of the specialist forum and a draft running order. The forum must be chaired by two persons who are members of the Association of German Art Historians. We would be pleased to receive further suggestions as to ways in which the specialist forums and the Association could pursue a more intensive collaboration outside the Congress, too. In the case of agendas that are not aimed at a public audience, a limited number of rooms can be made available, e.g. for a discussion of organisational matters.