

Art and Temporality

York Summer Theory Institute in Art History (YSTI)
University of York, May 23 – 27, 2016, 1 – 4:45 pm daily
Convener: Professor Whitney Davis (University of California at Berkeley and
University of York)

Description: Designed for students entering and in postgraduate study (and for interested postdoctoral students), this will be the second iteration of the Summer Theory Institute in Art History at the University of York (YSTI), organised and led by Professor Whitney Davis. Each YSTI has a broad topic/thematic definition: the Institute in 2015 dealt with *Art History and the Parameters of Image Studies*, and future Institutes might deal with *Bodies and Sexualities in Art History*; *Art History, Art Criticism, and the Philosophy of Art*; *Art History and the Transnational Artworld*; and *Place and Space in Histories of the Arts*. Each Institute is led by members of faculty from York, convened by Professor Davis. Each emphasises recent conceptual, methodological, and theoretical writings drawn from different national and linguistic traditions of art history. Some emphasis will be placed on readings in languages other than English (although non-English texts will usually be available in translation). (One aim of the Institutes is to contribute to globalising postgraduate study and research and to help build international professional networks for participants.) Texts will be selected partly for their generality (that is, for accessibility and applicability more or less independent of specialised art-historical subject area, period, and/or region), and the relatively compact reading list (two or three articles, chapters, or essays for each session) will enable close focus on arguments and issues.

There will be two public lectures associated with YSTI, an opening lecture by the convener of the Institute and a later lecture by an invited speaker whose current work is related to the overall topic/theme. Participants are expected to make their own arrangements for travel and accommodation.

Art and Temporality. In the 2016 YSTI, we will explore the ways in which the temporalities of the arts and their histories have been conceived in art history, visual culture, image studies, and related disciplines. Recent discussions of 'multiple modernities', of 'revivals' in the arts, of 'anachronic' histories and 'anachronistic' art histories, and of the need to study the 'global modern', 'global medieval', and/or 'global ancient' (not to speak of 'global prehistory') have reawakened critical, theoretical, and methodological interest in philosophies of history, time, and periodization. Well-established approaches (such as conceptualizations of the 'dialectical' and/or 'processual' image [Benjamin, Adorno], of history as 're-enactment' of the past in the present [Collingwood], and of 'hot' and 'cold' paces of cultural development [Lévi-Strauss]) have been

put into dialogue with approaches that have emerged in postcolonial studies, world art studies, paleoanthropology, and elsewhere. The seminar will examine such issues as taxonomy, typology, and seriation; archaism; survivals and revivals; multiple and/or global 'moderns', 'ancients', etc.; linear and cyclical cultural temporalities; 'emic' and 'etic' times; the temporal phenomenology of the 'succession' and 'recursion' of images; the nature of 'heritage'; the question of 'presentism'; the status of 'grand narratives' – progressivist or not – of the world history of art; and the nature of the time of art-historical reflection itself.

Format: There will be two afternoon sessions, approximately 2 hours each, with a 45-minute break in between. In the first session, participants will briefly introduce their research interests and projects. The majority of the sessions will be devoted to discussion of the assigned readings. Presentations, discussions, and questions by seminar leaders and students will contextualize the readings for about an hour (Professor Davis will usually take the lead but students will be asked to comment on materials with which they have special familiarity), followed by more open discussion based on comments and questions for a second hour. For each session, three participants will prepare some advance comments and questions on the readings to present to the group. All readings should be done in advance (mornings and some evenings should be kept open for this purpose, and some readings will likely need to be completed before the Institute begins). In addition, an individual session will be devoted to follow-up discussion of each of the two evening lectures by the convenor and a visitor. A brief talk explaining how readings/sessions might have suggested new perspectives in participants' research and specific feedback on the contents and formats of the Institute – suggestions for future Institutes and funding applications – will be presented by each participant in the final session. This will be made available in recorded or written form to participants' supervisors in order for them to get a sense of their students' activities and interests in the Institute.

Full reading list: to follow