

OPENING UP ART HISTORY: 50 YEARS AT BIRKBECK

Birkbeck's History of Art department, which accepted its first students in September 1967, will celebrate its 50th anniversary during the academic year 2017-18.

The theme of the celebrations, 'Opening up Art History', unites the department's legacy and its future.

Since its inception in the liberal atmosphere of 1960s London, the department has offered life-changing, eye-opening access to the study of a subject long considered an elitist enclave. The definition of what an art history student could be was transformed by Birkbeck's entry into the academic landscape.

The department is known as a centre of cutting edge research in all periods and in areas throughout and beyond Europe. This research has consistently opened up the field to other disciplines, to other media, and to myriad social and political contexts.

The anniversary will be used as an opportunity to generate other openings, including new approaches to ensuring open access to art historical research, via publishing innovations and interventions in the current museum, archive and heritage fields.

Events:

16-17 September 2017 OPEN HOUSE LONDON: 43 GORDON SQUARE

The School of Arts opens the doors of its historic Georgian terrace on Gordon Square free to the public during this city-wide festival of architecture. Hourly tours of the building will be offered by Birkbeck History of Art students, with a focus on three moments in the building's history: the original building of the early 19th century, its transformation by the Bloomsbury Group in the early 20th century and the radical contemporary insertion of the cinema in the early 21st century.

You can see a short film about the building, featuring our lecturers, at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yvk6G1tns6k>

30 November 2017 PETER MURRAY MEMORIAL LECTURE

Dr Gabriele Finaldi, Director of the National Gallery, London

Thursday 30 November 2017, 6pm, Lecture Theatre, Clore Building

How to form a national collection. The Prado Museum and the National Gallery, London

Please join us afterwards for a wine reception in the Clore Building.

Gabriele Finaldi has been Director of the National Gallery since 2015. He was previously Deputy Director for Collections and Research at the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, a position he took up in 2002. Prior to his role at the Prado, he was a curator at the National Gallery between 1992 and 2002, where he was responsible for

the later Italian paintings in the collection (Caravaggio to Canaletto) and the Spanish collection (Bermejo to Goya). Finaldi studied art history at the Courtauld Institute of Art, where he completed his doctorate in 1995 on the 17th-century Spanish painter who worked in Italy Jusepe de Ribera. He has curated exhibitions in Britain, Spain, Italy, Belgium and the US. He has written catalogues and scholarly articles on Velázquez and Zurbarán, Italian Baroque painting, religious iconography.

The **Peter Murray Memorial Lecture** is supported by the Murray Bequest, established in honour of Peter Murray. Peter Murray was a founding member of Birkbeck's Department of History of Art, where he was Professor until 1980.

22 February 2018 BIRKBECK HISTORY OF ART ANNIVERSARY LECTURE

Dr Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A

Clore Lecture Theatre, 6pm, followed by a reception. Kindly supported by the School of Arts.

23-24 February 2018 FORWARD LOOKING: WORKSHOPS ON THE FUTURE OF ART HISTORY AND MUSEUMS

In four public workshops, Birkbeck's academics are joined by experts from the worlds of museums, media and publishing to put our collective finger on the pulse of the discipline and of the museum world we all engage with as academics. Each workshop focuses on an area of crisis and transformation, asking where we are now, what's next, and why. The workshops are kindly supported by the Murray Bequest.

Friday 23 February 2018, Cinema, School of Arts, 43 Gordon Square

10-12.30 The Future of Studying Old Art

This workshop explores the continued relevance of studying the art of the Middle Ages and Renaissance in a cultural climate where the humanities have been downgraded, and art history labelled elitist. With contributions from teachers, scholars, curators and broadcasters, we aim to think broadly about how we study, teach and communicate ideas about 'old' art, in order to challenge established discourses in the discipline, engage with a wider audience, and make connections between past and present.

Robert Maniura (Birkbeck)

Peta Motture (V&A)

Rose Aidin (Art History Link-up)

Peter Maniura (BBC)

Chair: Dorigen Caldwell (Birkbeck)

2-4.30 Futures for Publishing in Art History

We are at a turning point in the publishing of art historical research. To what extent is the existing model of art history publishing sustainable? What does the future hold for

the illustrated scholarly print journal and monograph? How is art history responding to the push for online open access publishing? How do copyright and licensing restrictions and costs affect what can be published and in what form? This session brings together print and online publishers and editors, an intellectual property expert and academics to think about the way forward.

Sarah Victoria Turner, Head of Research, Paul Mellon Centre
Natalie Foster, Routledge
Bernard Horrocks, Intellectual Property Manager, Tate
Steve Edwards, Birkbeck
Chair: Leslie Topp, Birkbeck

Saturday 24 February 2018, Cinema, School of Arts, 43 Gordon Square

10-12.30 Making a Difference: Do Museums Matter in a Changing World?

Since their establishment, museums have played a significant, and often contested, social, political and national role. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries they frequently became sites where the cultural memory of nations was constructed and imperial identities, policies and aspirations were promoted. The last thirty years has witnessed a boom in museums especially those focussing on post-conflict contexts. This symposium addresses the question of whether museums can make a difference in an increasingly conflictual and segregated world.

Sharon Macdonald, Institute for European Ethnology, Humboldt, Berlin
Nicholas Thomas, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge
Gaye Sculthorpe, British Museum
Christine Eyene, Birkbeck

Chair: Annie E. Coombes

2-4.30 The Future of Museums in a Time of Austerity

Museum closures are a matter for concern. The austerity measures introduced under the current government have resulted in local authorities reducing funding for museums and some have been forced to close. In this workshop we examine the landscape of closure within the UK. How do rates of closure compare with previous decades and also with rates of new museums opening? What's lost when a museum closes? And is closure always a problem? Is it really necessary to have so many museums keeping their collections for posterity?

Alistair Brown, Policy officer, Museums Association
Jon Finch, Director of Harris Museum Preston
Jamie Larkin, Mapping Museums research team, Birkbeck
Chair: Fiona Candlin, Director Mapping Museums research team, Birkbeck

Friday 9 March 2018 – EXHIBITION OPENING

Photography, Politics, Collaborations: an exhibition of new materials from the Jo Spence Memorial Library at Birkbeck

Peltz Gallery, School of Arts, Birkbeck

This exhibition showcases important archival materials related to the late Jo Spence, British photographer, writer, artist and self-defined ‘cultural sniper’, recently donated to the History and Theory of Photography Research Centre in the School of Arts at Birkbeck. Curated by Patrizia Di Bello with Birkbeck History of Art Students.

The exhibition runs until 28 April 2018.

Friday 29 June 2018. CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF ART HISTORY AT BIRKBECK – A GARDEN PARTY

5-8pm, Gordon Square

Kindly supported by the London Art History Society.