

The Graduate Visual Culture Association at Queen's University
Context & Meaning XXIII:
Present | Past

CALL FOR PAPERS

We are pleased to announce the twenty-third annual *Context and Meaning* Graduate Student Conference, hosted by the Queen's University Department of Art History and Art Conservation from **Friday, February 9th to Saturday, February 10th, 2024**.

How do we look at the past? How does the past shape our present—or vice versa? Such questions were particularly apt in the aftermath of the Second World War, when Theodor Adorno popularized the concept of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (“coming to terms with the past”) to explore how post-war Germans examined their role in the conflict. However, scholars such as Max Czollek and Peter Chametzky have indicated cracks in Germany's apparent success in grappling with its complicated past. Both swap out the “past” in Adorno's formulation for “present,” proposing instead “*Gegenwartsbewältigung*,” whereby our debates about the past are often proxies for coming to terms with the present. History is produced in the present, as historians of visual culture are well aware. Studies have highlighted the subjective and emotional position of the scholar towards their temporally displaced objects of study and considered how such objects are interpreted, disseminated, and canonized according to contemporary concerns. Scholars have also considered temporality in visual culture by emphasizing the ephemerality of material objects, the time-bound processes of art and image making, and how images and artworks can be read as records of their origins. Indeed, it is high time to take time seriously.

By selecting the theme of ***Present | Past*** for the twenty-third annual Context and Meaning conference, the Graduate Visual Culture Association at Queen's University seeks to engender dialogues about how time is experienced and constructed, how we view the past through a contemporary lens, and how artworks, images, and other objects of visual culture mediate history.

Some potential topics that we hope to explore include, but are by no means limited to:

- The persistence of colonial structures in present cultural production
- Biases and absences in museum and archival collections
- The roles of art, cinema, and visual/material culture in mediating time
- Moves to re-centre marginalized groups in our narratives of the past
- Nostalgia and national mythologizing using artists, artworks, and design
- Discourses around public monuments and commemorative projects
- Approaches to diversifying art historical knowledge and pedagogy
- Rehanging of public art collections and “hacking” the museum
- Conflicts between historical knowledge and contemporary demands in art conservation
- Documentation of personal and social histories through craft
- Appropriations and uses of images in politics and activism
- Artworks dealing with time, history, and ephemerality

Context and Meaning XXIII intends to provide an inclusive forum for multi-disciplinary academic discussion on visual and material culture. We encourage paper submissions from students and scholars with a broad range of backgrounds and approaches whose work employs visual culture for interpreting the past and present. Submissions are welcome from current graduate students, as well as those who have completed their graduate studies within the last two years. We seek to assemble a diverse group of scholars in order to foster interdisciplinary discussions, and expect submissions from fields including anthropology, architecture, art and design history, classics, conservation, economics, education, environmental studies, film and media studies,

gender and sexuality studies, history, Indigenous studies, Jewish studies, language and cultural studies, literary studies, material culture studies, music, museum studies, philosophy, policy studies, political studies, religious studies, screen cultures and curatorial studies, sociology, and theatre.

If you are interested in participating in *Context and Meaning XXIII*, being held from Friday, February 9th to Saturday, February 10th, please visit www.gvca.ca/context-and-meaning to submit an abstract of no more than 300 words with the title of your paper and a 150-word bio. As we hope to again host a hybrid conference, you will be prompted to indicate your preference to present either in-person or online. Presenters will be asked to deliver a 15-minute presentation that will be followed by a panel discussion period. The deadline to submit an abstract will be at the end of day, **Monday, November 20th, 2023**. Thank you to all who apply!

Nicholas Markowski and Peter Sproule
Conference Co-Chairs
Context & Meaning XXIII
contextandmeaning@queensu.ca

Graduate Visual Culture Association
Department of Art History and Art Conservation
Ontario Hall, Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario, K7L 3N6, Canada

*Queen's University is situated on the territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabek.
Ne Queen's University e'ho noñwe nikanónhsote tsi noñwe ne Haudenosaunee tánon Anishinaabek tehatihsnónhsahere ne óhontsa.
Gimaakwe Gchi-gkinoomaagegamig atemagad Naadowe miinwaa Anishinaabe aking.*

