



April 2018

## **ASSOCIATION FOR ART HISTORY STATEMENT ON THE ONGOING INDUSTRIAL ACTION BY UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE UNION MEMBERS**

As the subject association for art history in the UK, the Association for Art History regards academics and students in the Higher Education sector as our core constituents. We therefore voice our strong support for those who stand to be disadvantaged by the proposed changes to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS): full time permanent faculty, part-time and casual staff and those considering a career in art history.

While we take no view on the specifics of the new pension actuarial valuations, we are cognisant of the impact they would have on members' retirement benefits and what the changes portend for the future of our discipline. An erosion of benefits not only puts members' future financial security at risk, it discourages those who would consider a career teaching art history in the academy.

The changes are part of a disquieting trend in the university and cultural sectors, one which prioritises a market-based approach to higher education and exposure to the arts and humanities. This has led to students paying high fees for a university education without a concomitant investment in full-time, permanent contracts for staff and to the reduction of art history departments --with more such actions on the horizon.

We recognise the dedication of our members to their students and we applaud their efforts to organise alternative and creative instruction during the industrial action. However, as exam-time nears, this situation has reached a critical point and, as such, we urge a swift resolution to the current impasse to avoid any further and significant disruption to students' academic careers.