

ART OUT OF PLACE

SHIFTING CONTEXTS, CONTESTED MEANINGS

ASSOCIATION FOR ART HISTORY | SUMMER SYMPOSIUM
JUNE 30, 2023 | GLASGOW WOMEN'S LIBRARY

Speakers

Lavinia Amenduni

Marlie Centawer

Tori Champion

Bea Gassmann de Sousa

Maria Howard

Lucy Howie

Struan Kennedy

Cai Lyons

Maria Metoikidou

Elsa Perryman Owens

Naomi Polonsky

Dylan Volk

Baylee Woodley

Keynote Lecture

Dr. George Emeka Agbo,
the University of Edinburgh



WELCOME

Members of the Doctoral and Early Career Researcher's Committee, Jess Bailey, Nikki Kane, and Sonny Ruggiero are delighted to bring you 'Art Out of Place', the Association for Art History's 2023 Summer Symposium. Held at the Glasgow Women's Library, an archive, museum, and grassroots community research space in Scotland, this gathering will bring together a group of emerging researchers thinking critically about the relationship between context and meaning. Amplifying current PhD and early career researchers working in fields across visual and material culture studies, each of the symposium's speakers will focus on a primary artwork or object from their research, sharing how changes in context, use, and interpretation impact our wider study of visual and material culture. What are the specific stakes for an artwork or object's meaning when it changes contexts?

Artworks change context. They live complex lives beyond their immediate moment of production. An artwork's meaning is often contested across this reception history. Have you encountered an artwork or object of visual and material culture in your research that has lived many lives, while challenging the interpretive frameworks of art history? This symposium offers an opportunity to examine these objects and questions in detail.

As art historians and researchers of visual and material culture, our own viewership and writing form yet another moment in an object's reception history. Focusing on the biographies of objects as they move across sometimes vast amounts of time and space, often with acute cultural and political ramifications, also invites consideration of our own positionality. In bringing together a group of researchers and their primary objects of study, this symposium will ask what methods can help us in the face of shifting contexts and contested meanings.



Please join us in welcoming
Dr. George Emeka Agbo, from the University of
Edinburgh, for the keynote address.

Re-interpreting Colonial Artefacts in Local Nigerian Communities

Between 2018 and 2021, I took part in the [Re:] Entanglements project of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. It involved conducting research with copies of colonial photographs, pictures of artefacts and audio recordings in the Nigerian communities where they were originally produced. British government anthropologist, N. W. Thomas assembled these materials, which I collectively call 'artefacts', during his anthropological surveys in Nigeria and Sierra Leone from 1909 to 1915. Focusing on the Nigerian example, I draw on the research to analyse the new life of colonial artefacts in their communities of origin and the light it sheds on local responses to debates around colonial history. The colonial artefacts are integrated into complex local politics, encompassing issues of identity, community, and family histories. They play a significant role in establishing a sense of rootedness within the community and are deployed as means of reclaiming the past, which was originally lost to colonialism. These new meanings emerge as the artefacts get reproduced and transformed through artistic engagement with them. The people who have historical and cultural connections to colonial artefacts take ownership of these objects and give them their own interpretations that project local historical and cultural sensibilities. The creative engagement helps to bring ancestors back to life, to re-inhabit the world they left long ago, to reconnect with the living and be celebrated and canonised. These examples demonstrate that amidst the ongoing international controversies surrounding colonial collections, such as reflected in the repatriation project, members of local communities develop different relationships with these artifacts. The relationships downplay the difficult histories embodied in the colonial objects.

We would like to thank the Glasgow Women's Library for allowing us to host this year's symposium at their space. To learn more about GWL and to support the incredible work they do, please visit: <https://womenslibrary.org.uk/>



PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 30TH JUNE 2023

OPENING REMARKS | 10.10 - 10.25

PANEL 1

**SUBVERTING ART HISTORICAL EXPECTATIONS THROUGH OBJECT
BIOGRAPHIES | 10.30 - 12.00**

CHAIR: JESS BAILEY

Maria Metoikidou, 'Unravelling the Biography of a Sueki Cup from the Gregorios Manos Collection: Aspects of Mobility'

Lavinia Amenduni, 'The decontextualising word: a Chinese base relief between Greek sculpture and Sieneese Fresco'

Baylee Woodley, "Old Paper—no value"

Elsa Perryman Owens, 'Temporal Infractions: Shattered window glass from the Great Fire of London (1666)'

LUNCH BREAK | 12.00 - 13.30

PANEL 2

**UNDERSTANDING ART HISTORICAL CONTEXT THROUGH METHODOLOGIES OF
GENDER | 13.30 - 15.00**

CHAIR: SONNY RUGGIERO

Tori Champion, 'Feminist Fabula: Interpretive Subversion in an Eighteenth-Century Watercolour'

Naomi Polonsky, 'Forms in space': situating and interpreting Barbara Hepworth's 'Ascending Form (Gloria)'

Struan Kennedy, 'Is he Catholic or Protestant?' Cú Chulainn: the Ultimate Poster Boy'

Lucy Howie, 'The Surrealist Art Object in Jacqui Duckworth's "A Prayer Before Birth"'

COFFEE BREAK | 15.00 - 15.15

PANEL 3 _____

RESHAPING ART HISTORICAL MEMORY THROUGH DECOLONIALITY | 15.15 - 16.45

CHAIR: NIKKI KANE

Cai Lyons, 'In the manner of a (white) woman? Gender and Racial Identity in Mary Swanzy's "Nude Study, Samoa"'

Bea Gassmann de Sousa, 'The Past in the Present: Ben Enwonwu's Memento Mori for a lost culture'

Dylan Volk, 'Historicity, Remembrance, and Ethics of Restoration in Shu Lea Cheang's Brandon'

Maria Howard, 'Column as anachronism'

COMFORT BREAK | 16.45 - 17.00

KEYNOTE _____

*Dr. George Emeka Agbo
The University of Edinburgh*

'Re-interpreting Colonial Artefacts in Local Nigerian Communities'

'The colonial artefacts are integrated into complex local politics, encompassing issues of identity, community, and family histories. They play a significant role in establishing a sense of rootedness within the community and are deployed as means of reclaiming the past, which was originally lost to colonialism. These new meanings emerge as the artefacts get reproduced and transformed through artistic engagement with them.'

PLEASE JOIN US FOR DRINKS AT THE LAURIESTON BAR FOLLOWING THE SYMPOSIUM.





IRELAND
SCOTLAND
NORTHUMBRIA
CUMBERLAND
DURHAM
IRISH
WESTMORELAND
LANCA SHIRE
CHESHIRE
DERBY
STAFFORD
WORCESTER
GLOUCESTER
BRECKNOCK
CARMARTHEN
PEMBROKE
CARBONARI
MERIONETH
MONTGOMERY
RADNOR
HEREFORD
CARBONARI
FLINT