

Scholarly Conference: Call for Proposals

Foucault: Art, Histories, and Visuality in the 21st Century
OCAD (Ontario College of Art and Design) University,
Toronto/Tkaronto, Canada
May 29 & 30, 2024

Deadline: January 22, 2024



The French philosopher Michel Foucault's (1926–84) work has had a major effect on scholars of art and visibility since *Les Mots et les choses* (1966) appeared in English in 1970 as *The Order of Things*. His radical ideas galvanized artists and art writers into many different directions: to insert ruptures and incoherence into history; to reimagine the subject, subjectivity, and identity; to politicize the realms of vision, visibility, and visibility; to formulate critical approaches to technology and media; and to scrutinize the inner workings of art institutions, including museums, schools, and archives. The versatility of Foucault's thought greatly contributed to major shifts across disciplines, including the interventions of the "new art history" in the 1970s, multiculturalism and identity politics in the 1980s, visual and cultural studies in the 1990s, the questions of contemporaneity and globalization in this century. Owing to the posthumous publications of his lectures and the papers deposited at archives internationally, Foucault's oeuvre continues to shape current discussions on methodological, political, and ethical assumptions regarding visualities and art histories forty years after his death.

Drawing from four decades of research in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, this two-day symposium proposes a critical assessment of the ways that Foucault's influence intersects with current inquiries into art, visual culture, and their technologies. The organizers invite thirty-minute paper proposals that historicize and challenge the established patterns of Foucault's reception in art history, archaeology, museology, visual anthropology, philosophy of art, aesthetics, film and media studies, visual culture, art education, and research-creation. We hope to form an eclectic lineup of speakers who have been engaging with the French thinker's legacies from critical perspectives informed by the urgent issues of today, such as global inequity, decolonization, Indigenous sovereignty, race and ethnicity, post-truth, artificial intelligence, gender identities, environmental crisis, immigration, and diaspora. We will ask: How has Foucault's thinking—ultimately concerned with human existence in a time of crisis—emerged from and contributed to the visual arts and material culture in the twenty-first century?

The symposium is part of the World Congress "Foucault: 40 Years After," a global series of events commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the philosopher's death (<https://foucault40.info>). In efforts to reduce environmental impact and to prevent duplication with other events, we solicit proposals from researchers and artists based in North America. We welcome proposals that are international in the scope of research as well as those anchored in specific regional contexts, including Canada, for example. Please send a one-page, single-spaced proposal and a short biography to foucault2024@gmail.com by January 22, 2024. The organizers are working on securing funding, which, if successful, would allow financial support for participants. We thank the peoples of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe, and the Huron-Wendat, on whose unceded lands the event will be held.

Organizers:

Anton Lee. Assistant Professor of Art History, Theory, and Philosophy, NSCAD (Nova Scotia College of Art and Design) University

Catherine M. Soussloff. Professor Emerita of Art History, Visual Art, and Theory, University of British Columbia, and History of Art and Visual Culture, University of California, Santa Cruz

Collaborator/Local Host:

Charles Reeve. Professor of Visual and Critical Studies, Associate Dean of Arts and Science, OCAD University

Confirmed Speakers:

Andrew Gayed. Assistant Professor of Art History and Visual Culture, OCAD University

Amelia Jones. Robert A. Day Professor of Art and Design, Vice Dean of Faculty and Research, Roski School of Art and Design, University of Southern California

Louis Kaplan. Professor of History and Theory of Photography and New Media, Graduate Department of Art History, University of Toronto

Tavia Nyong'o. Professor and Chair of Theater and Performance Studies, Professor of American Studies, Professor of African American Studies, Yale University

John Rajchman. Adjunct Professor in Art History and Archaeology, Columbia University

T'ai Smith. Associate Professor of Art History, Visual Art, and Theory, University of British Columbia

Kyla Wazana Tompkins. Professor and Chair of Global Gender and Sexuality Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo