CALL FOR CHAIRS OF SESSIONS FOR THE 34TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS IN THE HISTORY OF ART

from the International Committee of the History of Art (Comité International de l'Histoire de l'Art), CIHA, and from the conveners of the Beijing Committee for the Congress, Professors LaoZhu, Fan Di’an and Shao Dazhen

TERMS: CONCEPTS OF ART HISTORY

CALL FOR CHAIRS

The Beijing organizing committee for the 34th Congress in the History of Art warmly invites expressions of interest from the international community of art historians. The concepts for the sessions are outlined below. We ask for expressions of interest from scholars who wish to develop these themes as session chairs.

Each session will have an international chair and a Chinese chair. A Chinese chair may be from Chinese mainland, Taiwan or abroad. An early career researcher might serve as associate chair if necessary. The two co-chairs (and an early career researcher, if there is one) will act as a committee to define and refine the concept of the session for the preliminary congress in mid-September 2015, and to select presenters for the major congress at Beijing in 2016.

Applications for Chairs may be made by academics or independent scholars. We want to remind applicants that no member of the CIHA Board and no one having been a Chair in the Nuremberg Congress can apply for serving as Chair of a session in the Beijing Congress.

Applicants should

1. Be thoroughly acquainted with the most recent developments in the field of art history relevant to the topic of their session.
2. Be able to develop the chosen concept by organizing relevant symposia and workshops before 2016, to initiate dialogue and discussion, and to identify important issues for discussion at CIHA 2016 in Beijing.
3. Be able to identify global experts in the appropriate fields and to collaborate with them.
4. To be present at CIHA 2016 Beijing.
Applicants should send the following to the CIHA Scientific Secretary (ciha@inha.fr) with copy to Chinese committee (info@ciha2016.org):

1. Number and title of the proposed Session
2. 1 or 2 pages explaining the perspective they intend to give to the Session and the main ideas they would like to be developed and discussed
3. A first draft of the call for papers to be developed with the Chinese Chair if the session is selected.
4. A short CV stressing the activities and publications related to the session.

Deadline for applications will be 31th May 2014.
The list of the Chairs will be established during the CIHA Board Meeting in Marseilles (25th June 2014) and immediately announced on CIHA Website and Beijing Congress Website.

SESSION THEMES

The sessions as defined by the National Committee of the People’s Republic of China and the International Committee for the History of Art are as follows:

1. Words and Concepts:【语词与概念】

   The word for ‘art’ has varied etymological origins and connotations in different languages, whether in Greek and Latin, in French and Italian, or in Japanese, Arabic or Chinese. In each culture the concept of art has evolved over time. In some languages, such as Aboriginal Australian Languages there are no words for ‘art’ at all.

   This section explores the main theme of the 2016 CIHA Congress, different concepts of art in diverse cultures. The topic strives to achieve three goals. The first is to respond to the latest development of art history as a global discipline. The section aims to explore through diverse definitions art, which expose its relationship to the respective cultural framework, the disparities of different cultures in various periods throughout history, so as to gain a more comprehensive understanding of art as an essential part of human culture.

2. The Rank of Art【标准与品评】

   How do we rank art, create cannons, and define taste as part of contemporaneity? How do we experience disparities in the interpretation of art, namely, judgments of art’s value, and how do we evolve different criteria for evaluating art?

   This section explores how different concepts of art are rooted in consciously defined value systems. By contrast to interpretations of art, which abide by traditions and their evolution in specific cultural settings, there are self-conscious value systems and criteria that are part of theoretical reflection,
part of an understanding, of self-awareness and of a conscious establishment of norms. Different from general ideas or interpretations about/on art, these ideas have certain intentionality. The evaluation and ranking of art affects the development of art by defining the trends of art or restraining some aspects of its growth. In other words, the disparities of art arise from the disparities of evaluation criteria. Moreover, the same art could take on further disparities just because of different evaluation criteria. The idea of the contemporaneity in ranking and judgment is always changing. A work of art could, for instance, acquire completely different evaluations when it is presented in different regions or settings, or viewed by different groups of people.

3. **Imagination and Projection:【想象与投射】**

What is the productive gaze? The imagination and projection produced by art varies with cultures. These imaginations and projections produce spectacles and images that in reality do not exist.

The third section investigates the social-cultural foundations of artistic difference. Besides the notion that the emergence of a certain concept of art is restricted by specific social and historical circumstances, special attention will be given to the fact that some societies and realities, in disparate historical periods, have been mythologized or embodied in legend, or literature, so that they appear to be especially imaginative or hallucinatory. The goals are to observe and understand works of art as an interactive process and to bring art to a new level of knowledge and cultural experience. The discussion focuses on two aspects of this topic: the first is on the issue of the relationship between the socio-cultural background and the artistic concept(s) it produces; the second the fermentation and symbiosis between imaginative and hallucinatory symbolization and the contemporaneous artistic concepts. Looking at nature or artifacts, artists could project their own imagination on them, producing spectacles and artworks.

4. **Appreciation and Utility: 【欣赏与实用】**

Art works and artifacts. Objects that have a spiritual or emotional impact on people are designated as art works, objects for daily use and consumption are defined as artifacts. The boundaries between art works and artifacts shift constantly; how are art works and artifacts distinguished, and what is the conceptual reasoning behind such definitions?

This session is about how a culture understands the function of art. For this topic, we recommend a discussion focusing on the functions of works of art or artifacts and how the function of art works and artifacts is determined by the social roles that they play. There are many aspects to a culture’s understanding of art and different avenues of research: art works and artifacts are variously differentiated in different cultures and different eras. How the utility of artifacts is chosen and preserved in a culture and how its spiritual aspect transforms it into a work of art. Moreover, this transformation process provides circumstantial evidence for concepts of art in different cultures.
5. **Self-Awareness or Self-Affirmation:【自觉与自律】**

How does art record and define itself? The self-consciousness of ‘art for art’s sake’ occurs at times in art history. Within particular cultural spheres, self definitions of art can vary. Every culture seems to have produced some art for art’s sake.

This topic entails an exploration of how art is understood in different cultures. This topic differs from the fourth one in that the latter deals with the distinction and relation between artworks and artifacts (Most artworks are produced for purposes and functions other than being art per se. Rather, they are considered historically significant cultural artifacts and are collected and preserved.), while this topic focuses mainly on works that are created as ‘art for art’s sake’.

How does the self-definition of art occur and to what effect? The discussion will focus on the development of art during a period of independent self-development of a culture, or prior to the significant and widespread exchanges and mutual influence among cultures. In the self-aware process of defining art, the concept of art undergoes continual construction (constructivism), art works are “consciously” formed and made in this way rather than that their self-affirmed distinctions construct a crucial aspect of the cultural multiplicity.

6. **Politics of Identity: Tradition and Origin【传统与渊源】**

Art as identity. Identity for so-called tradition and original art by different cultures and nations. Identity has its roots in a respective historical and social background.

This topic entails an exploration of the issues of identity in the art of different cultures. There is the matter of selection and identification both in the field of an artistic tradition and of artistic creation and evaluation criteria, which forms a distinct tendency in different eras and cultures. Whereas certain choices and identifications would inflate the disparities in art, others would enhance convergence among different cultures or eras, leading to entirely different results. Identity touches on two levels, from the large – society – to the small – community. Both involve the use of art to construct identity. The characters of different types of communities manifest themselves exactly through defining the social boundaries: be it geographic, racial, gender-based or just imaginative, in which art plays a crucial role. The analysis of social framework reveals differing social groups and different forms of reception for artistic concepts. Under cultural exchange the identity of art can be the awakening of cultural self-consciousness of an oppressed or colonized culture, it can be the propagandizing expansion of nationalism or cultural strategies of imperialism. Within a culture the emphasis on identity may be seen in two entirely different ways. On the one hand it may become a tool of cultural awakening for the local people; on the other hand it may be exploited by the autocratic authority to control and discipline others. Therefore, the identity of art creates or bridges the
difference between cultures. How to self-identify, however, and what kind of disparity may then result is worth further study.

7. **Translation and Change: 【流传与嬗变】**

Art history on the road. The Silk Route. The Danube. Changes in the concepts of art induce changes in the production of art. After a work of art is completed, through the process of collection, circulation, and transfer, it is evaluated, judged and often recorded. This type of process and later interpretation can add meaning to art; it can also ascribe meanings that are different from or even conflict to the original ones; the new understandings and interpretations can lead to changes in the production of art.

The seventh topic deals with the study of changes in art and specially deals with the way culture is spread through contacts made on trade routes. This topic intends to explore the development of art, which is not subject to explicit outside influence in those nations and regions. In different circumstances, the developmental process of art not only takes a different direction, but the speed and magnitude of change differs greatly. It is suggested that in discussing these differences, in addition to impact of politics, economics, science and technology in a society, as well as that of its spiritual background (religion, thought), special attention will be paid to the role played by the qualities inherent in art itself.

8. **Art and Taboo: 【禁忌与教化】**

For religious and political reasons, art is used as an important tool to educate and evangelize. On the one hand this particular use can cause positive changes to art, but on the other hand, political and religious interference can also negatively affect established art and outsider art. Censorship is seen as taboo.

This topic considers the relationship between “art and power”. The discussion focuses on how art, as a resource, is made use of and manipulated by political and religious authorities and the consequences of their employment and manipulation. Art is exploited as a tool and weapon for political instruction, cultural cultivation and religious preaching. The power that makes art a means of taboo and propaganda manifests itself in the form of strong influence (such as in religion), or in that of coercion (such as political propaganda), or in the usage of certain customs (such as traditional taboo) by the human being. Propaganda (dissemination) and education (socialization, evangelization) have at times been seen as two important functions of art.

9. **Autonomy and Elusion: 【独立与超脱】**

Art has its own independence, consciousness and autonomy. It has an impact on the dialectic of power. Art functions as a way of eluding power in a harsh situation. Neither influenced by economy and society, nor intervened by politics or religion. Each culture has developed its own particular approach to protect art’s independence, consciousness and autonomy.
The topic considers the independence of art as a force in resisting authority. The resistance shown that art can be seen neutrally as art’s transgression of rules which themselves are the consolidation of power. The rules may be ideological constructions or social norms. To various degrees, art displays its inherent function of dispelling, resisting and dissipating power. For those social groups without authority art functions to confront power and acts as a tool for obtaining independence, freedom and solace. Disparate social forces, especially those among disadvantaged groups and the ruling classes, use art to express their own political aspirations and state of mind. They employ art for gaining independence and demonstrating resistance. At the same time artists themselves possess, in all cultures and eras, a degree of freedom of creation that rejects rational control and established norms, and they consciously make use of it.

10. **Gendered Practices**

The status and function of gender differ in different cultures across time. The norms of dealing with gender issues in art and its progression within a single culture may change. The relationship between gendered space, status and power in society and the artworks is a crucial set of concerns. Gender issues exhibit complex structures in different cultures and ethnicities.

This topic concerns gender issues in the art of different cultures. The status and power of genders are rooted in their corresponding social structures which can be seen not only in the physical and social space occupied by different genders but also in the art that depicts the gender disparities and the art made by different genders. The discussion focuses on how art represents, manifests, regulates or even rejects this social structure in varying ways, and how gender awareness of a specific social-cultural community influences the formation of artistic concepts. The relationship between gender and art in different cultures can vary significantly. In some cultures, gender and art are more closely linked than in others. In some cultures certain art forms are based entirely on gender distinction. (For example, nüshu, or “women’s writing,” a mysterious symbolic system and art form used by a certain group of women in Hunan province in southern China.) It is important to understand how sexual identities and gender are constructed by artworks and art practice.

11. **Landscape and Spectacle**

Reading the world. Landscape is an acknowledgement and a response of the human being to the natural world. In different artistic traditions, different landscape consciousnesses are formed. “Spectacles” and images of the world-diagram also have a corresponding relationship. Natural scenery, man-made wonders and artistic experience are directly and indirectly affected by the history of art.

This topic considers landscape as both a geographical constraint and a cultural projection. The focus of the discussion is not on Guy Debord’s ‘spectacle’ as image, instead, we view landscape or spectacle as a projection of the relationship between the environment, both natural and urban environment,
and the reflection of this environment in the artistic tradition. This topic also touches upon relevant issues of landscape planning, urban and community design and public art.

12. Garden and Courtyard:【园林与庭院】

Gardens give expression to particular ideals and function as artistic metaphors in different cultures. A garden is related to geography, humanity and customs of life.

The twelfth topic concerns gardens and courtyards as a universal art form for cultural expressions. In enclosed spaces gardens and courtyards present comprehensively human(re-)presentations and expressions of nature and art in an orderly form. Gardens and courtyards draw us closer to nature and place one’s ideals without keeping away from the institutional framework (such as the palace) and urban life. Some proposed examples for discussion: In the history of art, there has existed a strong disparity between the traditions of French gardens and English gardens, and between the traditions of Chinese gardens and Japanese gardens.¹

13. Transmission and Adoption: 【传播与接受】

The spread of art concepts—transmission and adoption. Art and artistic concepts flow between different cultures often due to economic and political situations, namely international relationships rather than by the nature of art itself. But transcultural practice sometimes exists outside the limits of the economic and political relationships. In different societies, art is transmitted in various ways and to various degrees.

This topic investigates the intercultural transmission of art. The transcultural spread of art is often a by-product of trade, mission, conflict and war. Case studies on the transmission of art induced by intercultural expansion have been thoroughly discussed on the Montreal and Melbourne Congresses. The reason for choosing this topic again is that we hope to further emphasize the transmission of different art and artistic concepts. To sharpen the discussion, we propose to switch the focus to the different modes, means and methods of transmission and thus to study how new modes and means of transmission can expand the value of relativity and strengthen perceptible impact onto humanity. The new modes and means of transmission of art concepts thereby change and expand the original patterns of interest and shape to new forms of expression. For instance it can be explored in post-colonial studies how dominant cultures impose their art concepts and visions on the subalterns.

¹The suggested topics outlined above are issues that concern the different developmental paths and artistic productions created in disparate cultures. These differences can be divided into “internal art problems” and “external art problems” on the basis of the relationship that art engages with. The external art problems focus on the relationship between art and social, historical and other (political, economical, religious, ideological and scientific) factors surrounding the artistic production in any given society and culture. Internal problems of art center around aesthetic, expressive and creative aspects of art, as well as a society or culture’s own visual tradition. The remaining topics listed below concern interaction and exchange between arts of different cultures across time. The issues were the center of discussion at the 31 Kongress of 2004 Montréal Sites and Territories of Art History; XXXI eCongres, Montreal, QC, Canada 32. Kongress 2008 Melbourne Crossing Cultures: Conflict-Migration-Convergence.
14. Othering and Foreignness: 【他者与陌生】

Strange and unfamiliar aesthetic of foreign art. Acceptance and rejection of foreign art, depending on one’s own perspective: On the one hand, cultures enjoy the novelty of a foreign culture’s sentiments; on the other hand, cultures possess an inertia that rejects and resists outside ideas and influences.

This topic considers how a culture views and evaluates a foreign and unfamiliar art. The discussion focuses on the reaction of a culture to the others “prior” to extensive exchanges and transmissions among them take place. Every culture encounters foreign and unfamiliar art. Even within a same culture there could be those “foreign” and unfamiliar aspects of art that are not from the cultural center or do not conform to the traditional cultural milieu. These non-familiar or foreign aspects (Ex) can be praised and cherished and at the same time belittled and excluded from the recipient’s cultural mainstream. This paradox is the premise that both gives rise to impact and determines the nature and extent of the [cultural] exchange.

15. Creative Misunderstanding: 【误解与曲用】

Misunderstanding can occasion creativity. The utility of misunderstanding. In art history, the capacity for creativity and the harm that misunderstandings and misinterpretations may do. This type of dual nature creates rich cultural phenomena within art history.

The focus here is on misunderstanding and misinterpretation in the history of art. It intends to further study the problem of the reception of foreign, heterodox and non-traditional cultures. The difference between Topics 14 and 15 is that Topic 14 deals with how to view and treat other cultures (reception of an existing culture) prior to actually engaging with them. Topic 15 focuses on the consequences of cultural exchange: “misunderstandings” lead to changes of cultural and individual behavior, which can be either creative or disruptive. Disruptions can be corrected and thereof lead further to the emergence of new creativity. Relevant to this theme is the nature of misunderstanding - whether as a conscious choice or merely a result caused by distance, no matter chronologically or spatially.

16. Commodity and Market: 【商品与市场】

The art market’s effect on art arises perhaps largely from the goals of commerce, and art commerce also embodies alienation and deviation from political power. This session investigates the interactions and disparities between art’s non-commercial nature (poetic quality) and the repeated transactions of artworks. It also compares the connections and differences between the value of mainstream art and kitsch.

This topic is about the art market as a special and dedicated way of exchange and as a form of cultural interaction. In the post-economic globalization era the ways in which market transactions work are changing. We
propose to focus the discussion on how the changed patterns of the art market have altered to a large extent the patterns of the dissemination of art and how they have affected the evolvement of artistic concepts. The circulation and transactions of artworks are reflected in the globalized economy. On the one hand the differences between the boundaries of cultures are somewhat smoothed out in order to gain a broader market, while on the other hand artistic novelty and peculiarity are intentionally created, so as to increase competitiveness of the art commodities in the globalized setting and to raise the value of the collectible artworks and their consumability. The artistic creation is consequently targeted to specific purchasing demand and becomes part of the cultural industry. New means of communication are changing the ways of pricing art, imposing a real impact on the art market. Virtual works of art based on digital technology are both different from traditional artworks and from the artworks that can be reproduced by machine. These new media have subverted the concept of “original work” and outstripped the “copyright” definition for replication of work, which also has an impact on the development of art.

17. **Display and Observation:【展示与观看】**

Performing difference by showing art. Effect of exhibition on art historical concepts and methodologies. Exhibitions also change the concept of historical art strongly. Evolution of art historical concepts and methodology as reflected in the collection, conservation and presentation of art; the change in both the content and the methodology of presentation, as well as the meaning of the museum’s role as a “composer” of different art history.

Exhibition serves as a channel for communication between cultures and a means of illustrating differences. The concern of this topic roots in the impact of the exhibition on art historical concepts and methods. We suggest a discussion on the changes in the content and methods of displaying art and on the changes of the concept of museum and especially on how to apply these (changes) to structure knowledge and spread civilization by means of comparing cultures and utilizing different cultural perspectives. In traditional cultures displaying art is often related to private connoisseurship, but in the contemporary environment, where intercultural contact has expanded significantly, art exhibition serves as a channel of communication and a means of exchange. It could be understood as the advent of “public space”. The display and clash of intercultural differences meet the needs of the exhibition and the viewer’s interests. How a curator brings together different regions, cultures and styles into an exhibition in order to display historical differences, attract the viewers’ curiosity, create special hybridity or contrasting scenes to expand knowledge (a re-understanding of history), to break through historical boundaries and create a wholly new culture, and how virtual artistic expressions on the Internet are threatening traditional means of exhibition, are all important issues to be discussed in this section.

18. **Media and Visuality:【媒体与视觉】**
Propagation of artworks in the information age. With the popularization and application of the Internet and various digital storage techniques and applied technology, traditional art has been affected by a high degree of challenge and substitution. Visual culture is currently changing the structure and spirituality of people’s lives; it also broadens gradually the methods of art’s creation, the techniques of its propagation and the scope of its acceptance.

This topic resumes the corresponding discussion on the CIHA 2012. Traditional artistic media have helped forming cultural identities in different cultures, for instance, the marble statues for the ancient Greek, the oil painting for the European, the Ukiyo-e for the Japanese and the ink and wash for the Chinese etc. In the information age the new methods of communication have significant impact on the visual arts under the different cultural traditions and realities. In addition to the general impact of new media and methodologies, we propose to focus the discussion on how temporal and geographical barriers between cultures and regions gradually lose their traditional significance in the midst of the new media and visual culture. “Common time” alters people’s sense of history and temporal experience; synchronization and juxtaposition of spaces, explored in theories on “spatial turn”, change their tradition consciousness and cultural identification. Groups with new media and their audience are no longer divided by identity concepts of traditional culture, nationality, ethnicity or region. Has modern media, in a sense, transformed people into “media art”?

19. **History of Beauty vs. History of Art: 🇨🇳【审美与艺术史】**

New connections and disparities between aesthetics and the history of art. Traditionally, art is often associated with beauty - as reality’s perfect, idealized and man-made form. However, art is not equal to beauty. It is even more so in today’s society. An enormous disparity emerged between the history of beauty and the history of art. Art has broken through the boundaries of aesthetics, sensory and emotion, and entered a realm of social responsibility and intervention of the reality. In turn, art tries to seek, beyond philosophies, interpretation of freedom and understanding of human rights.

This section is a study on how the revolution in new means of communication has changed art history and aesthetics. We propose here to focus the discussion on the different relation between art and aesthetics in different cultures, and how this relation is constructed, strengthened, broken and re-constructed. In the information age this relation has changed. Art has transcended aesthetics and feelings and expanded its traditional scope to play a more direct role in society and reality, and further, to the ideological and philosophical quest for interpreting freedom and human rights. We can further discuss from here new directions and methodologies in the study of art history, as well as the new mode of thinking following the ‘pictorial turn’.

20. **Professional Education and Aesthetic Education: 🇨🇳【专业与美育】**
That disparities in art and art history bring changes in methodology and reforms of professional art education is an important concern for the development of contemporary art and art history. Non-professional art education is an education technique for the citizenry. Utilizing art for aesthetic education through new media has become an important way for improving the citizens’ quality of life.

The topic is about disparities of art education in different cultures. We propose to focus the discussion on different forms of art education before the advent of information age and on reform of art education in the information age. In each culture traditional art education has its own specific emphases. For instance, differences are apparent in the forms of apprenticeship, the relationship between master and apprentice or between teacher and student and the administration of the workshop. The changes brought by new media and technology deal with three issues: (1) new artistic concepts, new categories, and new methods demand new specialized arts education; (2) how have the revolutionary changes in concepts, categories and methods altered methodologies in art education, whether these changes effect specialized/professional arts education and art education for the public; (3) how new artistic concepts, categories and methodologies, together with new modes of communication and transmission, will affect the development of art history, for example the emerging digital humanities.

21. Connecting Art Histories and World Art: 【多元与世界】

The relationship between local art history and global art history. Aside from the disparate academic traditions of the East and of the West (and of the South?), what cultural circles and academic traditions are there in the world? How has and can art history become an open global discipline.

This last topic discusses art history within a framework of global art history. This section deals with the further development of art history and the art history in view of interdisciplinary research. We hope to gain responses from their respective positions by participating scholars in order to further promote understanding of the disparities and commonalities in art and art history among different cultures throughout the world. For example there is a remarkable difference between East Asian art history (as represented by the art of South Korea—Japan—China, etc.) and Western art history. Besides this there are many distinct cultural spheres and schools in the world that have their own art and art historical terms. The scope of world art history recognizes and understands the differences among artistic terms of each individual people and specific time. It places art terms beyond any unified single standard and thereby contributes to a globalized art history to encompass all world art in its research purview. At the same time, in cooperation with other fields, art history takes on an interdisciplinary approach, which promises to lead art history toward a new future-oriented era. With new and open scholarship on issues, CIHA 2016 strives to further explore and develop new energy, new directions and a new mission!