

**Design History Society
Conference 2023**

**Displaying Design:
History, Criticism,
and Curatorial
Discourses**

STUDENT FORUM

LIGHTNING TALKS

Saturday 2nd September

2pm BST

The DHS Student Forum presents a session of 5 minute Lightning Talks to be held online on 2nd September at 2pm BST inspired by the 2023 annual conference theme '[Displaying Design: History, Criticism and Curatorial Discourses](#)'. This event is separate to, but inspired by, the 2023 annual conference.

This year, the conference explores how design exhibitions and exhibition design have a central place in the history of design, providing us with significant milestones for understanding how designers, schools, companies, and organisations have publicly displayed work, values, and ideas.

Register via [Eventbrite](#)

PROGRAMME

Lauren McQuiston – Before Whitney and the Discursive Capacity of Exhibiting Architecture

Parita Upadhyaya – The Deconstructivist Exhibition at MoMA (1988)

Michela Bonomo – Constructing the Dream : Villas on Display in Italy in 1933 and 1964

Isabela D'Auria Caragelasco - A discussion on the reception of Art Deco in different American countries

Portia Silver – Displaying Plasticity: The Exhibition Design of Everlasting Plastics

Chloé Henry – The Black Fashion Museum

John Binchy – Exposition Coloniale

Catelijne van Middelkoop – Interchanging worldviews. Re-contextualising the self-image of design

Q&A

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Lauren McQuiston is a PhD Candidate in the Constructed Environment at the University of Virginia. Her dissertation research focuses on the spatialized history of the Whitney Museum of American Art, exploring the intersection of art and architecture in the context of cultural institutions.

Parita Upadhyaya recently finished her final year research thesis titled, 'The Absurdity of the Deconstructivist Exhibition', guided by Riyaz Tayyibji at CEPT University, Ahmedabad, India. She is inclined towards a theoretical and academic practice of architecture given her shared interest in literature and philosophy.

Michela Bonomo is a second year PhD student at EPFL Lausanne in Switzerland. Prior to joining EPFL Michela has been a practising Architect in the UK since 2016, working mainly on luxury private residential projects at Foster and Partners and Herzog De Meuron (London) and worked as a freelance architect on interior refurbishments. Michela received her RIBA Part 1 in Architecture at London Metropolitan Architecture, Riba Part 2 Diploma at the Architectural Association School of Architecture and Riba Part 3 at the University of Westminster. She holds British nationality and she is an accredited architect in both UK and Italy.

Isabela D'Auria Caragelasco is an undergraduate student in design at the University of São Paulo, Brazil. Her research consists of studying the involvement of the Art Déco movement in the city of São Paulo, an investigation primarily conducted through the analysis of the *Mirante das Artes*, &tc magazine, while also incorporating the study of exhibitions, private collections, and other academic sources.

Portia Silver is a second-year MA Art History student at Case Western Reserve University, with interests in modern and contemporary art, focusing on decolonial, eco-critical, and gender theories. She was a 2023 summer intern for the US Pavilion exhibition at the Venice Architecture Biennale, supported by the Peggy Guggenheim Collection.

Chloé Henry is a graduate student at Sorbonne Université in Paris. She is currently completing a master's degree in English studies, specializing in American history. Her research focuses on the influence and instrumentalization of fashion in the context of social movements and in the construction of identities in the 20th century.

John Binchy is a current student on the MA in History of Design programme at the RCA/V&A. He is an Irish design and art historian interested in 19th and 20th Century European cultural history, with an emphasis on decoloniality studies and indigenisation within the museum space. For his dissertation (c. 12,000 words long), he focused on various forms of indigenous display and representation in 20th century France, with a specific focus on the 1931 Exposition Coloniale.

Catelijne van Middelkoop is a PhD candidate at the University of Groningen, Design Fellow and former Professor of Visual Communication Design at the Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering, Research Lecturer at the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam, and Research Professor (Practor) 'Meaningful Creativity' at SintLucas in Boxtel and Eindhoven. Her main research interests include the position of 'making' in creative processes, the influence of emerging technologies on the field of visual communication design, the changing role of the designer in a predominantly digital age dictated by machines, as well as speculative futures for (and pasts of) art and design education.

ABSTRACTS

Lauren McQuiston – Before Whitney and the Discursive Capacity of Exhibiting Architecture

In the summer of 1985, controversy over Michael Graves' design for an expansion of the Whitney Museum of American Art roiled the architectural and popular press.

In response, the New York-based independent arts organization Storefront for Art and Architecture publicized an open call for participation in an exhibition entitled *Before Whitney*. The invitation for public submissions implored respondents to redeem a concept of “American” architecture actively divorced from both the receding influence of Modernism represented by the Whitney's existing Brutalist building and from what was deemed the already-failed postmodernist architectural experiment embodied by the Graves design.

This talk will understand the discursive capacity of exhibiting architecture as integral to Storefront's participatory tactics critiquing the discipline from outside the dominant lineage of architectural history and as a means to respond to the cultural, social, and political anxieties critically challenging architectural discourse and practice in the mid-1980s.

Parita Upadhyaya – The Deconstructivist Exhibition at MoMA (1988)

The Deconstructivist Exhibition at MoMA (1988), curated by Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley was one of the first exhibitions to portray projects as a collection of architects whose works felt seemingly related. The curation referred to Russian Constructivism and Deconstruction, outside the domain of architecture and put forth ideas from art and literature which the participants were consciously practising. The curation was heavily politicized and criticised for being exclusionary, misrepresentative, and focused only on the formal similarities of the work. It gave a centre stage to the architectural explorations being conducted in the margins of the discipline – employing digital technology to design, literary theory to conceptualize, and drawing formal themes from the art movement. It radicalized architectural thinking by putting theory at the forefront and showcasing alternative ways of representation. Albeit its compliance with the consumerist tendencies of ‘image’, it had a significant impact on emerging architectural pedagogies, followed by the rise of theoretical forums, documentaries and films, and publications, alongside the acknowledgment of similar works across the world.

Michela Bonomo – Constructing the Dream : Villas on Display in Italy in 1933 and 1964

The increasing interest in the concept of the so-called ‘escape’ from the city, fueled by the recent pandemic, puts the holiday villa at the centre of research attention. The fate of the villa in contemporary architecture and research culture reflects its very own position: outside of the ‘urban’ centres of knowledge and critical inquiry, it is still abundantly present as an unexamined source of architectural intelligence, history and ideology. This situation is particularly applicable to Italy, the birthplace of the villa: in histories focusing on Italian post-war architecture, this type of building is strikingly absent despite a revival of this building type in this period. This contribution focuses on one chapter of a larger thesis to examine the role that two exhibitions, held at the Triennale di Milano in Italy in 1933 and 1964, had in constructing and reproducing the unsustainable dream and ideology of owing a holiday villas in Italy.

Isabela D'Auria Caragelasco - A discussion on the reception of Art Deco in different American countries

Although Art Deco started to gain more prominence between the 1960s and 1970s, it's common for the movement's historical significance to vary across different countries, depending on each nation's unique relations with the style and their cultural production in general. To initiate a discussion on the reception of Art Deco in different American countries, a comparison was established between exhibitions featuring the movement in Brazil and the United States, analyzing the period from the 1930s to the 2000s. In the first geographical context, the Leirner collection, one of the most important Art Deco collections in the country, was chosen as the object of study, represented by exhibitions in various institutions. Meanwhile, in the United States, the MoMA was selected, represented by displays of multiple groups of artifacts throughout the examined period. This analysis, primarily based on the number and distribution of exhibitions, aims to contribute to the understanding of the evolution of Art Deco's relevance within the exhibition context.

Portia Silver – Displaying Plasticity: The Exhibition Design of Everlasting Plastics

The 2023 US Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale, Everlasting Plastics, investigates the problematics and potentiality of plastic, seeking to complicate the human relationship with this ubiquitous yet invisible material. This talk will explore how the design of the exhibition disrupts the built environment of the pavilion, encouraging visitors to engage physically and conceptually with plastic materiality as presented by the exhibiting artists, architects, and designers. Curatorial and design strategy intersect in the creation of didactics and architectural elements: metal benches and PVC curtains. Through the creation of a factory aesthetic, visitors are implicated in the production, use, and disposal of plastic, prompting personal inquiry while avoiding easy answers. I will explore the effectiveness of the design to mediate the exhibit/viewer interaction. Finally, this talk will question how issues of sustainability, accessibility, and environmental justice function within the inherently colonial structure of the Biennale as an institution and experience.

Chloé Henry – The Black Fashion Museum

Due to a persistent Eurocentric narrative, black fashion and craftsmanship have historically been neglected and marginalized, cultivating the idea that Black people have made no significant contributions to the larger history of dress. Lois K. Alexander Lane, motivated to disprove such beliefs after one of her professors claimed that black people “had not made any contributions to the fashion worlds”[1], established the Black Fashion Museum (BFM) in 1979 in Harlem. The BFM aimed to “dispel the myth that Blacks were newfound talent in the fashion industry” and displayed a collection of more than a thousand items made by some of the most impactful yet forgotten black designers and seamstresses from Ann Lowe to Peter Davy and Rosa Parks. This talk will be the opportunity to understand how the BFM contributed to fostering diverse perspectives and giving voices to black figures within the realm of fashion history.

John Binchy – Exposition Coloniale

My dissertation examines three distinct ways in which the indigenous populations of France’s colonies were represented during the Exposition Coloniale of 1931 in Paris. Organisers of the Exposition wanted to have a lasting colonial impact on the Parisian landscape and, as such, this representation was not confined to the six month duration of the Exposition and, in fact, some forms of this colonial display are still visible today in Paris. Thus, for the purposes of my dissertation, indigenous representation has been split into three different temporal categories: Temporary, Semi-Permanent and Permanent. However, in order to properly give a voice to those same indigenous people this Exposition sought to subjugate, this dissertation also examines some of the most prominent anti-imperialist actions that were provoked by this Exposition. Arguably, this anti-imperial action can also be split into these same 3 timeframes: Temporary, Semi-Permanent and Permanent. This categorisation helps to pin down the oftentimes messy, complicated history of anti-imperialist movements in 1930s France - the most notable of which was a counter-exhibition organised by French Communists and Surrealists called 'The Truth about the Colonies.' This temporal framing also aids in assessing the lasting impact that the actions of both sides of the colonial fence had on La plus grande France, the amalgam of France and her colonies.

Catelijne van Middelkoop – Interchanging worldviews. Re-contextualising the self-image of design

During a five minute lightning talk I would like to discuss the interconnection between worldviews and design, emphasizing the importance of contextual awareness in shaping meaningful creative output. I would like to present a comparative case study of two exhibition design related projects, designed 11 years apart, using Adobe's Creative Suite and AI Magic Tools from Runway ML.

The first case study, 'Year in Context,' aimed to provide a context for the graduation projects of BA and MA design students from Design Academy Eindhoven, challenging the perception of designers as self-absorbed and disconnected from the outside world. The project utilized news photographs and design process documentation to contextualize the work, highlighting the importance of real human-world relations.

The second case study, 'When Images Remain,' explores the significance of images in knowledge transfer and education. Using historical glass lantern slides from TU Delft's collection and a selection of digital images from a visual communication course at the Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering, the project questions the role of images in learning and understanding the past and future. The design consists of transparent perspex "sandwiches," integrating AI-generated imagery and traditional images to create new perspectives and connections, turning the background into the foreground and vice versa.

In conclusion, the proposed comparative case study calls for a deeper exploration of the impact of contextual awareness on design's meaning and urges further investigation into the role of images in education and knowledge transfer. The significance of these questions goes beyond the presented case studies and opens avenues for broader research in the field of design (history).

This content is part of my PhD project '[The Last Makers. Shaping the future of \(Dutch\) design education through \(de-\)constructing its \(speculative\) past\(s\)](#)'