



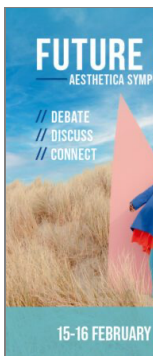
Aesthetica

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Future Now Symposium 2017

Unmute



Future Now Symposium 2017

Our two-day event brought together key institutions, galleries, publishers, artists for in-person and streamed discussion surrounding pressing issues from the creative industry.

Read the Program

25 May – 26 May 2017

Addressing themes in today's artistic climate through lectures, panel discussions and portfolio reviews, the Future Now Symposium 2017 considered the arts ecosystem within a broader social context. It established a place for the exchange of ideas, offering support, talent development and networking opportunities to those working in the sector.

This year, the event addressed how the arrival of the digital age has created an unprecedented feeling of alienation. Communication has changed and we now rely on technology to interact, presenting ourselves in ways that are evolving beyond control. The sense that the public is merging with the domestic has also spread into a larger, blurred depiction of reality. Surveillance is becoming a prevalent and inescapable issue internationally. Contemporary art is the mechanism that enables us to respond to this renewed understanding of living.

Welcoming speakers from some of the UK's leading art organisations, publications and galleries, Future Now gave attendees the opportunity to meet those who are shaping the art world today. Topics included Curating for the 21st Century Audience; Sculpture Today: Dependent & Autonomous Objects; Innovation in the Making: Technology, Design & Digital; The Future of Art Journalism: A Panel Discussion, and Future of Photography: The Epic in the Everyday amongst others.

Representatives from the following organisations will be in attendance

Art Fund / Artangel / Arts Council England / East Street Arts / Edinburgh Art Festival / Elephant Magazine / FACT Liverpool / Glasgow School of Art / Hiscox / Holden Gallery / Ikon Gallery / Iniva / Jupiter Artland / Leeds Beckett University / Leeds College of Art / London College of Communication / Magnum Photos / Max Mara Art Prize for Women / Nesta / Nottingham Contemporary / Open Eye Gallery / PHOTOFAIRS / Photomonitor / Royal British Society of Sculptors / Tate Liverpool / University of York / Visual Arts South West / Wellcome Trust / Whitechapel Gallery / World Photography Organisation / York St John University / Zabłudowicz Collection

The Future Now Symposium took place at York St John University, UK. All sessions were hosted on the university campus.



To see the full list of Speakers from the 2017 Symposium, visit the [Speakers page](#).

Sessions: Thursday 25 May 2017



Keynote: A Renewed Understanding of Living
Cherie Federico, Director Aesthetica

Cherie spoke about the arrival of the digital age and how it has created an unprecedented feeling of alienation. Communication has changed and we now rely on technology to interact, presenting ourselves in ways that are evolving beyond control. Online networking sites like Instagram, Twitter and Facebook help to continue this façade, but they also take away the notion of privacy. The sense that the public is merging with the domestic has also spread into a larger, blurred depiction of reality. Contemporary art is the mechanism that enables us to respond to this renewed understanding of living.

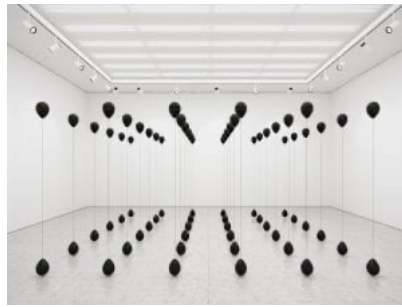
Image: Stanza, *The Nemesis Machine*, 2015



Break
Morning Coffee Hour

Situated in a relaxed and welcoming setting of the De Grey Foyer, visitors could enjoy a morning refreshment and plan their busy day ahead, getting to know the professionals, practitioners and participants in attendance. An ideal way to kick-start a day of industry sessions, exhibition visits and networking, the session was based in the heart of York St John University campus. Morning Coffee Hour was the perfect place to gather your thoughts, questions and portfolio materials before heading off to the next event. Complimentary coffee, tea and refreshments were available with a symposium pass.

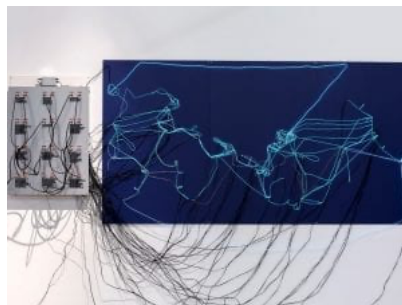
Image credit: Jim Poyner



Session 1
Curating for the 21st Century Audience

In the age of funding cuts and readily accessible information, the notion of the modern museum is constantly under threat. Who has the authority to present artworks to contemporary audiences? Curators are expected to provide blockbuster shows and support new talent, whilst ensuring an influx of visitors. Darren Pih (Exhibitions and Displays Curator at Tate Liverpool) discussed how the responsive spectator affects new acquisitions through feedback that is both online and offline and how galleries are ultimately asked to find a balance between autonomy and algorithm.

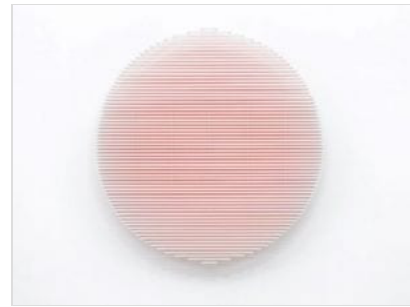
Image: Tadao Cern, *Black Balloons*, 2016



Session 3 - Innovation in the Making:
Technology, Design & Digital

From Louis Daguerre to Andy Warhol, artists have always used technology to invent, create and redefine their work. But in today's climate there are more and more practitioners working with code rather than "making" in the traditional sense. This has an immediate effect on the viewer, who is engaging with a new world that represents both augmented and virtual realities. Hosts Warren Fearn (York St John University), Mike Stubbs (FACT, Liverpool) and Paul Chapman (Glasgow School of Art) negotiated the lines between art and design technology, offering examples in which the two disciplines meet.

Image: Anna Madeleine, *Currents*, 2016



Session 2 - Sculpture Today:
Dependent & Autonomous Objects

From the formal white-cube plinth to its development into site-specific locations, sculpture has always fluctuated between juxtaposing conditions of sovereignty and reliance based on the shifting topographies and varying locations of arts spaces. Aesthetica Main Prize Winner 2016 Rachel Ara, Steven Gartside (Holden Gallery) and Dr Joanna Sperryn-Jones, (York St John University) will explore the ways in which sculpture has transitioned between these two states throughout the 20th / 21st centuries, whilst considering the effects of audience interaction and the influence of technology.

Image: Jerzy Goliszewski, *Golem*, 2015



Session 4
Funding and Commissioning: Career Support

There is an increasing number of organisations that commission and fund exhibitions. As such, this unique event offered an exchange of industry relevant ideas about the importance of new opportunities and ways in which to find support for artists, filmmakers and creatives alike. Alice Carey (Wellcome Trust), Seva Philips and Fran Sanderson (NESTA) and Gordon Dalton (Visual Arts South West) looked at the different avenues opening up and talked about how to approach a range of organisations for bursaries in order to develop and promote practices in a highly competitive sector.

Image: Martin Bricelj Baraga, *Cyanometer*, 2016

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Break
Networking Lunch

The networking lunch took place in the De Grey Foyer. The event was open to all attendees and speakers with a symposium pass, and was a great opportunity to network with delegates and artists alike. The brown bag lunch was offered to everyone in attendance, with both meat and vegetarian options available. This event was the perfect opportunity to discuss future collaborations and ideas in a lively and open-minded setting, finding out the answer to any questions and connect with other creative practitioners.

Image credit: Jim Poyner



Session 5
Future of Photography: The Epic in the Everyday

Through social media the constant dissemination of images has changed our perception of photography. When should something be considered fine art as opposed to a snapshot? Contemporary practitioners are re-examining the form, and expanding its definition to include more interdisciplinary practice. Dr Christina Kolaiti lead a panel discussion with Thomas Dukes (Open Eye Gallery), Anne Williams (London College of Communication), Fiona Rogers (Magnum Photos) and Roma Piotrowska (Ikon Gallery) about what this means for the future of image-making and its influence on programming.

Image: Janeanne Gilchrist, *Inter tidal*, 2016



Session 6
Diversity in the Art World

Whilst we live in a multicultural world, the consideration of diversity is now crucial more than ever. Art can undeniably connect people from a variety of cultures and socio-economic situations, with the ultimate power to eliminate borders. Hosted by Rebekka Kill (York St John University), Season Butler (Slate), Zoe Sawyer (The Tetley) and Laurence Sillars (BALTIC) highlighted how organisations are addressing marginalisation and what is being done to ensure that audiences are experiencing the breadth of work being produced through a level playing field in the sector.

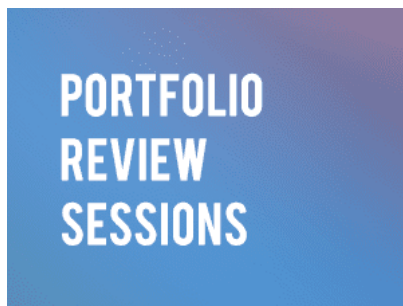
Image: Ouchhh Studio, *AVA_Particle Physics_360 Outer Geodesic Dome Installation*, 2015



Session 7
Painting Now: New Directions

Moving away from traditional styles of abstraction and figuration, today's painters and printmakers are forging unique pathways of experimentation, but several questions remain. How does the two-dimensional practice continue to be contemporary in spite of the rise in digital methods? Is the practice undergoing a renaissance now that it can move away from the canvas and incorporate multidisciplinary modes of working? Dr Alistair Payne (Head of the School of Fine Art, Glasgow School of Art) looked at the potential of painting now.

Image: Khushna Sulaman-Butt, *Society*, 2016



Special Event
Portfolio Review Sessions

These Portfolio Review Sessions are for practitioners working across all different types of genre including drawing and painting, photography and digital art, sculpture, design and three-dimensional art, video, installation and performance. Here artists had the opportunity to book a slot with industry experts who provided essential advice and guidance on current practices and career progression opportunities. This unique chance helped artists develop work and find out about new ways to expand their practice. Click here to see the reviewers.



Special Event
Private View and Prize Giving

Visitors had the chance to explore the Aesthetica Art Prize ahead of the crowds at a Private View. Following an informative day of talks and panel discussions, visitors joined delegates and guests from the art world for a special evening, networking and attending the awards ceremony – all within the heart of the York Art Gallery. Prominent themes explored by the work of 18 shortlisted artists included alienation in the digital age, the intersection between private and public spaces, sensory experiences and the transient nature of life.

The Art H



Sessions: Friday 26 May 2017



Keynote: Big Ideas. Small World. Stuart Page, Associate Dean of Development, York St John

The notion of how cities and urban spaces are built, negotiated, ordered and attributed cultural significance is key to understanding patterns and trends in society. With research interest in internationalisation and global urban cultures, Stuart discussed how globalisation is influencing contemporary art, and why interconnectedness is both influencing and challenging today's cultural landscape. The artwork displayed responded to this and Stuart unpacked its relevance as a signifier of current times.

Image: Emmanuelle Moureaux, *I am here*, 2016



Session 8 – The Contemporary in Historical Settings: The Creative City

Cities have quickly become a malleable arena for architects, festivals and artists. While places like Edinburgh offer profoundly historic contexts, they have also evolved into major hubs for contemporary culture, each year hosting an extraordinary cultural presentation. SORCHA CAREY (Director of Edinburgh Art Festival) and host STEVEN GARTSIDE (Holden Gallery) expanded on the potential to uncover new perspectives in the historic city and the opportunities for promotion and programming amidst an array of festivals all jostling for space and audience.

Image: Jasmina Cibic, *Tear Down and Rebuild*, 2015



**Session 9
The Changing Face of the Art Institution**

As viewers' expectations are altered and artists follow new modes of making, the role of the public gallery is in a state of flux. Having identified creative ways to promote age-old collections alongside innovative commissions, Rachael Browning (Art Fund), Maitreyi Maheshwari (Zabludowicz Collection) and representatives from Art Fund Museum of the Year 2016 finalists John Heffernan (Jupiter Artland) and Reyahn King (York Art Gallery) discussed the challenges of curating in the 21st century and how funding shapes exhibition programmes.

Image: VOID, *Bruit Blanc*, 2015



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Image credit: Jim Poyner



**Session 10
Engaging with the Site: The Importance of Place**

The increasing number of site-specific artworks being commissioned, accompanied by the rise of "pop-up" art projects, suggests this area of creative practice is growing at a remarkable rate. Its appeal is attributed to the dialogues stimulated within local communities and the wider collective consciousness. Laura Purseglove, Production Coordinator for Artangel – known for Rachel Whiteread's *House*, Michael Landy's *Breakdown* and Roger Hiorns's *Seizure* – discussed strategies of engagement, in relation to both the physical and social aspects of a site.

Image: The Institute for New Feeling, *This is Presence*



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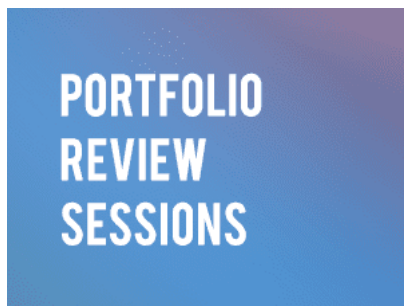
Image credit: Jim Poyner



Session 11 The Future of Art Journalism: A Panel Discussion

Print media has been left in a precarious position after the release of the smartphone and the subsequent ways to consume information. There is a growing expectation that news should be free, but specialist publications continue to thrive despite the option of data-filled landscapes. Kate Simpson (Aesthetica Magazine), Lara Eggleton (Corridor8), Christiane Monarchi (Photomonitor) and Molly Taylor (Elephant Magazine) discussed the balance between editorial and advertorial. Chaired by Sarah Cooper (Leeds Beckett University).

Image: Meredith Glisson, *is here | she*, 2015



Special Event Portfolio Review Sessions

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Session 12 - Preparing for the Future: Talent Development and Art Prizes

Offering insight into the significance of competitions in career development, the panel examines the reasons behind the prominence of international accolades and uncovers recurring trends in winning works. Reyahn King (York Art Gallery), Scott Gray (Sony World Photography Awards), Griselda Goldsbrough (Aesthetica Art Prize) and Bryony Harris (Max Mara Art Prize for Women) thought about how awards give practitioners a chance to display their pieces amongst peers, gaining increased exposure and further developing their ideas.

Image: Anthony Garratt, *High and Low*, 2016



Special Event Meet the Artists

Creatives from the 2017 Aesthetica Art Prize shortlist and longlist participated in the Future Now Symposium closing event. Meet the Artists invited delegates and guests to hear from 2017's international line-up of practitioners in an information and networking session. Each artist in attendance provided a brief introduction to their practice, with a specific focus on their selected Art Prize submission. Symposium Pass holders were able to discuss areas of interest and forge new connections with the artists.

Session 13 Shaping a Space for Artists' Film

This session highlighted the connections between distribution, production and curation of artists' film and moving image, recognising the fluidity of the genre. What is the crossover between contemporary fine art practice and mainstream cinema? James Boaden (University of York) and Sarah Perks (Home) looked at the way the medium is exhibited and how this can challenge perceptions, as well as noting the current platforms available in terms of distribution. An important question was asked: What is the key difference between being an artist and a filmmaker?

Image: Eunhyung Kim, *Street*, 2016

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