

**THE ARTIST COLLECTIVE SUMMER SCHOOL
INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS
PAUL MELLON CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN BRITISH ART
YALE SCHOOL OF ART
YALE HISTORY OF ART
YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART**

INTRODUCTION

The Artist Collective Summer School is a lively, twelve-day programme of activities and events, in which the participants take a leading role. It offers the opportunity for art historians and art students to learn from each other, and for UK-based students to connect with their Yale-based peers and with other members of the UK's arts community. It provides a forum for stimulating discussion and debate on a theme – this year, forms of artistic collectivity – that is of interest to both art students and art history students, that is of relevance in relation to both historic and contemporary art, and that is investigated through the prism of British artistic and architectural practice. Finally, the summer school brings together the creative and intellectual energy of all the participating institutions and enables areas of common interest to be developed.

As well as the Paul Mellon Centre, the Yale Art School, the Yale Art History Department and the Yale Center for British Art, each year the summer school is co-hosted by an additional partner institution. We are delighted that for the inaugural year this partner is the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London.

The Artist Collective Summer School programme is structured around:

- A series of day-long workshops, in which the participants will work with a number of artistic and cultural collectives
- A series of talks by, and conversations with, art historians, curators, critics and artists
- Visits to exhibitions, artists' studios, archives, and arts organisations

The emphasis is on generating creative and collaborative forms of analysis and exchange on the part of the participants. Accordingly, the last two days of the programme are devoted to sessions in which the participants present their reflections and responses – artistic and scholarly – to the chosen theme, and to the materials, events, and ideas they have encountered. These sessions may provide the basis for future outputs – publications, for example – which would offer a permanent expression of the work done in the summer school.

THE THEME FOR THE 2019 SUMMER SCHOOL: ARTIST COLLECTIVES

This year's summer school addresses the following three questions:

- *'What does collectivity mean?'*
- *'What does collectivity mean to artists, both past and present?'*
- *'What is the relationship between artistic collectivity and the institutional structures of any given art world?'*

The school begins from a point of acknowledged friction in its very structure: between collectivity as an active, and socially and politically urgent, mode of practice; and collectivity as a historical object of study. Today, artistic collectivity encompasses a broad spectrum of approaches and motivations: from the conscious devolution of, and turning away from, the individual authorship of artworks, to the establishing of alternative structures for working that bypass conventional understandings of artistic production. A unifying thread among some of the most interesting contemporary collectives – such as the Otolith Group, sorryoufeeluncomfortable, and Collective Creativity – is the desire to challenge the value systems that have become entrenched around individual artistic subjectivity. This form of collectivity also raises the possibility of an important realignment in the understanding of art practice, as one that, in the words of Henriette Heise & Jakob Jakobsen, is “not exclusively related to the making of art works, but also includes the establishing of institutions for the experience and use of art and generally the making of institutions for human life.” To collectivise is to organise communally, and to establish new structures for working, exhibiting, circulating, communicating, and living. From this perspective, to collectivise is to self-institutionalise. The summer school investigates what this form of self-institutionalisation means for existing institutions and academies, which tend to limit collectivism to a space of exception. Can institutions and academies learn from contemporary artistic collectivity to better understand their own areas of elision and reproductions of inequality?

As well as addressing these issues in relation to contemporary art, the summer school explores non-conformist examples of artistic collectivity from the past and investigates the parallels and contrasts they offer to the present situation. From early in the nineteenth century, groupings of artists and art-workers who felt estranged from, and neglected by, the dominant institutional structures of the British art world coalesced into what they defined as alternative, oppositional collectives. These collectives often saw their role as one that encompassed far more than a collaborative, communal form of artistic practice; they, too, saw their example as one that offered an alternative model of self-institutionalisation, and a different way of living. Such historical precedents include the Pre-Raphaelites in the mid-nineteenth century, who rebelled against the institutional and ideological directives of the Royal Academy; the Independent Group of the 1950s, who operated both inside and outside the ICA, and who instigated innovative forms of artistic collaboration as they did so; and the Hackney Flashers of the 1970s, a women's photography collective which developed within the context of the rapidly growing Women's Liberation Movement, and who believed that collective action was a vital element in bringing about social and political change.

PROGRAMME

- The summer school takes place between Monday 8th July and Friday 19th July.
- The programme runs from Monday to Friday during this period, allowing for free time over the weekend. The weekdays are full days, with at least four evening events.
- It is co-hosted by the PMC and the ICA in London.
- Participants' travel and accommodation costs, and the costs of four evening social events, are covered as part of the course. The logistical arrangements are co-ordinated by Nermin Abdulla, Education Manager at the PMC.
- The summer school involves the participation of 4 PhD students based in the UK, and members of the PMC's Doctoral Researchers Network; 8 MFA students from the Yale Art School; 8 PhD students from the Yale History of Art Department; and between 4 and 8 members of the ICA's wider community.
- It is convened by Mark Hallett and Rosie Ram from the PMC, with Richard Birkett from the ICA and Ayham Ghraawi from the Yale Art School. It benefits from the input of other colleagues from participating institutions, including Tim Barringer of the Yale History of Art department and the PMC's Deputy Director for Research, Sarah Turner.
- The programme features three one-day workshops led by members of contemporary artistic collectives, with an emphasis on their particular understandings of collectivity and their relationships to institutional forms. It also comprises a series of workshops, seminars and trips that focus on historic forms of artistic collectivity, and which are led by curators, artists, critics, and art historians.

APPLICATION

There are four places on the summer school open to members of the PMC's Doctoral Researchers Network. To apply, please email a 500-word statement of purpose to Nermin Abdulla, Education Manager at the PMC: nabdulla@paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk. Please include details of why this year's theme of artist collectives is relevant to your current research, how you feel you would benefit from participating in the programme, and what you would hope to contribute. Please also include your full name, institution, year, and the working title of your thesis.

- Applications due: Sunday 7th April 2019
- Announcement of participants: Monday 15th April 2019

This is the inaugural year of the summer school, which will run annually. For those whose applications are unsuccessful this year, we would encourage you to apply in subsequent years throughout your doctoral studies. The school's theme and programme will change each year.

If you have any questions, please email: doctoralresearchers@gmail.com.