



36th Congress of the Comité international d'histoire de l'art
Matter Materiality
Lyon, Convention Center, June 23-28, 2024
PRESS RELEASE

A complete success for the 36th CIHA Congress, organized under the aegis of the Comité français d'histoire de l'art, in partnership between the CFHA, the Institut national d'histoire de l'art (INHA), the Université Lumière Lyon 2 and the Laboratoire de recherche historique Rhône-Alpes (LARHRA CNRS UMR 5190).

The event welcomed nearly 1,800 people from 60 different countries to Lyon from the 23rd to the 28th of June 2024. Each day, around 1,000 participants attended sessions, major conferences and workshops, or browsed through books in the book fair, in the bright and friendly spaces of the Lyon Convention Centre designed by Renzo Piano. Pictures of the highlights of this event are available on the ['Pictures'](#) page of the website, which will be regularly updated over the coming weeks.

The theme chosen for the congress, *Matter Materiality*, concerns the conception, production, interpretation and conservation of works of art from all cultures and periods, and encompasses environmental and societal issues of our time.

93 sessions were proposed (the highest number of sessions ever for a CIHA congress), i.e. over 300 hours of presentations and discussions, the equivalent of a month and a half long conference! The sessions covered a wide range of subjects, from restoration and issues of conservation, to studies of intangible works, or artistic issues relating to the choice of materials, and concerned all types of artefacts and heritage, from every continent.

The congress also provided an opportunity for reflection and discussion on heritage and war, with a special session focusing on heritage in Ukraine. Another highlight was the session devoted to the contemporary art market (organized by Artprice by Artmarket).

A number of leading figures in research in the human sciences, anthropology and art history (Georges Didi-Huberman, Tim Ingold, Gabriela Siracusano, Monika Wagner) gave keynote speeches that were well attended and provoked lively discussion. Artists came to share their approach to matter and materiality (Sheela Gowda, India; Jefferson Pinder, USA).

The conference's multicultural and multidisciplinary ambitions were recognized internationally: Orhan Pamuk, Nobel Prize for Literature and chairman of the Congress's honorary committee, opened the event with a brilliant keynote lecture.

The book fair, with 44 exhibitors (major publishing houses and more specialized journals) and the active participation of the Lyon bookseller L'œil cacodylate, was a lively place, with hundreds of people



coming every day to catch up on the latest art history and heritage publications. Around forty events (book signings, presentations, meetings) were organized.

At the same time, thanks to numerous partnerships with Lyon and regional institutions, a wide-ranging cultural program was offered, with twenty-one guided tours of museums, historic monuments and cultural venues during the week.

On Friday June 28th 2024, the last day of the congress, eight day trips were organized to discover the architectural and cultural heritage of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. These moments of engagement with the materiality of cultural assets provided an opportunity to create connections between the academic world and the conservation and restoration sectors, and to raise awareness of the various realities of heritage, both intangible and tangible ...

Finally, the Congress was a time for structuring the discipline, with the election of a new board for the Comité international d'histoire de l'art (and a new scientific secretary in the person of France Nerlich) and workshops on journals and provenance research.

It was also an opportunity for the CFHA to publish a work reflecting on sixty years of the discipline in France, *HistoireS de l'art en France. 1964-2024. Lieux, questions défis*.

Thanks to the partnerships forged with the city's public and private museums, there were plenty of social events for all delegates to enjoy throughout the six days: from Daniel Spoerri's dinner-performance at the Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon (under the guidance of Michelin-starred chef Jérémy Galvan), to the evening at the Musée des Beaux-arts (in front of Poussin with Pierre Rosenberg of the Académie française, or in front of restored works from the *Connecting Worlds* exhibition), or the grand evening at the Musée l'Organe - La Demeure du Chaos and headquarters of Artprice, and finally a festive closing evening at the maLyon. Other receptions, by invitation only (organized by the École du Louvre, the Getty Foundation and the Musée d'Orsay), provided an opportunity for informal encounters, particularly for grant holders who had benefited from the support of international foundations and institutions.

Researchers from every continent were able to take part in this key event for art history and heritage. In order to encourage equal exchange, the organizers were keen to ensure that the Congress was held in person rather than as a hybrid event. Over 150 grants were offered to enable speakers from less-favored regions of the world to take part in the conference (16 researchers from Argentina, 7 from India, 6 from Ukraine and as many from Brazil, for example). These grants also made it possible to support the participation of young researchers, both in France and abroad, with master's and doctoral students.

The chosen theme encouraged the participation of a wide range of professional backgrounds: researchers and academics from all over the world were able to exchange ideas with heritage managers, conservators and curators from collections of all kinds (in addition to the various museums in Lyon, the Musée d'Orsay, the Musée du Louvre, The John P. Getty Museum, the Museu das Culturas Indígenas in São Paulo and the Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing...). The mix of generations, the diversity of languages and the respect for parity have enabled a strong collective inclusion of all communities, whether cultural, geographical or professional.

The 36th CIHA Congress reaffirmed the need for major international meetings of the community, especially after the pandemic. The first CIHA Congress was held in Vienna in 1873, more than 150 years ago, and the last CIHA Congress in France was held in 1989. These congresses have often left their mark on the history of art and the history of conservation and heritage studies, by developing new concepts for structuring themes in art history. Since the 'global' shift that began at the Melbourne Congress in 2008, the CIHA has continued to promote an art history that is less Eurocentric and more



attentive to linguistic, economic and thematic diversity. From this point of view, the Lyon edition has reached a new milestone in terms of its international scope and inclusivity.

The momentum generated will undoubtedly continue at the next conference in 2028, in Washington, on the theme of sovereignty, led by Paul B. Jaskot (Duke University) and Steven Nelson (The Center, National Gallery of Art, Washington).

The success of this congress is based on long preparatory work and the mobilization of a large community. The first preparations date back to 2017, when the University of Lyon 2 and the LARHRA proposed Lyon's candidacy and the theme Matière Matérialité for the 36th CIHA congress, a proposal that was immediately supported by the CFHA. In 2019, the partnership agreement between the four organizing partners (CFHA, INHA, Lyon 2, LARHRA) was formalized. Several committees have been set up to ensure that it is carried out. The Executive Committee, made up of France Nerlich (INHA), Laurent Baridon and Sophie Raux (Lyon 2 University - LARHRA) and Judith Kagan (Ministry of Culture and CFHA), worked on a daily basis to implement the event, with the assistance of Mathieu David, project manager, and Coralie Guillaubez, scientific secretary. The Executive Committee was supported by a Steering committee, chaired by Olivier Bonfait, President of the CFHA, and was advised by an international Advisory committee in developing the theme and scientific program.

An organizing committee, chaired by Damien Delille (Lyon 2 University), was set up with Lyon-based partners to implement the cultural programme. Over a hundred volunteers, led by Lynda Degouve de Nuncques, ensured that the conference ran smoothly throughout the week. The book fair was curated by Olivier Bonfait, Dominique de Font-Réaulx and Sophie Raux, assisted by Turner Edwards.

Such a global event required a substantial budget of over 800,000 euros, including 250,000 euros earmarked for mobility grants. The CFHA treasurer, Michaël Vottero, was called upon to manage various funds. Live! by GL Events was responsible for the material management of the event. The French Ministry of Culture's Direction Générale des Patrimoines et de l'Architecture supported the project, and the INHA provided constant and effective support. The organizers would also like to thank the many institutional and private sponsors who supported them (see attached list). Without their support, the conference would not have been possible!

The 36th CIHA Congress was therefore a major scientific event, as well as a real celebration of art history and heritage science.

Finally, it should be remembered that artistic and cultural assets constitute a plural, common and universal heritage. They are objects of study, enjoyment and sharing to be disseminated in a spirit of exchange without any form of exclusion. This was also one of the issues at stake at the 36th CIHA Congress.

Olivier Bonfait, President of the Comité français d'histoire de l'art
The Executive Committee of the 36th CIHA Congress
Laurent Baridon, Judith Kagan, France Nerlich, Sophie Raux

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