

Provincialising Impressionism

Samuel Raybone, Aberystwyth University, sar69@aber.ac.uk

Nineteenth-century art history is finally becoming as global as the 19th century itself. Yet, the future of Impressionism in this globalising field is far from certain. Quintessentially French, Impressionism was central to the Eurocentric meta-narratives of 20th-century art history. If the impetus to *provincialise Europe* means decentring its historicist meta-narratives, are we not obliged therefore to decentre Impressionism?

This session invites papers that rise to this postcolonial challenge and attempt to write what Dipesh Chakrabarty might call 'a history that does not yet exist', a provincializing history of Impressionism. To provincialize Impressionism is to attend to Impressionism's 'other histories' as sites of 'plenitude' and 'creativity', and to rethink the history of Impressionism as one of conjunction with its 'others' (Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000], p. 42, 35).

Certainly, attention is now being paid to the influence of Impressionism around the world. From Australia to Argentina, Turkey to the USA, and Canada to the Caribbean, we now recognise many Impressionisms. Further, recent scholarship has unveiled the French Impressionists' myriad global connections and the globality of the modernity they painted, problematising the epithet 'French' Impressionism. Yet, a pitfall common to both this former paradigm of 'influence' and this latter practice of 'provincialising' is a continued implication of 'original' and 'centre': the disguise rather than deconstruction of European hegemony.

Responding to the potential and pitfalls of *provincialising Impressionism*, papers might explore such *other histories* as the distinct meanings assumed by Impressionist artworks upon their dissemination into diverse, global collections, as well as the strategic and creative appropriation of Impressionism's tenets in local or hyper-local contexts.