

# 34<sup>th</sup> AAH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

2 – 4 April 2008

Tate Britain, Tate Modern and Chelsea College  
of Art & Design, London

**LOCATION: THE MUSEUM,  
THE ACADEMY AND THE STUDIO**

## PAPER PROPOSAL FORM

TATE

University of the  
Arts London  
Chelsea



**Paper Title: Kunsthallen and Art Historical Discourse**

**For Session: Museums, the Academy and the Studio**

### Your Name and address (please complete all sections):

<b>Title:</b>	Ms / PhD cand.
<b>Full Name:</b>	Victoria Preston
<b>Correspondence Address:</b>	Ch.de la Moraine, 36
<b>City:</b>	St-Prex
<b>Region/Province:</b>	
<b>Post Code:</b>	1162
<b>Country:</b>	Switzerland
<b>Affiliation:</b>	Birkbeck, University of London
<b>Email Address:</b>	preston.victoria@gmail.com
<b>Phone Number:</b>	+41793412877 (mobile)

### Abstract for a 30 minute paper (no more than 250 words)

This paper challenges the binary of the connoisseurship of the museum curator versus the speculative, reflexive and politicised approaches of the university-based art historian by exploring the contribution of curators of Kunsthallen to the art historical debate. It refutes the “old” definition of a curator as responsible for the collection, care, research, and exhibition of art or artifacts and adopts a wider definition reflecting developments in curatorial practice from 1990s onwards to include being a conceptual, facilitator, enabler, or creative organizer.

There is scepticism towards arguments that art histories are only constituted by museums with collections. Although traditional art history (Aby Warburg, Erwin Panofsky, Ernst Gombrich) is closely related to museum history and focuses its attention on narratives surrounding art objects and collections of art objects, anxiety about established object-based collections and the contingent nature of the representation of art histories in museums and galleries is to be found in Tony Bennett’s *The Birth of the Museum* (1995) and Carol Duncan’s *Civilising Rituals* (1995).

During the course of this paper I will explore the contribution of Kunsthallen to art historical discourse and show how they relate a different version of cultural history to the narratives generated by object-based museum collections. This contemporary cultural history is constructed from the programmes and display practices within Kunsthallen, as well as from the discourse and controversy surrounding the staging of those programmes and practices. I will select examples from around Switzerland: Kunsthalle Bern, Kunsthalle Zurich, and

Kunsthalle St Gallen and explore in more depth the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève.

**You must email your proposal to the convenor(s) of the session that you are proposing a paper for.**

**Equipment Requirements: Please state number required**

**Overhead Projector:**

**Slide Projector:**

**Other (Data Projector,  
Laptop etc):**

**yes**

**PLEASE EMAIL YOUR PROPOSAL TO THE SESSION CONVENOR(S)  
PROPOSAL DEADLINE: 16 NOVEMBER 2007**