

**Bridging the Gap: Conservation of Contemporary Art
Maastricht 24th - 27th March 2019**

Title: Towards an Ethics of Intangible Art
Abstract Proposal

Heidegger opens his famous essay 'The Origin of the Work of Art' by dispelling the claim that the artist is the sole 'origin' of the work. Instead he argues that the 'origin' is relational between artist, art and concept. Since then the concept of 'relationality' was further developed by Bourriaud and others. Though Heidegger begins to develop an argument that could enlarge the relational group to include viewers/audience/participants, this aspect is still underdeveloped in his work. The role of museums, galleries and curators are also there, but not fully and explicitly developed. The recent restaging of the curator Harald Szeemann's exhibitions (Venice 2013, Los Angeles, Bern, Dusseldorf, Turin and New York 2018-9) and the need to reproduce works which did not survive in collaboration with artists, researchers, gallerists, collectors and artist's estates, further highlights the point.

The paper will develop Heidegger's discussion from his wider works and in the context of specific art works and exhibitions to argue for a wider articulation of the relational aspect of 'the origin of the artwork'. In so doing, it will introduce the roles of the museum/gallery, the public, the curator(s), the collectors, the art market, public funders and private funders in order to develop a different conservation ethic appropriate to contemporary and 'global' art. It will move away from the ethic of conservation which focuses purely on the materiality of the object and the intentions of the artist as its 'origin', an approach which easily maps on to our existing legal system in terms of property laws be they material or intellectual.

Short Bio

Dr. Nicola Foster is currently a Senior Research Fellow in visual art at Southampton Solent University where she is supervising PhD students. She has edited a book on feminist aesthetics, she was on the editorial board of *Women's Philosophy Review* and on the editorial board of *JAR (Journal of Artistic Research)*. She published several book chapters and journal articles on contemporary art, aesthetics, and art institutions. She is currently working on publications on Asian women artists, contemporary art institutions, including global Biennials, the art market, heritage and politics.

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