

Art Institute Review

Issue 1: Instability (September 2021)

Call for Proposals (closed)

Instability is the hallmark of our present moment—ways of living, working, and relating have been dramatically altered over the course of mere weeks. But upheaval has equally characterized the past. Encounters between cultures, whether through colonization and war or migration and trade, have regularly wrought dramatic, often violent, change. Technology in particular has a fraught relationship with instability, capable of exacerbating and ameliorating it simultaneously. How might we take this moment to understand instability and its effects, past and present, in radically different ways?

In the art world, instability is both catalyst and consequence. It is legible as a force that has shaped—and is actively reshaping—museum collections. It exists in the toppling of received art-historical hierarchies and the rewriting of dominant narratives, through means as diverse as academic scholarship and grassroots movements like Decolonize This Place. Artists of past centuries could not have foreseen that their work would be subject to the forces of instability, evolving over decades as its materials degrade. Conservators negotiate instability daily, paying attention to materials and environments in order to forecast and forestall deterioration. Some contemporary artists, meanwhile, deliberately flirt with instability as a creative force, experimenting with frailty, precariousness, organic materials, and viewer participation as ways of ceding control of their work.

The inaugural issue of the *Art Institute Review* invites you to interrogate instability in any of the multifarious ways it manifests in art objects, art history, and the art world. We seek proposals that critically engage instability in relation to technology, materiality, and making; narratives and identity; interpretive methodologies; museological concerns; and epistemologies of the field; and the intersection of these dimensions with social justice and equity. How has instability been not only a force to intervene against but also one that has fostered new, beneficial states or ways of being? In what ways is instability shaping new ways of practicing criticality, structuring our temporalities, or reframing our perceptions of conflict or compassion? Proposals may address art of any time or place. We especially welcome proposals focused on historically underrepresented objects or narratives and proposals from emerging scholars.

This issue is co-edited by Delinda Collier, Associate Professor of Art History, Theory, and Criticism, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Robyn Farrell, Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art, the Art Institute of Chicago.