

AWSS 2026 Biennial CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Creating under Constraint: Gender in Politics, History, Culture, Literature, Social Change

May 21-23, 2026

Art Academy of Latvia- Latvijas Mākslas akadēmija
Riga, Latvia

Thursday, 21 May

13:30 Conference Venue Opens

14:00 Welcoming Remarks: Rector and Professor Kristaps Zariņš and Vice-Rector for Scientific Work, Director of the Doctoral School, Professor Agita Gritāne, Art Academy of Latvia

14:15- 15:45 Panel 1: Globalized Gender Politics through the Lens of Latvia (Chair: Laurie Stoff, Arizona State University)

Daina Eglītis, Departments of Sociology and International Affairs, The George Washington University & **Laura Ardava- Āboliņa**, Department of Communication Studies, University of Latvia
“Gendered Narratives of Demographic Threat in Contemporary Latvia”

Jānis Ozoliņš, Department of Culture, Society, and Environment Studies, Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art at the University of Latvia, and Art Academy of Latvia, **“A Siren's Call: The Public Anti-Gender Discourse of Agnese Irbe”**

Iveta Ķešāne, Institute of Arts and Cultural Studies, Latvian Academy of Culture, **Liene Ozoliņa**, Institute of Arts and Cultural Studies, Latvian Academy of Culture, and **Maija Spuriņa**, Institute of Arts and Cultural Studies, Latvian Academy of Culture, **“Gender & Military Conscription in Contemporary Latvia: Discourse Analysis of Militarization”**

Vita Zelče, Department of Communication and Information Studies, University of Latvia, and **Marita Zitmane**, Department of Communication and Information Studies, University of Latvia, **“Gender, Ethnicity & Political Trust: Russian Speaking Women in Latvia & Attitudes Towards the Istanbul Convention”**

Discussion

16:00- 17:15 Panel 2: Reproduction, Ideology, Agency (Chair: Michele Rivkin-Fish)
Sasha Rasmussen, Department of History, University of Nottingham, **“The Limits of (Pro)Creation: Abortion as Crime & Healthcare in late Russian Empire (Riga +Tallinn)”**

Aliesia Soloviova, Department of History and Civilization, European University Institute

“Reproductive Control and Gendered Agency in Soviet Ukraine, 1953–1980: Creating Bodily Autonomy Under Ideological Constraint”

Justyna Wierzchowska, Department of American Studies, University of Warsaw, **“You will never walk alone’: Pregnancy, Abortion, and Feminist Motherhood in the Works of Contemporary Polish Artists”**

Urszula Chowaniec, Department of Polish Studies and Yiddish Studies, Lunds Universitet **“Rehearsal for a More Egalitarian World: Artistic Activism and Social Mobilization in All-Poland Women's Strike”**

Discussant, **Anna Temkina**
Discussion

17:30- 18:15- Keynote Address and Reception, Art Academy

Dr. Ineta Lipša, historian, senior researcher at the National Archives of Latvia, **“From Parasitic Elements to Anti-Social Way of Life: Gendering Immorality under Cold War Ideology in the Latvian SSR”**

20:00- Optional dinner (self-pay)

Friday, 22 May

8:30: Coffee and light fare

9:00-10:30 Panel 3: Coping with Patriarchal Constraints: Desires, Economics, Contradictions
(Chair: Sharon Kowalsky, Department of History, Texas A&M University)

Elena Korchmina, Department of Economics, University of Bologna
“Creating Economic Agency under Patriarchal Constraint: Russian Noblewomen's Property Mngmt & Ideological Transformation, 1780s-1840s”

Lea Horvat, Department of Cultural History and Cultural Anthropology, Friedrich Schiller University Jena, **“Entering the Club: Women & Coffeeshouse Culture in Late Habsburg Semi-Periphery”**

Karolina Labowicz-Dymanus, Department of 20th and 21st Century Visual Art Documentation Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw,
“The Erotic Refusal: Ewa Pachucka's Body, Pleasure, & Politics of Non-Reproduction”

Līga Romāne-Kalniņa, University of Latvia Faculty of Humanities, **“Digital Echoes & Algorithmic Constraints: Unmasking Historical Gender Bias & Stereotypes in Latvian Social Media”**

Discussion

10:30- 10:45 Coffee Break

10:50-12:20: Panel 4: Kinship and Creativity (Chair: Lea Horvat)

Jehanne Gheith, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Duke University
“Art of Sisterhood: The Khvoshchinskaias & Brontes”

Alissa Klots, Department of History, University of Pittsburgh
“Secure Old Age for Mother: Khrushchev's Pension Reform & Gendered Notions of Labor”

Laura Little, Department of Slavic Studies, Connecticut College
“Creating Sisterhood Under Constraint: Baltic Convents and Leningrad Unofficial Culture”

Sylvia Chassaing, Department of Russian Studies, Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales, "Research Center Europes-Eurasia (CREE), Paris
“From Women's Literary Heritage to Sororal Communities: Translation, Publishing, Creative Writing in Contemporary Russia”

Discussion

Friday, 22 May

12:30- 13:45 Lunch at Cafeteria, Art Academy of Latvia

14:00-15:30 Panel 5: Imagining and Manipulating Selves through Narrative

(Chair: Sara Dickinson)

Tatjana Šepić, Department of English language, University of Applied Sciences, Rijeka, and Department of English literature, Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Croatia, **“Ivana Brlic-Mazuranic & Marija Juric Zagorka- Two Emblematic Literary Figures of Female (Silent) Resistance”**

Mary Elliott, Department of Comparative Literature, University of California, Davis, **“Elena Guro + V. Mayakovsky: Pre-Rev Violence & Formation of (Inter)Subjective Self”**

Dina Famin, Department of Slavic Studies, Brown University

“Tamara, and Tamara, and Tamara: Lermontov, Vrubel, and Bakst’s Creations of the Georgian Woman”

Anna Berman, Slavonic section, Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages and Linguistics, University of Cambridge

“Writing as Man & Woman: N. Khvoshchinskaya, V. Krestovsky & the Problem of Gender”

Zita Kārkla, Department of Literature, Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, University of Latvia

“Memory and Feminist Temporality in Contemporary Latvian Women’s Writing”

Discussion

15:45- 17:15 Panel 6: Creativity and Community Amidst Exclusion, Loss, and in the Everyday
(Chair: Melissa Bokovoy, Department of History, University of New Mexico)

Ksenia Butuzova, Department of History, University of Oxford, **“Encrypted Labours: Women, Rebuses & the Construction of Modern Culture in Late Imperial Russia”**

Rachel Moss, Department of Theatre and Dance, University of Texas at Austin

“Ida Kaminska's Bunker: Framing Polish Jewish Postwar Possibility Through Matriarchal Legacy”

Hignett, Kelly, Department of European History, Leeds Beckett University, **“Culture in “The Castle’: Women Political Prisoners in Communist Czechoslovakia, c.1948-1968.”**

Julia Michcik, Department of Sociology, Jagiellonian University, **“Mapping Everyday Feminism: Situated Identities, Micro-Strategies and the Politics of Daily Life”**

Diana Planida, Departments of Political and Social Science, University of Bologna and Radboud University

“The Gendered Body in Motion: Dance and Displacement After Russia's Invasion of Ukraine”
Discussion

17:45 Keynote Speaker: Dr. Oksana Kis, President of the Ukrainian Association for Research in Women's History and Head of the National Research Foundation of Ukraine: “Beauty that saved their world: Ukrainian women's arts and crafts in the Gulag”

19:30 Conference Dinner: Café Osiris, Lāčplēša iela 31 (at the corner of Krišjāņa Barona iela 31) Centra rajons, Rīga, LV-1011

Saturday, 23 May

8:30- 9:00 Coffee and light fare

9:00- 10:30 Panel 7: In/ Visibility: Recognizing Women's Creative Expression, Restoring Women's Memory (Chair: Jānis Ozoliņš)

Laine Kristberga, Arts Department, Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia

"Unseen Acts: Women, Performance Art and Structural Invisibility of Soviet & Post-Soviet Latvia"

Līga Goldberga, National Library of Latvia and **Liāna Ivete Žilde**, Art Academy of Latvia, **"From the Attic to Art History: Reading Ina Stūre's and Zenta Dzividzinska's Photography Archives"**

Victoria Musvik, Department of Medieval and Modern Languages, University of Oxford, **"Diversifying Creativity: Russian Festivals of Female Photography of the 1990s"**

Karolina Pospiszil, Institute of Literary Studies, Faculty of Humanities, University of Silesia, Katowice, **"Reclaiming Voice, Reclaiming Memory: Upper Silesian Women's Narratives After 1989"**

Discussion

10:45- 12:15 Panel 8: Women's Activist Innovations Amidst Ecological Crisis & Anti-Gender Politics (Chair: Michele Rivkin-Fish)

Anna Sidorevich, Center for History of Sciences Po (CHSP), Paris

"(Re)Inventing Feminism Under Late Socialism? Leningrad Women's Movement in late 1970s + early 1980s"

Julie Hemment, Department of Anthropology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, **"Creativity under Constraint: Fostering Feminist Solidarity via Memory Work & Creative Writing"**

Noemi Fregara, Department of Literary, Linguistic, and Comparative Studies, University of Naples "L'Orientale"

"Configurations of Women's Activism: Polish Ecoliterary Wave under Patriarchal Constraints"

Ella Rossman, Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe, and **Marina Vinnik**, Bauhaus University Weimar, **"Mama Bear for President!" Russian Imperial Ecologies & Ecofeminist Sensibilities"**

Discussion

Saturday, 23 May

12:30- 14:00 Panel 9: Feminists Naming Violence: Creative Approaches to (Re)-claiming Voices

(Chair: Julie Hemment)

Oleksandra Shtepenko, Department of Journalism, Interregional Academy of Personnel Management, Kyiv, **“The Discourse of Traumatic Memory in Contemporary Ukrainian Women's Dramaturgy about War”**

Masha Bratishcheva, Public History Unit, Faculty of History, Philosophy, and Theology, University of Bielefeld, Germany

“Men Have Run Out of Words': Women Journalists as Witnesses of War”

Marina Iaroslavtseva, Department of Sociology, Justus Liebig University Giessen (JLU), Germany

“Corporeality, Credibility & Creativity under Constraint in Russophone Feminist Prose”

Saara Ratilainen, Department of Russian Language and Culture, Tampere University

“Tactical Ambivalence & Russian-Speaking Feminist Media Ecology Before & After Russia's Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine”

Discussant, **Melissa Bokovoy**, Department of History, University of New Mexico

Discussion

Lunch 14:00

Optional Museum tour