

The Global Neoclassicism Project

Online Symposium:

Neoclassicism in the Extended Field: A Global Project

28-30 May 2026

Co-chaired by:

Faraz Olfat - PhD candidate, Department of the History of Art, Yale University.

Rebecca Yuste - PhD candidate, Department of Art History & Archaeology, Columbia University, and Junior Fellow, Garden and Landscape Studies, Dumbarton Oaks.

Keynote Speaker: Meredith Martin, Professor of Art History, NYU

Neoclassicism – rooted in the aesthetic, philosophical, and political traditions of Greece and Rome – stands as a defining current of the long nineteenth century, especially the period from 1750 to 1860. Often linked to state-building, emerging national identities, and the rise of secular modernity, the movement was shaped significantly by figures such as Robert Adam, Jacques-Louis David, Angelica Kauffman, Thomas Jefferson, Antonio Canova, and Abbé Laugier. Their ideas circulated broadly, aided by expanding imperial networks, print culture, and the development of photography. As a result, Neoclassical forms and ideals appeared far beyond Europe, taking shape in the colonial Americas, the Middle East, South Asia, and across the African continent. Art academies and new modes of image dissemination further amplified access to classical models once limited to travelers and on-site observers.

This conference asks what happens when Neoclassicism moves beyond its traditionally understood geographic center in Western Europe. How was the movement introduced, promoted, adapted, and transformed in non-Western contexts? How did Greco-Roman traditions intersect with existing local architectural, artistic, and archaeological legacies? And in what ways did Neoclassicism participate in, or respond to, global imperial structures?

We invite papers that expand, complicate, or challenge established narratives of Neoclassicism across media from the rediscovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum through the first decade of the twentieth century. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Transmission of Neoclassical design through colonial networks
- Photography, pattern books, architectural treatises, and academic training (including the École des Beaux-Arts)

- Governmental architecture, libraries, financial institutions, religious monuments, private residences, or unrealized projects
- Theoretical or historiographic studies that question conventional boundaries of the movement

We welcome contributions that offer new perspectives, illuminate understudied regions, or reconsider the global dynamics that shaped Neoclassical expression. As this will be an online symposium, we are especially eager to hear from scholars working in Asian, African, and Latin American geographies.

Please submit an abstract of no more than 250 word along with a CV to faraz.olfat@yale.edu by the 1st of February, 2026.

We will communicate decisions by the beginning of March.

For any questions or concerns contact Rebecca Yuste at:

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