

Æstetisk Seminar

*Æstetisk Seminar er tilrettelagt af Anette Vandsø og Niclas Nørby Jochumsen Hundahl,
Institut for Kommunikation og Kultur, Aarhus Universitet*

Kasper Lægning

Towards an Emotional History of Pictures

For a very long time, emotions and their histories have been largely overlooked within art history. Since the 1990s, the history of emotions (Boddice, Dixon, Rosenwein) – rooted primarily in the discipline of history – has left a strong mark on neighbouring fields within the humanities, yet only rarely on art history itself. James Elkins' essay collection, *Pictures & Tears* (2001), constitutes a notable exception, which, however, has not been followed by comparable studies. Only in the study of contemporary art have theorists – often artists themselves – more extensively confronted emotions as raw material for the artwork, and a pronounced exchange between affect theory and image theory has emerged (Bennett, Doyle, Ngai). Similarly, the emerging field of visual culture studies (Mitchell) has been more receptive to affective dimensions.

In this talk, I argue for the relevance of rethinking not only visual culture but also art history under the sign of emotions. Drawing on both iconic and overlooked paintings, I bring forth qualities of affect and mood that may serve as stepping stones towards a renewed understanding of painting – and, more broadly, of pictures.

Torsdag den 5. marts 2026, Kl. 14:15-16:00

Kasernen, bygning 1584, lokale 124

Alle er velkomne / All are welcome