**Unexpected Territories**

**Permanence, Shifting Grounds, and Unexpected Territories in Art Education**

**July 21—25, 2025 | 38th InSEA World Congress**

**Olomouc, Czech Republic**

The 38th InSEA World Congress will aim to promote international dialogue and exchange of experience and expertise in the field of art education and related disciplines. The title of the congress offers a metaphor that can be figuratively applied to many ‘unexpected territories’, primarily to those we discover in art, in the ‘image’. The notion of image is not understood here only as one of the historical forms of representing the material and non-material world, or an expression of creativity and human imagination. Traditionally, the image has a material basis, but it is also a mental image – an unbounded concept, in short, an ‘unexpected territory’. Through the image, we think and feel, through the image, we seek, find and express our identity, uniqueness, subjectivity – that is, our inner *territory*. Through the image we interpret and perceive not only ourselves, but also society, and the visible and spiritual world, too.

Unusual *territories*, aesthetics and imagination can be also found in the art of new media or thanks to contemporary immersive technologies and generative tools of artificial intelligence – but we also enter unexpected and often dangerous *territories* through visual culture broadly understood, in which numerous disturbing principles can be traced, including deception and false reality, pressure on self-perception, addictive behaviour, imitation of models, the shaping of a certain type of behaviour – all with consequences that include a global increase in depressive and anxiety states. Social networks – of which the 'image' is an essential part – are abused and distort social debates, replacing a dialogue with confrontation.

For a person anchored in the contemporary hypermodern, globalized reality, an unexpected *territory* can be territories with the visuality and sign systems of other cultures or even our own traditional culture, in which we often feel like strangers. Modernity, the consequences of which we are now experiencing, has brought about the disembedding of tradition and normative value frameworks: we are able to overcome spatial limitations, we can even reside outside of physical space (e.g. in virtual reality), or we can connect with people in another time zone and another space at the same time, without being hindered by physical limitations. Disembedding mechanisms have given us freedom, but have also disrupted shared cultural and value systems and social relationships to the natural environment.

The topics which are also offered for a professional debate, and anticipated by the subtitle of the congress ‘Permanence, Shifting Grounds, and Unexpected Territories in Art Education’ include: the disembedding of tradition and, on the other hand, its rediscovering, continuity and discontinuity, deconstruction of one's own cultural practices, reflection on paradigmatic changes brought about by modernity and digital technologies, new structures of knowledge and new methods of learning that find its expression in the field of *digital humanities*, digital platformisation and design practice, the permanent establishment of one's own value systems and identities through art production and art reception.

Colleagues from the field of art pedagogy, museum and gallery education, as well as those who work in related disciplines are all cordially invited into the realm of unexpected territories. The conference is aimed at professionals as well as students, practising teachers and early career researchers.

The congress will primarily take place in physical form, but key parts of the programme will also be available online (virtual exhibition, streaming of invited keynote speakers). The venue will be the historic university city of Olomouc, which has been labelled the shimmering hidden pearl of Europe thanks to its valuable and well-preserved historical centre and baroque architecture. The congress will be hosted by Palacký University Olomouc, specifically by the Department of Art Education of the Faculty of Education of Palacký University located in the historic building of the Jesuit Convent, which now serves the academic community and the cultural public as the Art Centre.

**Congress organisers**

The main organiser of the congress – which is an official InSEA event – is the Czech Section of INSEA and the Department of Art Education of the Faculty of Education of Palacký University Olomouc.

**Congress venue**

The congress venue is Olomouc and the university campus located right in the historical centre of the city. The Czech Republic is a popular tourist destination, known especially for the charms of its capital city Prague, its rich cultural life, valuable folklore and tradition, but also for its safety and accessible public transport. The city of Olomouc boasts charming streets, museums, parks and a main square that counts among the most picturesque in the Czech Republic. It is surrounded by historic buildings and adorned with the Holy Trinity Column, a UNESCO-protected monument. Beautiful churches are scattered throughout the streets of the historic centre, as Olomouc was and is an important spiritual centre and the seat of an archbishopric. Visitors to Olomouc can explore the foundations of the ancient Olomouc Castle and the valuable art collections in the Archdiocesan Museum. The experience of the beautiful city is completed by a unique set of Baroque fountains, as well as cafés, wine bars with Moravian wine and pubs with regional cheeses and beer delicacies from local breweries.

**Hosting institution**

Palacký University Olomouc (UP) is an internationally respected and scientifically and academically highly productive university in Central Europe. Founded 22 December 1573, it is the second-oldest university in the Czech Republic and the oldest one in Moravia. For 450 years it has contributed to the intellectual wealth of society and to its scientific, cultural, and social development.

Every year 23,000 students study UP’s eight faculties, which provide over a thousand combinations of Bachelor’s, Master’s, and doctoral study programmes. Virtually every discipline is on offer, in teacher training, law, theology, physical education and sports, the humanities, social sciences, and arts to those in natural, medical, and health sciences. The UP credit system is fully compatible with international ECTS. The university operates a number of modern science and research centres employing renowned international teams.

Palacký University Olomouc also focuses on “third mission” community engagement and service activities via educational and socio-cultural events. It founded a popular science centre, Fort Science, and runs the UPoint information centre and shop in the city centre. Since 2021, the university has established a Sustainability Office – Sustainable University, has created the UP Sustainable Development Strategy and is responsible for its implementation. Great emphasis is being laid on international relations and internationalisation. In the global university rankings, UP is regularly ranked among the top three Czech universities.

**History of the University**

The foundations of Palacký University Olomouc date back to 22 December 1573, when the former Jesuit College in Olomouc was given the right to confer degrees; i.e. promoted to university status. The development of the University of Olomouc throughout four centuries has reflected the milestones in European and Czech history. The Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648), the dissolution of the Jesuit Order (1773), the revolutionary year of 1848, the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic (1918), the German occupation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (1939–1945), and the student demonstrations of 1939 and 1989 – all these events have shaped the past of today’s Palacký University Olomouc, one of the most prestigious Czech and Central European universities.