“Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought. Thus it is that no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other over against itself.” – Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, 1949

What is alterity and how do we represent it? How do we, as human beings, craft personal and communal identities, and achieve a sense of social belonging? To what extent do we rely on inherited biases about class, gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity when fashioning our self-image? As the French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir observed in her well-known feminist manifesto, the concept of Otherness occupies a central place in human consciousness. Social identities are inherently relational, and people often define themselves in terms of what they are not. This comparative impulse manifests itself in complex ways in the history of art and architecture. Given the global upswing in nationalist sentiment and nativist movements built on hardened definitions of Otherness, we feel that such dialogue is more important than ever.

The Rutgers University Art History Graduate Student Organization seeks proposals that address any of the above-mentioned questions. Abstracts are welcome from all historical periods, geographical areas, and cultural, theoretical, and methodological perspectives. Submissions within the fields of art and architectural history, archaeology, history, visual and material culture, media studies, and gender studies will be considered for 20-minute presentations in English. After the symposium, one paper will be selected for possible publication in Volume 36 of the Rutgers Art Review, a peer-reviewed, open-access journal produced by graduate students in the Department of Art History.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Cross-cultural encounters (the Grand Tour, appointments to foreign courts, prints accompanying written travel accounts)
- Orientalism and the taste for the exotic
Physiognomy, phrenology, and other pseudo-sciences
The architecture of segregation and apartheid
Colonialism, imperialism, and unequal power dynamics
Representations of slavery and servitude
Stereotypes, caricatures, and satires
Minstrelsy, masquerade, and racially charged forms of entertainment
The impact of trade and globalization on notions of Otherness
Intercultural identities in contemporary society

Please send your abstract and a current CV to rutgersarthistorygradsymposium@gmail.com by December 15, 2018. Abstracts should be no more than 300 words. Applicants will be notified of the committee’s decision by January 15, 2019.