



## *The Arts as a Site of Social Reconstruction:*

A Conference of the John Dewey Society,  
held in conjunction with  
The Philosophy of Education Society  
Chicago, IL  
March 2-4, 2023

### CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Due: December 1, 2022

*The John Dewey Society aims to foster intelligent inquiry into the pressing social problems of our time, especially pertaining to the place and function of education in resolving such problems, as well as to share, discuss, and disseminate the results of such inquiries.*

**The John Dewey Society** invites paper proposals for its annual meeting, to be held in Chicago, March 2-4, 2023. Come join us for scholarship, community, and experiential learning immediately prior to and in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society.

To acknowledge the wide impact of Dewey's work across philosophical scholarship, community organizing, education, and more, we issue a broad and open call. We seek submissions that take up the ideas and spirit of Dewey in new and creative ways. We welcome papers that apply Deweyan approaches to engage philosophical issues and analyze social, political, and educational situations. We request papers that use a Deweyan lens to provide directives through challenging times and environments. We invite papers that continue the Deweyan legacy by opening new conversations about the continued relevance of the American Pragmatist tradition.

At the same time, we make special note of the location of our conference – in Chicago, and our Dewey Lecturer, Marilyn Fischer, from the University of Dayton. Fischer is the author of [\*Jane Addams's Evolutionary Theorizing: Constructing 'Democracy and Social Ethics'\*](#) (2019), [\*On Addams\*](#) (2003), and co-editor

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of *Jane Addams and the Practice of Democracy* (2009). (See <https://american-philosophy.org/i-am-an-american-philosopher-interview-series/i-am-an-american-philosopher-marilyn-fischer/>). Following on the heels of last year's Presidential Panel on border justice, we are bringing together emerging Chicago artists -- immigrant and first generation -- with scholars as they express, represent, and analyze the arts through Addams' lens of social action (as well as the Deweyan view of *Art as Experience*). Proposals aligned with these issues are especially welcome.

*Read on here for our rationale for choosing the conference theme. [See below](#) for information about proposal submission.*

## **The Arts as a Site of Social Reconstruction in Pluralist Societies**

In Hull House, Jane Addams provided perhaps the greatest living example of the Pragmatist vision of democracy as a form of associated living in which experiences conjoined through art, science, and neighborly conversation provided the basis for continuous social reform.

Again and again in *Twenty Years at Hull House*, Addams theorizes the role of the arts—considered expansively to include not only painting, music, and theater, but also weaving, basketry, and woodcarving—in helping immigrant communities create bridges. These bridges were being built not only between the old country and the new, but between parents and their American-born children, and between foreign-born and native-born Americans.

As was the case for Dewey, Addams approached the question of art through the framework of experience. Addams theorizes the arts as a space in which to reconstruct personal histories—as a space in which immigrants can put the harsh and oppressive conditions of industrial Chicago in a new light. In the vaudeville theaters and nickelodeons along Halstead Street, experience was recast into a false light and miseducation—indeed, the many stories of personal tragedy and ruin that fill the pages of *Twenty Years at Hull House*—was the result. By contrast, the arts preserved, created, and re-created by immigrant communities themselves tended towards the genuine reconstruction of experience in ways that provided a sense of hope, feelings of expanding social solidarity, and pathways for future growth.

As one example, Addams noted how the “Lithuanians, the Poles, and other Russian subjects often use the Hull-House stage to present plays in their own tongue, which

shall at one and the same time keep alive their sense of participation in the great Russian revolution and relieve their feelings in regard to it.”

Likewise, Hull House’s Labor Museum was a site in which the history of the industrial arts was put alongside attempts to sustain their continued relevance and practice. Recalling Dewey’s attempt to create a school curriculum organized around the occupations, Addams documents how: “The textile museum is connected directly with the basket weaving, sewing, millinery, embroidery, and dressmaking constantly being taught at Hull-House, and so far as possible with the other educational departments; we have also been able to make a collection of products, of early implements, and of photographs which are full of suggestion. Yet far beyond its direct educational value, we prize it because it so often puts the immigrants into the position of teachers, and we imagine that it affords them a pleasant change from the tutelage in which all Americans, including their own children, are so apt to hold them.”

Richard Siegesmund has noted how Addams “believed that the arts were not a set of skills to be acquired through training, but a set of experiences that opened the imagination to our relationship with the world.” Addams realized a vision of democratic life in Hull House, living, working, and learning alongside her immigrant neighbors. Through the arts, Addams was able to partake in their experiences in ways that made her a better neighbor. For the John Dewey Society’s 2023 annual meeting, as we return to the city of Addams’ work, we hope to revisit this vision.

## Submissions

Accepted submissions will also be considered for publication in one of the journals sponsored by the John Dewey Society, including *Education & Culture*, the *Journal of School & Society*, and *Dewey Studies*. **In addition, presented papers will be eligible for consideration for the inaugural JDS/Educational Theory Outstanding Paper Award (details on the [JDS website](#)). That Award carries with it a \$500 prize, with publication (after review) of the paper in *Educational Theory*.**

[How to Submit](#)

Learn more at: <https://www.johndeweyociety.org/>

Submit all proposals via email with an attachment as a Word document. All proposals are due by midnight EST, December 1, 2022, via email to Barbara Stengel, John Dewey Society President-Elect, Professor Emerita, Vanderbilt University, [barbara.stengel@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:barbara.stengel@vanderbilt.edu). Any questions should be directed to Barb. Proposals accepted for presentation will be notified no later than January 5, 2023. Full papers will be due by February 15, 2023 for the discussants to prepare remarks.

### Proposal Guidelines

#### Part 1

Using the subject line, “JDS Proposal,” send an email to [barbara.stengel@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:barbara.stengel@vanderbilt.edu) with the following information **included in the body of the message:**

- (1.) The title of your paper
- (2.) Your name, title, and institutional affiliation (if any)
- (3.) Your address, phone, and email address
- (4.) An abstract of up to 100 words
- (5.) The status of your JDS membership (current member, interested in joining, needs more information, etc.)
- (6.) Are you a graduate student who is interested in being considered for the John Dewey Society Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award?

#### Part 2

*Attach a Word document to your email.* That document should have all identifying information removed for anonymous review. In that Word document, please provide the following:

- (1.) The title of your paper
- (2.) A descriptive summary of your paper (maximum length 1000 words), explaining your paper and its significance. List several references to place your contribution in the broader scholarly conversation.

**Thank you for your interest in progressive education, social amelioration, and the pragmatist philosophy of John Dewey!**

**Please note:** *The John Dewey Society is striving to make this conference an inclusive and accessible environment. If you would like to request accommodations or have questions about accessibility features of the facility, please contact Barbara Stengel, JDS President-Elect, at [barbara.stengel@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:barbara.stengel@vanderbilt.edu), in advance of your participation. Requests for Sign Language interpreters and/or CART providers should be made at least two weeks in advance, if possible.*