Date: April 23, 2021
SFMOMA, 151 3rd St, San Francisco, CA 94103

Submissions Due: February 11, 2022

Some forty rough hewn marble sculptures by Michelangelo line the walls of the Galleria dell'Academia in Florence. Known today as the Hall of Prisoners, the sculptures were meant to decorate the tomb of Pope Julius II at the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome, but the project stalled for financial reasons and by the time of Michelangelo’s death, remained unfinished. These abandoned sculptures stand as exemplary cases of the non finito, or unfinished work of art. First mobilized as a term in the Renaissance, non finito has become an important concept both within and outside of the Western canon. Examples of such incomplete artworks litter the trajectory of modernism into the contemporary period: we may think of the infinite mathematical permutations inscribed by Hanne Darboven, or Gedi Sibony’s deconstructed installation work as two of many examples that engage ideas of incompleteness, fragmentation, and the processual.

Central to the understanding of the non finito is the question of intent: the discrepancy between works deliberately left unfinished and those that remain incomplete due to political, social, and aesthetic circumstances. The non finito poses salient questions for art historians, artists, curators, and viewers alike and challenges notions of telos and temporality, labor and value, and techniques of appreciation and assessment.

Situating these questions within the disciplines of art history, art practice, and visual culture, the 2022 Berkeley-Stanford Symposium: Work in Progress, invites participants to draw connections between the unfinished, unmade, and the yet-to-be uncovered. This is an opportunity to think critically about how social and political ruptures—across histories and geographies, and within our contemporary moment—have fractured the logic of linear progress and reveal new aesthetic potentials.

We invite participants to propose paper presentations across a range of specializations, from ancient to contemporary art, addressing topics that may include but are certainly not limited to: materiality and objecthood; display and presentation; reception studies; historiography; speculative and erstwhile architecture; and instances of circulation and exile.

Please note that this symposium will be held in-person at SFMOMA on April 23, 2022, COVID-19 conditions permitting.

We welcome abstracts of no longer than 250 words by February 11, 2022. Presentations should not exceed 15 minutes. We will reserve time for discussion at the end of each panel. The symposium is open to scholars and graduate students in any discipline, as well as artists, critics, and curators. In addition to the abstract, please also submit:

- A participant bio
- A description of any necessary support and technical needs you may have beyond a standard microphone

All materials must be submitted via e-mail to berkeleystanford2022@gmail.com no later than Friday, February 11, 2022. Please address all questions and concerns to the conference organizers via email.