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”Thanks, but no thanks”.

**An experimental session on how recurrent failures make us successful anyway,
and vice versa.**

The academic job market keeps getting tighter for historians (see recent AHA job reports) and failure is one of the few certainties in our academic lives. From early career positions' rejections – 95% failure rate of ERC grants and about 15% success rate of Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowship programmes – to the constant struggles with journal peer reviewers, the specter and the reality of fiascos are life-long travel companions of any researcher. Healing and overcoming the sense of academic failure is high in several universities' agenda, especially in the UK, and this means that we are addressing much more than a personal status.

Surprisingly enough, failures are often invisible and we give others the impression that most things work out for us. Our CVs and our institutional introductions do not reflect the bulk of our academic efforts — they do not mention failed exams, unsuccessful PhD or fellowship applications, or papers never accepted for publication. At conferences, we talk about the one project that worked, not about the many that failed.

To try to reverse such a trend, with this experimental session we invite young and established scholars to “kill our darlings”, our glittered as much as rare successes; to “stay with the failure” and write the blank lines of our Cv, share our beloved and never selected research project.

But also success in nowadays academia happens at the expenses of something else. We are always searching for a brand-new concept while being interested in practices, for pushing forward the boundaries of a research field or even establishing a new discipline while campaigning for multi/trans/post-disciplinary approaches. We long for a project to be granted rather than for a grant for our project.

Personal stories about failures – due both to rejection and to selection – on the academic job market reminds us that failure isn't a reflection of who we are as persons and might

inspire ourselves or a colleague to shake off a rejection and start again.

Join us if you do not mind to share your three-minute story of academic failure (possibly in a funny, ironic and constructive way) and methods that have helped you deal with a frustrated yourself and academic pressure.

Do we need to feel ashamed of ourselves for our micro- and macro academic disasters, professional dismay and personal failure? Do we need to hide and dismiss our divergent personal and professional trajectories in order to fulfill and nurture an abstract model of scholar? “Thanks, but no thanks”.

Those participants have confirmed their presence: