

## Renaissance Portraiture: Identity in Written Words (RSA, Washington 2012)

Washington, DC, Mar 22–24, 2012

Registration deadline: May 8, 2011

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CFP - Renaissance Society of America, Washington, DC, March 22-24, 2012

### RENAISSANCE PORTRAITURE: IDENTITY IN WRITTEN WORDS

The Renaissance portrait, one of the most important of the period's revivals of antique types of art, truly embodied the human-centered ethical system of the time. Portraits were conceived of as an expression of self-consciousness and self-assertion, as a way to legitimize the centrality of the individual both within contemporary society and in the broader context of history. The purpose of this session is to examine to what extent the "written word," in the form of poetry, prose, mottoes, and inscriptions, assisted the visual forms in the definition of the self, within and beyond the customary terms of the paragone. Although the function of portraiture was to immortalize somebody's likeness and to guarantee him/her eternal fame and recognition, too often the biographical identity of the sitter remains anonymous, erased from collective memory over time. In such cases, the "written word" offers a valuable tool of investigation, supporting and complementing the materials provided by visual evidence. It also proves the complexity of the issue of identity, a concept that cannot be fully explained in terms of an unequivocal association between likeness and name, but involves social, political, and cultural mechanisms sometimes better explained in words

Jointly organized by Eveline Baseggio and Sarah Blake McHam

Send 150 word abstracts and a c.v. to Eveline Baseggio

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#### Reference:

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