

Session at Historians of Netherlandish Art Conference (Ghent, 24–26 May 2018)

HNA Conference, Ghent

Deadline: May 31, 2017

H-ArtHist Redaktion

Call for papers received:

Pevsner's Blind Spots. Organization and Representation of Art Academies in the Northern and Southern Netherlands

Organizers:

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Nicolaus Pevsner's *Academies of Art. Past and Present* was first published in 1940. Without a doubt, his *Academies* is still a standard reference work. Nevertheless, it consolidated the alleged incompatibility of the Netherlandish and the French / Italian art system and hereby created a gap and hierarchy between the different art academies still recognizable in recent research. Pevsner's largely idealized description of the French Academy was already in contrast to the situation in Antwerp. But above all, the Northern Netherlands appear to be diametrically opposed to this ideal. Pevsner exemplified his concept based on the artists Rembrandt and Charles LeBrun and regarded the Dutch group of buyers as characterized by a less developed tradition in matters of art collecting as well as a less trained ability to judge art and as having a much simpler taste. This, according to Pevsner, had damaging consequences: To satisfy the taste of these amateurs on a shapeless anonymous art market the Netherlandish artists were often forced to produce a huge amount of paintings of low quality.

Interdisciplinary approaches in various fields of research – e.g. the examination of statutes and ordinances of the different guilds and academies or prosopographical analysis of the members of the Saint Luke's guilds (Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp) – have helped to revise this one-sided image of Netherlandish academies in recent years. Nevertheless, major desiderata still exist, e.g. regarding a historically appropriate terminology: A more precise definition of the different types of academies, brotherhoods, confraternities and guilds is still lacking. Scholars have suggested the concept of an „informal art academy“ or „drawing school“, as, among others, Hessel Miedema recommended instead of using the term „academy“

The session seeks to analyse Pevsner's ‚legacy‘ or, better, his ‚blind spots‘ of academies within the geography of Northern Art and aims at paving the way for an examination of the organization, training and networking of Northern artists in a comparative analysis. We try to examine the artistic processes of exchange without overestimating the ideal of the French academy as the only his-

torically valuable template for the concept of academia. Besides terminological questions the session aims to discuss the role of artists within Dutch and Flemish „academies“. How can the artistic contribution (allegorical visualizations; decorative programs) to the different academic spaces of art (meeting halls, ephemeral art on processions, ceremonial acts or a blijde incomst) be defined? Gender topics, e.g. the exclusion and inclusion of female members in Netherlandish and Flemish academies compared to those in Germany or France, also ties in with essential research objectives. Which artists were „border crossers“ between guilds and academies (e.g. artists in Den Haag)? How did this situation influence their work and in which cities did the academies emerge out of the guild of Saint Luke (e.g. Antwerp)? And yet another topic has also been underestimated so far: How far can the written or painted self- portrayal of the artist as a member of the academy or of a rederijkerskamer affiliated with this organization be interpreted as a conscious act of self-academization?

We invite scholars to submit abstracts in English of max. 250 words and a short cv (100 words) no later than May 31 2017 to

nils.buettner@abk-stuttgart.de and bmuench@uni-bonn.de. If you submit a proposal to more than one session, you should notify the chairs in advance. Only papers that are unpublished will be considered.

Speakers must be HNA members at the time of the conference.

The conference language will be English.

Reference:

CFP: Session at Historians of Netherlandish Art Conference (Ghent, 24-26 May 2018). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 17, 2017 (accessed Jul 13, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/15264>>.