

## Session at RSA (New Orleans, 22–24 Mar 18)

New Orleans, USA, Mar 22–24, 2018

Deadline: Jun 4, 2017

H-ArtHist Redaktion

64th Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America, New Orleans

[1] From: Maggie Crosland <maggie.crosland@courtauld.ac.uk>

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Subject: CFP: Following the Paper Trail? Complexities, Implications and Problems in Interpreting Primary Sources for Artistic Production

Renaissance Society of America, March 22 - 24, 2018

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Session:

Following the Paper Trail? Complexities, Implications and Problems in Interpreting Primary Sources for Artistic Production, Renaissance Society of America, 22 to 24 March 2018, New Orleans

Organised by: Maggie Crosland, Saida Bondini and Costanza Beltrami, PhD Candidates, The Courtauld Institute of Art

As (art) historians we often use documents as evidence. Indeed, what could offer us more direct information about an object, artwork or building than the records of the material used to construct it, or the payments for its labour?

And yet, the mechanisms through which uniquely useful documents such as inventories, contracts and payment accounts are produced are not always transparent. In fact, these are formulaic documents written within tight conventions, for specific economic or legal ends. In this session, we aim to investigate how these records came to be, how they relate to the objects they purportedly explain and how they influence our perception, analysis and conclusions on the past and its relics.

In proposing this session, we are interested in uncovering what documents hide. For example, a contract must often be the final product of a long and multiple discussion. As such, this document reduces the interaction of several people – masters, family members, advisors, apprentices etc. to the legal agreement between just two, effacing all the other voices as well as the temporal dimension of reflection, creation, and changes of mind.

A goal of this session is to provide a platform through which scholars of different media and geographic location can discuss the complexities and implications of relying on and using primary

documents. As such, we are interested in paper proposals that engage with such documents from a range of standpoints.

Suggested topics include:

- The temporal and plural vision of the past as hidden or revealed through documents
  - Establishing patron-artist networks through primary sources
  - Implications of agency and patronage
  - The bureaucratic nature of artist contracts and payment accounts
  - Missing conversations – how to look beyond the one-to-one relationship suggested by contracts and payment accounts
  - Reconstructing the lost/missing archive
  - Early modern and modern historiography on the use of primary sources
  - What information remains hidden in the archive, and what is published and promoted instead?
- What does this tell us about our changing perception and efforts to shape the past?

To be considered for our panel, please email [costanza.beltrami@courtauld.ac.uk](mailto:costanza.beltrami@courtauld.ac.uk) with:

- The title of your proposed paper (15-word maximum)
- Abstract (150-word maximum)
- 5 keywords
- A very brief curriculum vitae (300-word maximum), formatted to the RSA's standards.

Please note that the deadline for applications is June 4, 2017.

Reference:

CFP: Session at RSA (New Orleans, 22-24 Mar 18). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 1, 2017 (accessed Jul 13, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/15685>>.