

European Painted Cloths C14th-C21st (London, 15-16 Jun 2012)

The Courtauld Institute of Art, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN, Jun 15-16, 2012

Deadline: Aug 5, 2011

Ingrid Guiot

European Painted Cloths C14th-C21st
Pageantry, Ceremony, Theatre and the Domestic Interior

This two day conference will explore the use of painted cloths in religious ceremony, pageantry, domestic interiors and scenic art. It will focus on their change of context and significance from the fourteenth to the twenty-first century exploring their different function, materials, and method of creation.

The potential for large sizes, portability, and versatility for religious objects including banners, hangings, altarpieces, and palls was the impetus for the emergence of fabrics as a painting support in Western art in the Middle Ages. The demand for elaborate altarpieces, church furnishings, and liturgical objects increased in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries due to changes to liturgical practice and an upsurge of religious fervour. The functionality of the works explains the survival of relatively few examples. Were paintings on fabric envisaged as ephemeral objects? There is evidence to the contrary. One of the most common forms of interior decoration for centuries, painted cloths have received less attention from art historians and historians than they deserve in part due to their poor survival. Often regarded as cheap substitutes for those who could not afford tapestries, their function has been oversimplified and their importance in providing imagery as well as literary subjects has been underrated.

Scenic backcloths were once commissioned for court functions, part of an elaborate display of royal power and magnificence, such as the Field of the Cloth of Gold. The same methods and materials continued to be used for theatrical cloths. The nineteenth and twentieth century saw a resurgence in interest in the art form, as established artists, among them Burne-Jones, Rossetti, Picasso and later Piper, Hockney and Caulfield, took up commissions for the theatre and ballet.

The conference, to be held at The Courtauld Institute of Art, will be run in collaboration with the Victoria & Albert Museum. Presentations by four keynote speakers will reflect the aim of the conference to bring together and foster interdisciplinary research between art and interiors historians, paintings and textile conservators.

Both abstracts, and papers submitted for the subsequent publication (Archetype publications), will go through peer review by a committee which consists of art historians, and conservators.

Submissions should not have been presented and/or published elsewhere before the date of the conference.

Deadline for abstract: 5th August 2011

Deadline for paper submission: 16th June 2012

Please send the abstract as a word document (maximum 250 words not including title and authors details) by 5th August 2011 to paintedcloths@courtauld.ac.uk

Organised by Christina Young (The Courtauld Institute of Art) and Nicola Costaras (Victoria & Albert Museum)

Reference:

CFP: European Painted Cloths C14th-C21st (London, 15-16 Jun 2012). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 25, 2011 (accessed May 3, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/1594>>.