Art and Ideas on the Move (London, 25 May 18)

The Courtauld Institute of Art, London, May 25, 2018
Deadline: Jan 8, 2018

Emily Markham

Renaissance Postgraduate Symposium - Art and Ideas on the Move (1400-1600)

'[H]e who changes his country or place of habitation seems to change his nature, talents, character, and personal habits, insomuch that sometimes he seems to be not the same man but another, and all dazed and stupefied' (Giorgio Vasari on Rosso Fiorentino, trans. Gaston du C. Vere (1909))

In tracing the patterns of movement of people in and through different geographic regions – whether as merchants, pilgrims, scholars, soldiers, vagrants or the like – the highly mobile nature of many communities from the medieval to the early modern period has come to the fore in recent scholarship with particular clarity. As part of this scholarly trend, art historians have increasingly adopted the term 'mobility' as a byword for the study of the cultural effects of not only the migration of people (most notably artists and patrons) but also the concomitant flow between different geographic locales of images, objects, artefacts, materials, techniques and ideas.

This symposium seeks to explore how modern perceptions of artistic practice and visual experience in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have been, and continue to be, remapped according to this new academic topos of movement, restlessness and itinerancy. As a central part of this discussion, participants are encouraged to ask what sits behind the label of 'mobility'? Does the study of migration and movement simply reformulate age-old art-historical concerns or does it offer a new and profitable avenue for exploring the interplay between notions of artistic exchange, stylistic development and, above all, regional or cultural identity? Is it possible to explore the nature of artistic encounter within (or indeed without) Europe in these terms or is this question rooted in, and bound by, the very notions of cultural coherence and geographic fixity that the study of mobility challenges?

Applicants to the conference are invited to investigate the theme of artistic, visual and cultural mobility in the period 1400 to 1600 in the 'European' context. Papers will be welcomed that relate to any degree of physical or conceptual foreignness, from movement between neighbourhoods, workshops, cities or geographic regions to interdisciplinary encounters. Applicants are particularly encouraged to reflect on the validity of the term 'mobility' and the methodological and semantic implications of its use in art-historical scholarship and enquiry. Papers are invited on topics including but not limited to:

- The impact of the travel and migration of artists, patrons, merchants, collectors or other intermediaries and parties involved in the commission, production or reception of artworks

- The movement, circulation and displacement of artworks, objects and artefacts
- The interplay between the visual arts and other disciplines as a facet of epistemic exchange
- The impact of geographic exploration, scientific discovery and expanding horizons on the visual or built environment
- The status of certain climes or sites – whether geographic, institutional or conceptual – as particular crossroads for artistic and cultural encounter, exchange or confrontation
- The visual representation and iconography of movement and travel, whether real or imagined
- The contrary implications of stasis and immobility
- 'Dazed and stupefied': the historiography of artistic migration, cultural exchange and competing notions of stylistic contamination, appropriation, dissemination or emulation
- How the discourse of cross-cultural encounter, foreignness and otherness may have structured, problematised and challenged historical perceptions of the 'Renaissance' in Europe and its visual arts
- Movement without end: the cultural afterlife or after-motion of artefacts 'from' the relevant timeframe and the impact of this on more modern assessments of the period

Papers should be from emerging scholars and researchers (such as PhD students and early career academics) and preference will be given to candidates that present unpublished material. Proposals of no more than 350 words should be submitted together with a short CV to emily.markham@courtauld.ac.uk and peter.crack@courtauld.ac.uk by 8 January 2018. Successful candidates will be notified by 22 January 2018. Papers should not exceed 20 minutes in length. We hope to be able to provide some subsidy for travel and accommodation.

Reference:

CFP: Art and Ideas on the Move (London, 25 May 18). In: ArtHist.net, Dec 9, 2017 (accessed Nov 23, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/16939>.