

## Robert Klein (Florence, 8–9 Nov 18)

Florence, Italy, Nov 8–09, 2018

Ingrid Greenfield

Robert Klein, Art Historian and Philosopher

Organized by Alina Payne (Villa I Tatti – The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies), Alessandro Nova (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz Max-Planck-Institut), and Jérémie Koering (Centre André Chastel)

In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Robert Klein (1918-2018), this conference will bring together scholars to reconsider the published and unpublished works of one of the most erudite and inventive art historians of the twentieth century. At stake is the question of defining Klein's historiographical, critical, and theoretical positioning, as well as his contribution to the history of art and philosophy.

To date, no sustained study has yet been dedicated to Klein and his work, in part due to his tragic death in Florence in 1967, and the subsequent disappearance of a large part of his manuscripts (including his work on *ars and technè* from Plato to Giordano Bruno, his thesis on the aesthetics of *technè* in the sixteenth century, his study of the so-called Mantegna Tarocchi, and an essay on responsibility). The rediscovery of Klein's unpublished papers, donated to the library of the INHA in 2013, document his contribution to the redefinition of the discipline of art history and invite a reconsideration of his work. As the recent publication of his thesis *L'esthétique de la technè* (INHA, 2017) has shown, Klein undertook in particular to rethink Renaissance art and its history, bringing to bear the Aristotelian notion of *technè* and offering a vision of Renaissance artistic production quite different from the Neoplatonic ideals to which it is often linked. This conference will shed more light on these investigations as well as on the intellectual journey of an important art historian and philosopher of the past century.

Thursday, November 8 – Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies

### PROGRAM

#### Introduction

10.30 Welcome coffee

10.45 Alina Payne (Villa I Tatti/Harvard University)

Welcome and introduction

#### Session 1 – Klein in History

Chair: Carlo Ginzburg (UCLA/Università di Bologna)

11.00. Henri Zerner (Harvard University)

Some remarks on the man Robert Klein

11.30 Jérémie Koering (Centre André Chastel/Sorbonne Université)

Robert Klein, intellectual wanderings

12.00 Alessandra Russo (Columbia University)

Universal ingenium. The artist's new world in the 16th century

12.30 Discussion

13.00 Buffet lunch

Session 2 – At the Crossroads

Chair: Alina Payne (Villa I Tatti/Harvard University)

14.30 Maria Loh (CUNY, Hunter College)

The author as spirito peregrino

15.00 Yve-Alain Bois (Institute for Advanced Study)

Klein's response to modern art

15.30 Discussion

15.45 Coffee

Session 3 – Klein and Images

Chair: Ingrid Greenfield (Villa I Tatti)

16.00 Antonella Fenech (Centre André Chastel/Sorbonne Université)

Klein e i Tarocchi di Mantegna

16.30 Sabine Guermouche (EHESS)

Robert Klein and the "Warburgian" legacy

17.00 Discussion

17.30 Tea

Friday, November 9 – Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz

10.00 Alessandro Nova (KHI)

Welcome

Session 4 – On Mannerism and Art Theory of the Cinquecento

Chair: Fabian Jonietz (KHI)

10.00 Massimiliano Rossi (Università di Salerno)

Decline of the Arts and Apogee of Criticism: Late sixteenth-century Italian treatises in Klein's thought

10.45 Coffee

11.00 Patricia Falguières (EHESS)  
Klein's Lomazzo

11.30 Marco Ruffini (Sapienza Università di Roma)  
Robert Klein e il problema del gusto

12.00 Discussion

13.00 Cold buffet lunch for presenters

Session 5 – Klein, Philosophy and Ethics

Chair: Nicholas Terpstra (University of Toronto /Villa I Tatti)

14.30 Stéphane Toussaint (CNRS, LEM)  
Klein, Ficino e il platonismo

15.00 Emanuele Coccia (EHESS)

Responsibility between Theology and Law. An analysis of Klein's Essai sur la responsabilité

15.30 Coffee

Session 6 – Art Theory and Politics

Chair: Carlo Severi (EHESS)

15.45 Carlo Ginzburg (UCLA)

Technè and its Implications: A political approach to paragone

16.15 Alessandro Nova (KHI)

Stile e iconografia: Robert Klein e il Sogno di Raffaello di Marcantonio Raimondi

16.45 Discussion and Conclusion

This Conference is organized in partnership with the INHA.

Reference:

CONF: Robert Klein (Florence, 8-9 Nov 18). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 24, 2018 (accessed Apr 12, 2026),

<<https://arthist.net/archive/19330>>.