New Sculptors, Old Masters (Leeds, 8 Mar 19)

Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, Mar 08, 2019
Deadline: Nov 30, 2018

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New Sculptors, Old Masters: The Victorian Renaissance of Italian Sculpture

In his 1862 catalogue of the Italian Sculpture collection at the South Kensington Museum, curator John Charles Robinson (1824-1913) claimed:

"It never occurred to the artist of the revival to think architectural ornamentation beneath his dignity; on the contrary, the greatest sculptors have left us specimens of their genius in this branch … surely, where these great artists have so gladly trod no modern craftsman need disdain to follow. "

The collection of Italian Renaissance sculpture at South Kensington presented the Victorian viewer with a wide range of objects in diverse materials and vital colours, often with decorative functions: there were glazed terracottas, painted plasters and sculptures in wood, wax and black slate in sizes ranging from the colossal to the miniature. South Kensington's broad presentation of the sculpture category promoted the Museum's focus on the applied arts and the great Italian Renaissance sculptors therein were described as artists, architects and artisans who turned their talents to decorative sculpture in multiple materials.

Responding to a current exhibition in San Francisco, Truth and Beauty: The Pre-Raphaelites and the Old Masters (Legion of Honor, San Francisco, 30 June - 30 September 2018) and the recent publication of Elizabeth Prettejohn's Modern Painters, Old Masters (New Haven: Yale UP, 2017), which concentrated on Victorian painters and the reception of early Italian Renaissance painting at institutions such as the National Gallery, New Sculptors, Old Masters will highlight the productive sculptural response in the Victorian period to Italian Renaissance works in British collections.

The workshop will explore how nineteenth-century sculptors and critics directly encountered Italian Renaissance sculpture, in its broadest sense, through public and private collecting in Britain as well as travel on the Continent. How did encounters with a diverse range of Italian sculptural objects contribute to the developing mythologies of Italian sculptors in the nineteenth century? How did these encounters inspire Italian Renaissance receptions more broadly, both artistic and scholarly? How did they affect the perceived understanding of the term 'Renaissance' and its geographical, cultural and chronological boundaries? What impact did this have on modern sculpture practice?

We invite proposals for twenty-minute papers from postgraduate students, early career researchers and established academics on, but not limited to, the following topics:

- Scholarly and artistic receptions of Italian sculptural objects in the long nineteenth century
- Direct encounters with Italian objects in Britain and Italy
- Curating Italian Renaissance objects in the Victorian Museum
- Italian sculpture in public and private collections
- Artists as collectors of Italian objects/Italian objects in the sculptor's studio
- The changing mythologies of Renaissance sculptors in the long nineteenth century
- Images/biographies of Italian sculptors in the nineteenth century
- Italian Renaissance sculptors and the New Sculpture/Arts and Crafts movement
- Italian objects used as teaching aids in the National Art Training Schools
- The relationship between sculpture and architecture

To submit a proposal, please following this link: https://www.henry-moore.org/research/opportunities/call-for-papers/new-sculptors-old-masters

Reference:

CFP: New Sculptors, Old Masters (Leeds, 8 Mar 19). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 26, 2018 (accessed Nov 21, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/19631>.