5 Sessions at RSA (Philadelphia, 2-4 Apr 2020)

Renaissance Society of America Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, Apr 2–04, 2020

ArtHist Redaktion

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[1] Early Modern Intermediality: The Bel Composto Reconsidered

From: Rachel Miller
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Multimedia artworks and installations, as well as the concept of intermediality, have long held a prominent place in modern and contemporary art and criticism. When considered within the early modern frame, these concepts are most closely associated with seventeenth-century art, and specifically with Bernini and the bel composto. This session addresses the concept of intermediality and the “fusion of the arts” in the early modern period. We invite papers that investigate the relationship between modes and materials within the multi-component art “installation,” artists working across media and fusing different types of media, and the questions which arise regarding the design, production and function(s) of such works. Topics should be situated within the time frame of roughly 1300 to 1700, and can focus on a single region or several regions; can examine a single work or installation, ephemeral, permanent, or both; and can address a single artist or several artists. Given that many works have complex and even inter-regional patronage and production histories, what qualifies a bel composto? Is it something designed or premeditated, or can it be something which occurs through happenstance? Papers can address, but need not be confined to, any or all of the following:

- Is it possible to identify when intermedial or multimedial art practice begins, and with which works?
- How do such works function within sacred or secular contexts?
- What is the role of the viewer within the multi-component system?
- What does a “fusion of the arts” bring to bear on the paragone, the visual arts as traditionally understood?
- What are the respective roles of architecture, painting, and sculpture within such works?
- How do these works make use of space and light?
- How do ephemeral and permanent modes of art production relate to each other within the intermedial context?
- How do we address the issue of intentionality: what happens, for example, when a multimedia work is produced more by “accident” than by design?

- How does the global turn in the study of early modern art change our approaches to multi-component works of art, especially in circumstances when each component was created in a different region, or even continent?
- Is there really such as thing as the bel composto?

Please send the following to Andrew Horn (Andrew.Horn@ed.ac.uk) and Rachel Miller (Rachel.miller@c-sus.edu) by July 18, 2019:

- Title (15-word maximum)
- Abstract (150-word maximum)
- Keywords
- Shortened CV including name, current affiliation, email address, and PhD completion date (5-page maximum)

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[2] Lost Works of Art in Print

From: Claudia Echinger-Maurach
echinger@uni-muenster.de

Panel sponsored by the Association of Print Scholars

Organizers: Claudia Echinger-Maurach/Anne Bloemacher, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster

Considering the comprehensive literature on works of art lost during World War II, the absence of scholarship on lost paintings, sculptures and architecture from the Renaissance with special regard to their “preservation” in print is astounding. Prints play a significant role for our knowledge of lost art, yet all too often prints have been used as mere “documents” of such objects. As works of art in their own right, they show us the “contemporary eye” and very often, they offer “alternative facts”. The analysis of lost works of art in print opens a great variety of questions: How close comes the print to the original, how much did the draughtsman, who prepared the drawing for the print, or the engraver himself alter, leave out or add to the original? Are there different approaches to the task of “reproducing” in the North or the South? Can one observe different attitudes to render paintings, sculptures or architecture in print in the long run of the Renaissance? This session aims to clarify these aspects, especially to show the double face of preserving the work of art and to produce a new one through line, light and shade, but also (sometimes) through observing nature in a more intense way and in creating a convincing ensemble, fusing the style of the depicted work of art with the style of the engraver.

Scholars of art history are kindly invited to send their proposal to the organizers Anne Bloemacher (anne-bloemacher@uni-muenster.de) and Claudia Echinger-Maurach (echinger@uni-muenster.de) before Tuesday, July 16.

Your email should include the following:
- Full name, current affiliation; if applicable, preferred email address, and PhD completion date (past or expected)
- Paper title (15-word maximum)
- Abstract (150-word maximum) with 3-5 keywords listed below
- A short CV (300 word maximum)
- Any audio/visual requirements

Please note: Speakers must become RSA members by November 1st to speak at the conference.

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[3] The Image of the Book: 1300–1600

From: Nicholas Herman
hermanni@upenn.edu

How did artistic representations of the book convey meaning during the period of technological transition from manuscript to print? How can a two- or three-dimensional image of a codex or early printed edition—be it shown open, closed, thumbed, crumpled, clutched, manipulated, shrouded, overturned, splayed, stomped, balanced or burnt—convey the rich and extended linguistic content of a bound volume? How did painters, sculptors, illuminators, embroiderers, draughtsmen, glaziers, and printmakers engage with the medium of the book, both as a related artistic object and as a vehicle for conveying dense, textual meanings?

Representations of the book can be analyzed from a range of perspectives and disciplines in order to better understand specific bookbindings or scripts, the history of reading and literary practices, the development of liturgy, the rise of personal devotion, the maintenance and display of private and institutional libraries, the advent of printing, changes in religious iconography, and more. But the study of such images can also allow for deeper readings of the symbolic and metaphorical capabilities of representation, the ability of an image to “speak a thousand words,” and the relative merits of verbal versus visual communication.

This session seeks to assemble speakers who will address the depiction of books in painting, sculpture, print, and other art forms from one or more of these angles, with an eye towards understanding images as mediated signs as opposed to transparent representations of “real” objects and practices.

The session will be held in conjunction with the Books as Symbols in Renaissance Art (BASIRA) Project, currently being developed to enable a high-quality, searchable scholarly database of such representations.

Please submit a paper title, 150-word paper abstract, and CV, to both organizers listed below by August 10th, 2019.

Organizers:

Nicholas Herman
Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies, University of Pennsylvania
hermanni@upenn.edu

Barbara Williams Ellertson
BASIRA Project
basirabew@gmail.com

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[4] The Mock (Paradoxical, Ironic) Encomium and the Visual Arts

From: Gail Feigenbaum
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A distinct rhetorical genre in praise of things that are unworthy or trifling, the mock encomium was well

and widely known in early modern Europe. There is ample scholarship on its literary manifestations and its use by prominent writers such as Erasmus and Rabelais. Painters, sculptors and even architects found inspiration in the mock encomium, transmuting a literary genre into visual forms. Scholars are coming to recognize the broader significance of the device for art on both sides of the Alps, as for example in “burlesque” paintings of market or peasant scenes. When looked for, the mock encomium emerges surprisingly often in works of art in the Long Renaissance, and offers an important interpretive key.

We welcome papers that explore the paradoxical encomium in all forms of visual art.

Chairs: Gail Feigenbaum, Getty Research Institute, and David Levine, Southern Connecticut State University

Please include title and an abstract (no longer than 150 words), up to 5 keywords, and your short CV.

Send to: gfeigenbaum@getty.edu and levined1@gmail.com
Deadline: July 20, 2019

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[5] Exhibiting Art before the Salon: The Makings of a Practice in Early Modern Europe

From: Robert Brennan
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While art exhibitions play an increasingly important role in recent studies of modern and contemporary art, the long-term history of the exhibition has received relatively little scholarly attention. Standard histories of the art exhibition begin with the foundation of the Paris Salon, often presented as an institution linked with the liberalization of the arts and the emergence of art criticism in the 18th century. Yet Francis Haskell, Georg Friedrich Koch, and others have located many crucial precedents in earlier centuries, while Thomas Crow has shown how the complex dynamics of exhibiting art in Ancien Régime society extended across many different arenas of public life. Building on their work, this panel explores what it would mean to expand the early history of the exhibition beyond the Salon.

Such an expansion gives rise to many methodological questions. Is it really possible to distinguish the "art exhibition" from the great panoply of circumstances in which early modern art was displayed in public, from shop fronts and markets to court ceremonies and liturgical festivals? How did the public display of canonical "artistic" media like painting and sculpture relate to the display of other specialty items, such as luxury goods, "exotic" imports, or recently unearthed antiquities? Did the traditional ritual and liturgical settings of art already at times perform certain functions of the art exhibition as we know it? To what extent does the function of an exhibition depend on its broader institutional setting, as for example when we distinguish the exhibitions of the early art academies from the presentation of a chef d'oeuvre in contemporary guilds? Do early modern primary sources have specific terms and concepts for "art exhibitions," and should we, as historians, refrain from discussing "exhibitions" until they do? When and how do exhibitions come to change the career path of early modern artists, as narrated, for example, in early modern artistic biographies? Is there a direct relationship between early exhibition practices and the emergence of new genres of art writing?

We welcome proposals for papers that address these or related issues in European art between the 14th and 18th centuries. Applications may be written in English, French, or Italian, and should include a proposal of no longer than 500 words along with a short bio-bibliography (10 lines).
Please send materials to Olivier Bonfait (olivier.bonfait@gmail.com) and Robert Brennan (robert.scott.bren-

nan@gmail.com) by August 6.

Reference:

CFP: 5 Sessions at RSA (Philadelphia, 2-4 Apr 2020). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 23, 2019 (accessed May 30, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/21094>.