

## 6 Sessions at RSA 2021 (Dublin, 7–10 Apr 21)

Renaissance Society of America 67th Annual Meeting, Dublin, Apr 7–10, 2021

ArtHist Redaktion

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- [6] “Otium cum dignitate”. Leisure and amusement of Early Modern elites

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[1] The Renaissance Cannon: Artillery between Art and Craft

From: Michael Waters, mw3114@columbia.edu

Date: Jun 17, 2020

Deadline: Jul 31, 2020

Organizers: Janna Israel (Wadsworth Atheneum) and Michael Waters (Columbia University)

The development of metal cannons, bombards, and other large ordnance during the Renaissance led to fundamental shifts across a variety of domains including artisanal and artistic practices, architectural and urban design, and military technologies and strategies of warfare. The particular requirements of artillery to accommodate the explosive capacity of gunpowder catapulted arms production into a unique artistic and socio-political realm, just as their destructive force shocked the early modern historians, artisans, politicians, and scholars who experienced these weapons first hand. However, as artillery were instrumentalized as icons of authority and military hegemony, their spectacular power and symbolic meaning were also tempered through the proliferation of drawings and treatises. On the space of the page, technical issues related to form, production, and use took precedence. In these ways, as well as through interdisciplinary craft practice, cannons entered into dialogue with other classes of objects that shared formal, material, and technical requirements. Recipes to cast artillery, for example, demonstrated the similarities between the manufacture of weaponry and other metal objects from bells to statuary. This session seeks papers that move beyond the specialized literature to explore the cannon as a point of interdisciplinary study across an increasingly interconnected globe. Potential areas of inquiry include: casting and fabrication processes, rhetoric that developed in response to the violent effects of weaponry, the aesthetics of artillery, the collecting of artillery during the Renaissance, and the relationship between arms, armory, fortresses, and human casualties.

Please email a title, abstract of 150 words, and a brief CV to Michael

Waters (mw3114@columbia.edu) and Janna Israel (janna@alum.mit.edu) by July 31, 2020. Include your full name, email address, and current affiliation.

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[\[2\]](#) Beyond Brunelleschi: Theories and Techniques of Non-Linear Perspective (1400-1650)

From: Megan Reddicks Pignataro, [megan.reddicks@temple.edu](mailto:megan.reddicks@temple.edu)

Date: Jun 17, 2020

Deadline: Jul 31, 2020

While linear perspective took center stage in the biographies and treatises of Brunelleschi, Alberti, and Vasari, Leonardo da Vinci named it as only one of four different types of perspective. The others— color, acuity, and aerial perspective— require thinking beyond geometric optics to the way shape, distance, separation, and contiguity are perceived. The subjects only appeared in written treatises after Leonardo's abridged treatise on painting began to circulate, but much of what he recommended appeared much earlier in practice.

This panel seeks to address the disparity in approaches to perspective in early modern Europe by exploring how artists understood and utilized non-linear perspective in their work, how these techniques were dispersed, and how they were conveyed in writing through treatises, letters, or documents.

We invite scholars to submit papers that deal with issues such as the following:

- Artist's engagement with optical treatises
- The limitations of linear perspective
- Depictions of light and color in the distance
- Relief sculpture and the depiction of distance
- Responses to Leonardo
- The rise of interest in aerial perspective in the early seventeenth century
- Transmission of non-linear perspective in a wider European context

Interested participants should send a paper title and abstract (150 words max) and a short CV to Dr. Janis Bell and Megan Reddicks Pignataro by July 31, 2020 to the following email address: [tug45184@temple.edu](mailto:tug45184@temple.edu). Additional information can be submitted in an optional cover letter.

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[\[3\]](#) Architecture for the Common Good

From: Nele De Raedt, [nele.deraedt@ugent.be](mailto:nele.deraedt@ugent.be)

Date: Jun 18, 2020

Deadline: Aug 1, 2020

During the recent health crisis, individuals across the globe have yielded to the intrusive politics of public authorities in the attempt to secure public health. Governing bodies highly controlled the movement and activities of their citizens, instructing them to stay at home, preventing them from meeting with friends and family members, sitting in parks, shopping and eating in restaurants. These intrusions on private liberties – and the questions they provoked from individuals as to accept them or not – brought back a central

theme of political theory: that of the common good.

Since antiquity, the idea of the common good has problematized the shared political and social goal of communal well-being, which might or might not be in conflict with private interests. How to obtain this common good, in relation to private interests, recurs as an important question throughout the history of political theory. In these discussions, architectural patronage and design appear as important contributive factors in obtaining the common good. Architecture, urban planning and infrastructure development also incorporate innumerable tensions that exist between public and private interests.

This session invites papers that explore the “Architecture for the Common Good” in the Renaissance. Papers might focus on a primary-source text, examining the contribution of architecture to the public good. They might also present an architectural, urban or infrastructural project that hopes to contribute to the well-being of the community. Papers that specifically address the tensions that existed between public and private interests and that might have informed architectural patronage or design are likewise welcome.

Please send proposals by 1 August 2020 via email with the subject line “RSA 2021” to Nele De Raedt (nele.deraedt@ugent.be) and Elizabeth Merrill at (elizabethmerrill11@gmail.com). The proposal should include a title (15 words max.); an abstract (200 words max.); and a one-paragraph CV (in prose, 200 words max.). Provide also full name, current affiliation, and email address.

This session is sponsored by the European Architectural Histories Network.

Submission guidelines are available at <https://www.rsa.org/page/AnnualMeetingSubmissionsGuide>

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#### [\[4\] Renaissance Architecture in the Archives](#)

From: Nele De Raedt, nele.deraedt@ugent.be

Date: Jun 18, 2020

Deadline: Aug 1, 2020

For the purist, to know a building is to experience it first-hand, sensorily – to see its forms, to hear its echoes, to touch its surfaces, and to feel its spaces. Of course, history does not always allow for this full experience. For buildings of the early modern period – few of which survive, and even fewer, if any, in their “original” form – the historian must rely on “secondary” sources: drawings, commentaries and treatises, correspondence records, and contracts. It’s from the archives that the great histories of the Renaissance Europe’s iconic constructions unfold: the Duomo of Florence, St. Peter’s Basilica, the Royal Palace of Amsterdam, the Royal Site of El Escorial, the numerous palaces of merchant princes. The study of architecture through the archives likewise unveils works that would otherwise be invisible: constructions and monuments, long ago destroyed; ephemeral designs and stage scenery; unrealized feats of engineering; legal disputes; and theoretical debates. It’s in the archives that we also learn the extraordinary tales of the unsung protagonists of building design.

For centuries, the archives of Renaissance architecture were largely fixed and immobile, providing scholars with a wealth of information – at times, electrifying, at times, terribly banal – of the history of the built environment. Yet the archives have evolved, slowly over the course of the twentieth century, and increasingly so in recent years. New technologies have changed how documents are located and accessed. Draw-

ings, manuscripts and rare printed sources have not only been digitalized, but have also been made Open Access. Within the archive, scanning devices and cell-phone cameras allow the historian to assemble years' worth of data in a single afternoon. Off-site, computer software facilitates the processes of cataloguing documents, and even their transcription and translation. Where previously extensive time, training, resources and patience were necessary to access the precious records of Renaissance architecture, now these treasures can be easily retrieved by even the casual researcher in a distant locale.

The changing nature of the archive introduces exciting new opportunities, but also caveats and questions. It's clear that the virtual world is no real substitute for first-hand exploration: the accidental discoveries in the library or archive; the feel and sight of a drawing, manuscript or book; the shadows, the light, the sense of a place. For this panel, we invite papers that examine the "architecture in the archives" in its many forms and meanings. Papers might consider different archival sources and the light they shed on architectural history. We welcome submissions that point to new directions in archival research or highlight recent findings. Papers might also reconsider or "re-read" published documents. We are equally interested in submissions that address research methodologies and the challenges brought about by new technologies.

Please send proposals by 1 August 2020 via email with the subject line "RSA 2021" to Nele De Raedt (nele.deraedt@ugent.be) and Elizabeth Merrill at (elizabethmerrill11@gmail.com). The proposal should include a title (15 words max.); an abstract (200 words max.); and a one-paragraph CV (in prose, 200 words max.). Provide also full name, current affiliation, and email address.

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[5] Painted Faces: Documenting the Frescoed Façade in Renaissance Rome and Beyond

From: Alexis Culotta, aculotta1@tulane.edu

Date: Jun 18, 2020

Deadline: Jul 13, 2020

In early sixteenth-century Rome, as the architectural language of grand domestic spaces was being further refined, elaborate façade fresco decorations became popular. These cycles, some of which were designed to root the structure (and its owner) in Roman antiquity and others which aimed to make a humble space more imposing, were celebrated in their day and even documented (albeit sporadically) by artists. This session welcomes papers that explore frescoed facades in Rome and beyond from various perspectives, such as earlier roots, relations to other cities in Italy (such as Venice, where the tradition has been more extensively studied), or "painted faces" as a mode of artistic exchange.

Please send proposals to the organizer (aculotta1@tulane.edu) by Monday, July 13, 2020. Paper proposals must include:

- Abstract (150 words max)
- Paper title (25 words max)
- Your full name, current affiliation, email address, and Ph.D. completion date (past or expected)
- A brief c.v. (300 words max, and must be in a list – not narrative – form)
- A list of keywords (8 max)

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

Italian Art Society sponsored session.

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[6] "Otium cum dignitate". Leisure and amusement of Early Modern elites

From: Cristina Agüero, [cristina.aguero@ub.edu](mailto:cristina.aguero@ub.edu)

Date: Jun 20, 2020

Deadline: Jul 31, 2020

The concept of "otium cum dignitate" – fruitful leisure in opposition to idleness – present in Cicero's texts was restored by the Humanism and pervaded the noble culture from 15th to 17th centuries. "If you have a garden and a library" – wrote Cicero to his friend Varrone – "you have everything you need" (Epistulae ad Familiares IX, 4). The model of the Renaissance ville formulated by architects such as Sangallo and Palladio responded to this ideal by reflecting the principles of Vitruvio's treatise *De architectura*. This revival of the antique forms implied the assumption of the ideals of decorum (adequation of the house to the social rank and public role of its proprietary) and magnificence as a sign of distinction. Consequently, the garden, the gallery and the library were core elements inside the dwellings of early modern patricians. These places not only played an essential function within the strategies of representation and construction of the family memory but also served as a scenario for the "conspicuous leisure" (as named by Veblen in *The Theory of the Leisure Class*) distinctive of the elites. Art collecting, gardening, and amateur writing, painting or drawing were common practices among early modern nobles and sovereigns, who found shelter from melancholy – the disease of the soul – in the rarities of the cabinets, the beauties of the galleries and the amenities of the gardens (teeming with fountains, sculptures, exotic plants, fruits and animals). They hosted intellectuals and artist to amuse themselves with the art of conversation, commenting poems or discussing the stories represented in the paintings they gathered. The theater performances, banquets and concerts celebrated by members of the political and ecclesiastical elites –often in honor of foreign visitors– evinced the performative and political dimensions of some forms of "otium".

This panel aims to examine various aspects of the leisure events and activities cultivated by the early modern elites; considering their cultural, symbolical and political implications, the venues (ville, family palaces, libraries, galleries, banqueting houses, gardens, etc.) where they took place, and the artifacts and artistic creations (books, poems, plays, paintings, etc.) used or produced in these places. Studies on the cultural networks that thrive on the idea of "otium" (like the *Accademia degli oziosi*) and presentations concerning the concept of leisure and the criticism articulated thereon by moralists and arbitristas are also desirable.

We welcome proposals by researchers from every humanistic discipline – including history of art, history, philosophy and literature – at any career stage. Those interested in participating in this panel are requested to submit an abstract (no more than 300 words) and a short academic bio to [cristina.aguero@ub.edu](mailto:cristina.aguero@ub.edu) by July 31.

Please note that this panel proposal will be vetted by the Program Committee of the RSA 2021. All speakers must become RSA members in order to present their papers at the conference. For further information visit: <https://www.rsa.org/page/RSADublin2021>

<https://www.rsa.org/blogpost/1860861/350908/Otium-cum-dignitate—Leisure-and-amusement-of-Early-Modern-elites>

ArtHist.net

Reference:

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