

Novelty, Trade and Exchange in the Renaissance Interior

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CALL FOR PAPERS

'Novelty, Trade and Exchange in the Renaissance Interior'

Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 24-25 June 2003

During the Renaissance, Italians travelled extensively and individuals often were based in foreign branches of Italian companies. The goods they acquired and brought home helped to establish new fashions and to generate a taste for novelty. The house and its contents reflected and supported 'national' and international trade and exchange: apart from artefacts produced in Italian centres, Flemish tapestries, metalwork and paintings, German stoneware, English pewter, Baltic amber, Spanish pottery and leather goods all featured in the Italian interior. But goods were not only imported from Europe: Islamic carpets, textiles, ceramics, metalwork and other objects, whether purchased or looted, also figured prominently.

This two-day Symposium is the first in a series of events related to 'The Domestic Interior in Italy, 1400-1600', a research project culminating in a major exhibition at the V&A in 2006 and an associated publication (see details below). 'Novelty, Trade and Exchange in the Renaissance Interior' will explore the general question of novelty in domestic goods. In addition to examining the stylistic influences of imported wares on local production, and the economics of trade and manufacture, it will focus on the movements of both goods and people across and into Italy. Fundamental questions the Symposium will focus on include:

- What changed and what remained the same in the layout and furnishing of domestic interiors?
- How did novelty affect the look of the interior, the types of objects found within it and the range of domestic activities?
- To what extent did innovation reflect the influence of objects, techniques, people and ways of living from outside Italy or from other historical periods? Was there a resistance to some 'foreign' things (including exotica, antiques, objects belonging to ethnic minorities etc.)?

- Can we map a geography and chronology of influences? What places were most important and when?
- How were 'foreign' objects appropriated? Did they bring with them 'foreign' ways of living or was their use reworked to accord with local practices?
- Was the urban domestic interior a particular site of 'foreign' influences? More so than the court, than religious and secular public spaces or than villas and rural houses?

Proposals for 30 minute papers are invited from scholars from a variety of academic disciplines. Please send an abstract of 250-500 words, together with a brief curriculum vitae, to Marta Ajmar, Research Department, Victoria & Albert Museum, South Kensington, London SW7 2RL, m.ajmar@vam.ac.uk. The deadline for submissions is March 31, 2003. For further information, please contact Flora Dennis, Research Department, Victoria & Albert Museum, South Kensington, London SW7 2RL, flora.dennis@rca.ac.uk, 0207 942 2598 or access the website www.rca.ac.uk/csdi/.

Event sponsored by the Getty Grant Programme, the AHRB Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior and the Victoria & Albert Museum

The Domestic Interior in Italy, 1400-1600

Research Project jointly funded by the Getty Grant Program, the AHRB Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior and the Victoria & Albert Museum

The purpose of this project is to explore the urban house in Renaissance Italy as a setting for the development of art and culture, and for the unfolding of everyday life. Looking at the domestic interior provides unique insights into the unprecedented quality and wealth of objects produced for the home at the time - ranging from the artistic to the utilitarian. The evidence available is extensive and offers a complex picture. Contemporary depictions of interiors illustrate a wide range of domestic settings, suggesting geographical, ethnic and social variety alongside aesthetic diversity and development. These sources raise a number of challenging questions about the actual visual and spatial development of the house and its furnishings. Domestic artefacts can also powerfully illustrate the ways the wider cultural, artistic and socio-economic changes we associate with the Renaissance actually affected people's everyday lives. The impressive quantity, range and novelty of objects provided for the home demand examination in relation to new ideas of civility and decorum, and new notions of fashion and taste. Written sources often present the house as an extension of the self, thus provoking enquiry into the relationship between the interior and concepts of identity, gender and the body. As attractive as it is little-known, the Italian domestic interior demands new research and

interpretation.

The project, which was launched in September 2002, is to research and develop an exhibition and a book on the Italian domestic interior between c.1400 and c.1600. The exhibition will be held at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London in 2006 and is likely to travel to another venue. Drawn from the V&A and other collections (including art and design, archaeological and ethnographic museums), this major exhibition aims to explore the Renaissance interior as a powerful site where cultural and aesthetic values were constructed and challenged. A two-year research project jointly funded by the Getty Grant Program, the AHRB and the Victoria & Albert Museum will generate substantial new research by an interdisciplinary team of scholars. The research process will involve a series of symposia and seminars, culminating in a publication to accompany the exhibition. This will provide a permanent record of the project's findings. Both exhibition and book will present an entirely new way of looking at the 'Renaissance' through the development of domestic life and artefacts.

Reference:

CFP: Novelty, Trade and Exchange in the Renaissance Interior. In: ArtHist.net, Jan 9, 2003 (accessed Apr 15, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/25456>>.