

## Domestic and Institutional Interiors (V&A London, 26-27 Nov 2004)

AHRB Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior

### CALL FOR PAPERS

Domestic and Institutional Interiors in Early Modern Europe A Two-Day Conference Victoria & Albert Museum, London 26-27 November 2004

A growing body of studies is steadily expanding our knowledge of the early modern domestic interior. However, early modern people did not only live in houses. Men and women from a variety of social backgrounds made their homes in monastic institutions, houses of the poor and hospitals, some just for short periods, others for all their lives. For example, a significant number of the poor were institutionalised in post-Reformation Catholic Europe and nuns were cloistered: charitable institutions and convents became a regular feature of the urban landscape. As a result, a considerable proportion of the laity acquired a direct experience of institutional life. Ties were maintained between the inmate and his or her family, kin and community; moreover the new institutions became centres for the expression of lay piety and received work commissions from outside.

This raises a number of interesting questions. Did the many connections between the secular world and institutional environments also extend to the physical and material features of the living space? Recent studies on convents have shown that a flow of objects, as well as of visitors and guests, placed the secular and the institutional space in constant and close contact. Women who moved into monastic institutions brought with them furnishings, personal possessions, and sometimes artworks, which had been part of their secular domestic experience. Did they also bring views about how to structure their living space in the new environment? And do the recent findings about convents apply to other types of religious and lay institutions of early modern Europe, male as well as female? Finally, to what extent did the new models of devotion and good work promoted by the Protestant and Catholic Reformations affect the domestic interiors, such as the spaces dedicated to the sacred within the home?

This two-day conference invites reflections on the still under-researched characteristics of the institutional interior and on the reciprocal

influence between the domestic and the institutional space in an age marked, in many European towns, by the growing presence of institutions. Although the issue has so far been explored in particular in relation to Catholic areas (especially Italy and Spain) we also hope to attract studies on other European countries and on the Protestant world. We aim to bring together social, architectural and art historians to explore the relationship between institutional interiors, gender and class; the way in which spatial arrangements contributed to forging the inmates' behaviour and, in turn, the way in which the inmates themselves shaped the institutional space they inhabited; the range of objects that were available and circulated between houses and institutions; the transfer of rituals and models in interior decoration, furnishings, images from the domestic to the institutional interior and vice versa.

Proposals for 30 minutes papers are invited from a variety of academic disciplines. Please send an abstract of approximately 250 words, together with a brief CV, to the organisers: Sandra Cavallo, Royal Holloway University of London (s.cavallo@rhul.ac.uk) and Silvia Evangelisti, University of Birmingham ( s.evangelisti@bham.ac.uk).

The deadline for proposals of papers is 1 January 2004.

For further information see the website of the AHRB Centre for the Study of

Domestic Interior: [www.rca.ac.uk/csdi/](http://www.rca.ac.uk/csdi/) or contact the Centre at [csdi@rca.ac.uk](mailto:csdi@rca.ac.uk);

Tel. +44 (0) 20 7590 4183.

Please circulate this information.

---

AHRB Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior  
Royal College of Art  
Kensington Gore  
London SW7 2EU  
Tel. +44 (0)20 7590 4183  
[www.rca.ac.uk/csdi/](http://www.rca.ac.uk/csdi/)

Royal College of Art, Victoria and Albert Museum, and Bedford Centre,  
Royal  
Holloway, University of London

Reference:

CFP: Domestic and Institutional Interiors (V&A London, 26-27 Nov 2004). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 14, 2003 (accessed Feb 11, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/26007>>.