

Passions in the arts of early modern Netherlands (Kingston)

Franziska Gottwald

Symposium

The "motions of the mind"

Representing the passions in the arts of the early modern Netherlands

Friday and Saturday, November 17 and 18, 2006

Queen's University and Agnes Etherington Art Centre,
Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Deadline: March 13, 2006

Historians of southern European art have paid considerable attention to the representation of emotions, psychological presence and interiority in portraits and history paintings of the early modern period. Avenues of investigation include the connection to literary traditions as well as the aspiration of artists to demonstrate the expressive potential of their art and their individual talent in this area. There is, however, no similarly extensive discussion about the depiction of the passions in Dutch and Flemish art. Yet the most prominent Dutch artist, Rembrandt, has always been famous for depicting the "inner life" of the protagonists in his history paintings, portraits and tronies. Already in his own time Constantijn Huygens praised Rembrandt for his depiction of the expressions of the human face. A variety of recent studies have emphasized his evocation of the inner life and spiritual existence of his figures. At the same time, other Dutch artists from Lastman to Lairese were developing practical and theoretical strategies for the representation of human interiority. The 400th anniversary of Rembrandt's birth in 2006 provides an occasion to examine the rendering of the passions in Rembrandt's oeuvre and its historical context: the activities of Dutch and Flemish artists of the early modern period (ca. 1500-1750) who shared an interest in depicting the "motions of the mind".

We invite proposals for papers that explore aspects of this theme and that focus on issues such as shifting or competing strategies of representation, their function in paintings and other works of art, and the relationship between theory and practice. We also encourage papers that explore

connections between the visual arts and other disciplines, such as literature, theater and science, and between artistic convention and social ideals for personal conduct and self-expression, as well as exchanges between Dutch artists and the art of the Southern Netherlands and other countries. We welcome proposals from junior and senior scholars in art history and in related disciplines.

The symposium will take place in conjunction with the exhibition Wrought Emotions: Renaissance and Baroque Paintings from the Permanent Collection at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre. There will be a study tour through the gallery with the Bader Curator of European Art Dr. David de Witt on Saturday, November 18, and a visit to the vaults on Sunday, November 19, 2006.

Funds may be available to cover travel costs, fully or partially, for the speakers. A publication of selected papers is planned.

A one-page proposal in English or French for a 30-minute talk and a two page C.V. should be sent via e-mail by March 13, 2006 to: Franziska Gottwald: franziskagottwald@yahoo.de

Conference Organizers:

Stephanie Dickey, design. Bader Chair in Northern
Baroque Art, Queen's University, Kingston
David de Witt, Bader Curator of European Art, Agnes
Etherington Art Centre, Kingston
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Reference:

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