

Perception, Experience in the Italian Garden 1500-1750 (Buffalo, 10-14 Apr 13)

Buffalo, NY, USA, SAH Annual Conference, 10-14 April, 2013, Apr 9–Jun 1, 2012
Deadline: Jun 1, 2012

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Early modern visitors delighted in the gardens and villa estates built throughout the Italian peninsula. Foreigners and local viewers alike took in the antique statuary displays, contemporary sculpture and fountains, architecture, verdant plantings, flowers and exotic naturalia, and sweeping vistas afforded by these sites. Many described their garden experiences in written or visual form, precious documentation of gardens and landscapes later destroyed or dramatically altered by time.

Historians have traditionally employed primary sources to reconstruct the layout of villa and garden spaces, but these sources may also reveal the physical, emotional and social experiences visitors underwent as they moved through gardens and parks. Visual images, poetic verses, travelogues, legal documents, and personal anecdotes tell us something about how gardens appeared; they also form a picture of how visitors used and understood such spaces and how they perceived the garden owner, fellow visitors, or the nearly invisible laborers who maintained gardens. Though several exemplary studies have engaged contemporary theory to interpret the social significance of particular sites, and a few recent essays address the issue of viewer perception in gardens, there remains no comprehensive study of the social history of early modern Italian gardens.

This session seeks papers that examine and interpret the rhetorical nature of primary sources for the social experience and perception of Italian gardens. Primary sources may include guidebooks, maps, architectural plans, diaries and letters, poetry, paintings and drawings, and legal documents. Papers that discuss the experiences of non-elite viewers whose voices are elusive or difficult to discern, such as architects, stonemasons, fountaineers, gardeners, and women are especially welcome. Session chairs: Tracy Ehrlich, M.A. Program in Decorative Arts and Design, Cooper Hewitt Museum, tehrlich@nyc.rr.com; and Katherine Bentz, Assistant Professor, Fine Arts Department, Saint Anselm College, kbentz@anselm.edu.

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Abstracts of no more than 300 words are due 1 June 2012. SAH is using an online abstract submission process – please do not send your abstract to the session chair's email address as this will delay the review of your abstract or possibly void your submission. For submission instructions and the SAH webpage: <http://tiny.cc/xaaicw>

Reference:

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