Carrara Marble and the Low Countries (Rome-Carrara, 4-8 Jun12)

Roma-Carrara, Jun 4–08, 2012
Registration deadline: May 15, 2012

Leon Lock

International Conference, Roma-Carrara, 4-8 June 2012
“Carrara Marble and the Low Countries from the Late Middle Ages to Today”

ORGANISED BY:
Academia Belgica, Roma
Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome
Université Libre de Bruxelles
Universiteit Gent
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Université de Liège
Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels
Royal Museums of Fine-Arts of Belgium, Brussels
Nederlands Interuniversitair Kunsthistorisch Instituut, Firenze
The Low Countries Sculpture Society, Brussels

WITH THE SUPPORT OF:
The Belgian Embassy, Rome
The Dutch Embassy, Rome
Comune di Carrara
Marchesa Marie Angiola Gropallo and Grégoire van Hissenhoven, Sarzana/Brussels
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Dr Louk Tilanus, Universiteit Leiden
Dr Francis Tourneur, Pierres et Marbres de Wallonie asbl

SUNDAY 3 JUNE 2012
Individual arrival in Rome
Free evening and night in Rome

MONDAY 4 JUNE 2012, 9.00-18.00
Pre-Conference Study Day in Rome: The sculpted and painted decoration of galleries in Roman palaces and villas c.1500-1830 – day 1
Programme. Please note that during the one-and-a-half days of Pre-Conference Excursions we will be visiting embassies and other official residences that are rarely or never open to the public, but which may be closed at short notice for official functions. If this were the case, we might have to change the order of the individual visits or even attempt to substitute the cancelled visit with

another. The provisional programme includes the galleries of : Raphael's Villa Madama, Palazzo Farnese, Borromini's Palazzo Pamphilj (Piazza Navona), Algardi's Villa Doria-Pamphilj (Via Aurelia Antica), Museo Pio Clementino and Casino di Pio IV in the Vatican Gardens and the stone conservation workshops of the Vatican Museums.
Free evening and night in Rome

TUESDAY 5 JUNE 2012, 8.45-14.30
Pre-Conference Study Day in Rome: The sculpted and painted decoration of galleries in Roman palaces and villas c.1500-1830 – day 2
Programme: see above.

TUESDAY 5 JUNE 2012, 14.30-19.45
Academia Belgica, Roma via Omero 8
14.30-15.00 Registration
Session One
15.00-15.15 Welcome by Ambassadors Vincent Mertens de Wilmars and Alphonsus Stoelinga (tbc), Prof Dr Walter Geerts, director of the Academia Belgica and Prof Dr Bernard Stolte, director of the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome
15.15-15.40 Introduction by Dr Emile van Binnebeke and Dr Léon Lock
15.45-16.15 Keynote Lecture: Prof Dr Cinzia Maria Sicca Bursill-Hall, Università di Pisa, The marble trade in the sixteenth century: Pietro Torrigiani and the companies of Bardi, Cavalcanti and Botti in Antwerp and Bruges
16.20-16.50 Keynote Lecture: Geneviève Bresc-Bautier, director of the Sculpture Department, Musée du Louvre, Paris, Le commerce du marbre de Carrare sous Louis XIV, sous l'angle des relations internationales, des compagnies financières et des relations avec les propriétaires de carrières
16.50-17.05 Discussion
17.05-17.25 Coffee

Session Two
The Low Countries as a hub for the trade in Carrara marble to Northern Europe
17.25-17.50 Prof Dr Frits Scholten, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam/Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Amsterdam marble consortium
17.55-18.20 Dr Jacek Kriegseisen, University of Gdansk, Gdansk, Antwerp and Amsterdam : commercial relations for the import of Carrara marble
18.25-18.50 Dr Micha? Wardzy?ski, University of Warsaw, From Carrara through Amsterdam to the Commonwealth of the Two Nations. Three royal Polish commissions for Carrara marble in the 17th century
18.55-19.25 Keynote Lecture: Pier Terwen, independent historian and conservator of sculpture, Leiden, The use and meaning of Carrara marble in the tomb monument of Admiral Tromp (†1653) and other monuments
19.25-19.40 Discussion
19.45 Reception kindly sponsored by the Belgian and Dutch Ambassadors
Free evening and night in Rome

WEDNESDAY 6 JUNE 2012, 9.00-17.10

Academia Belgica, Roma via Omero 8
9.00-9.25 Registration
Session Three
The trade in Carrara marble to the Low Countries: local and international actors and strategies, and their impact on the design and production of luxury goods
9.30-9.55 Dr Cristiano Giometti, Università di Pisa, Marble merchants from the Low Countries in the early eighteenth-century from the documents of the State Archives of Massa
10.00-10.25 Muriel Barbier, Institut National du Patrimoine, Paris, Carrara marble for French fireplaces delivered by Flemish marble masons in the 18th century
10.30-10.55 Prof Dr Krista De Jonge, Catholic University of Leuven, Luxury Artefacts. The Early Modern Low Countries and the Genoese Trading Network in Carrara Marble
11.00-11.25 Dr Francis Tourneur, Association Pierres et Marbres de Wallonie, Namur, Marble gleanings: commerce, design, production and techniques from Boussu to Corroy-le-Château
11.25-11.40 Discussion
11.40-12.00 Coffee

Session Four
The social prestige of Carrara marble vs. alabaster
12.00-12.25 Dr Aleksandra Lipi?ska, University of Wroclaw (PL), « Marbre blanc qu'on dit albastre. » Italian marble vs. Transalpine alabaster in 16th-century Low Countries sculpture
12.30-12.55 Géraldine Patigny, Université Libre de Bruxelles/Royal Institute of Cultural Heritage, Brussels, La place du marbre dans la sculpture à Bruxelles à l'époque de Jérôme Du Quesnoy père et fils
12.55-13.10 Discussion
13.10-14.00 Lunch
Session Five
Carrara marble as a vehicle for classical ideals
14.00-14.25 Dr Léon Lock, Catholic University of Leuven, The techniques of Carrara marble carving in Antwerp in the 17th century between tradition and innovation
14.30-14.55 Inger Groeneveld, Royal Academy of Arts, Den Haag, Carrara marble for the Dutch Interior 1600-1800
15.00-15.25 Dr Sophie Mouquin, Université de Lille III / Ecole du Louvre, Paris, Poetics, symbolism and science: The perception of Carrara marble in Paris and in the Low Countries in the 18th century
15.25-15.40 Discussion
15.40-16.00 Coffee
16.00-16.25 Dr Emile van Binnebeke, Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels, The theory and practice of Carrara marble sculpture by Gabriel and Godecharle
16.30-16.55 Wim Oers, WENK Sint-Lucas Brussels-Gent / University of Oxford, The use and meaning of Carrara marble sculptures and decorations at Schönenberg (the current royal palace at Laken), near Brussels, 1781-87
16.55-17.10 Discussion
Free evening and night in Rome

THURSDAY 7 JUNE 2012
Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome via Omero 10/12

9.00-9.15 Registration and coffee
Session Six
The introduction and later flourishing of Carrara marble in the Low Countries
9.20-9.45 Dr Albert Lemeunier, Université de Liège / former director, Grand Curtius Museum, Liège, Meuse Valley marble sculpture in the 14th century
9.50-10.15 Caroline Heering, Université Catholique de Louvain, Where artifice meets nature. The marble ornaments of the Lady Chapel in the Antwerp Jesuit church
10.20-10.45 Dr Hendrik Jan Tolboom, Rijksdienst voor Cultureel Erfgoed, Amersfoort (NL), Conservation of Carrara marble sculpture in the Netherlands; a study on the weathering, treatments in the past and possible measurements in the future for the conservation of the Carrara marble sculptures on the exterior of the Royal Palace in Amsterdam
10.45-11.00 Discussion
11.00-11.20 Coffee

Session Seven
Carrara marble in Belgium and the Netherlands in the 19th and 20th centuries: art, industry and propaganda
11.20-11.45 Prof Dr Linda Van Santvoort, Universiteit Gent, Lode De Clercq, independent conservator, Antwerpen, Dr Joris Snaet, Catholic University of Leuven, The Laken cemetery and the use of Carrara marble
11.50-12.15 Guido-Jan Bral, independent art historian, Brussels, Carrara marble in the Brussels Arenberg Palace in the long 19th century
12.20-12.45 Florence Peltier, curator, Musée du Marbre, Rance, An episode in the export of Carrara marble workers' expertise to one of the principal Belgian centres for the extraction of marble (1923)
12.50-13.20 Jan van 't Hof, Rijksdienst voor Cultureel Erfgoed, Amersfoort (NL), New times, new buildings, new appreciation: white Carrara and coloured marbles c.1860-1965 in Rotterdam interiors
13.20-13.30 Discussion
13.30 End of conference in Rome
13.30-14.15 Lunch break

CONFERENCE EXCURSION AND CONCLUSION IN CARRARA

THURSDAY 7 JUNE 2012, AFTERNOON AND EVENING
14.15 Board coach
14.30-19.30 Travel to Sarzana
19.30-20.00 Check-in at the hotel Al Santandrea, via Variante Aurelia 34, Sarzana
20.00 Formal Conference Dinner at Il Loggiato Gemmi, via Bonaparte 11, Sarzana, kindly hosted by the Marchesa Marie Angiola Gropallo and Grégoire van Hissenhoven
Night in Sarzana
Friday 8 June 2012, 9.00-17.30
The extraction, transport and carving of Carrara marble from Classical Antiquity to today
Visits to include:
- Carrara marble quarries
- Duomo di Carrara

- Workshops of the Studi Nicoli, founded 1863
- Museo del Marmo, Carrara
- Workshops of the Accademia di Belle Arti di Carrara, Palazzo Malaspina

FRIDAY 8 JUNE 2012, 17.30-20.30
Conference Conclusion in Carrara
17.30 Welcome by Dott Angelo Zubbani, mayor of Carrara (tbc) and Dott Simone Caffaz, president of the Academia di Belle Arti
17.50-18.15 Sandra Tazzini-Berresford, independent art historian, Carrara, Carrara marble exports to the Netherlands in the early 20th century
18.20-18.50 Keynote Lecture: Dr Louk Tilanus, Universiteit Leiden, Aart Schonk and the tradition of modern Dutch sculptors working in Carrara
18.50-19.00 Discussion
19.00-19.30 Dr Emile van Binnebeke and Dr Léon Lock
Conclusions of the conference
19.30-20.30 Reception
20.30-21.00 Transfer to Sarzana
Night in Sarzana

SATURDAY 9 JUNE 2012
Departure day

REGISTRATIONS
Registrations will be handled « first come first served », so do not wait to book your place !
To register, please request the Registration Form from The Low Countries Sculpture Society: info@lcsculpture.org or to POBox 1304, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

Closing date for early rate registrations : 15 May 2012

THEME
The present international conference wishes to discuss the extraction of Carrara marble, the trade of it to the Low Countries and its use in architecture and sculpture in the Low Countries, from the Late Middle Ages to today.
Status Quaestionis. The history of the use of Carrara marble in the Low Countries has principally been written in the form of peacemeal studies or on the occasion of specific uses in architecture and sculpture, rather than as a subject in itself. These writings generally remained superficial both on a technical and a historical level, and rarely grasped the importance of the field of material studies. A review of this situation is sorely needed in a field dominated by literature written nearly exclusively in Italy (e.g. the major exhibition in Rome I marmi colorati della Roma imperiale, 2002), without any connections to the Low Countries, despite the fact that the Low Countries formed a major trading partner since about 1600.
The conference attempts to offer a critical review of this situation and to foster cross-fertilisation within a wide range of domains, from the Late Middle Ages to the present day, in order to establish Carrara marble as a subject worthy of study in its own right. As such this interdisciplinary converence will be at the cutting edge of history of commerce, history of art, history of techniques, material studies and current conservation practices.
The conference will start with a historical part, encouraging new research on the trading connec-

tions between Carrara and the Low Countries, following the work of amongst others Frits Scholten (1993) and Marie-Christine Engels (1997). It will further link historical studies with both art historical and material studies, in the tradition of that engaged in by the Royal Museums of Art and History (Bulletin vol. 53/2, 1982), but also following studies such as: Ype Koopmans, Muurvast en gebeiteld (1994), Frits Scholten, Sumptuous Memories (2003), Valérie Herremans (ed.), Heads on Shoulders. Portrait Busts in the Low Countries 1600-1800 (2008), Piet Lombaerde (ed.), Innovation and Experience in Early Baroque in the Southern Netherlands. The Case of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp (2008), Léon Lock, South Netherlandish Sculpture. Art and Manufacture c.1600-1750 (diss., 2008), Sandra Beresford (ed.) "Sognando il marmo". Cultura e commercio del marmot tra Carrara, Gran Bretagna e Impero (1820-1920 circa) (2009), Michelangelo's Madonna and Child in Bruges. Context and Reception (conference Firenze 2010).
The material studies aspect of the conference will concern the mapping of technical and technological developments in the quarrying and treatment of marble, all placed within exchanges between Italy and Belgium. These two countries boast a tradition in marble quarrying that goes back to antique Roman times and that culminated in the nineteenth century with the invention of marble extraction techniques used throughout the world today. Examples include marvels of interior architecture such as the Carrara and other marble cladding in the dining room of the castle of Corroy-le-Château (c.1848).
The conference also hopes to encourage material studies of Carrara marble applications in the Low Countries following theoretical and practical models explored in Italy in the last few decades, particularly those concerning Michelangelo, Bernini and Canova; and inversely those of conservation/restoration techniques and philosophies explored in the Netherlands and Belgium (e.g. the projects of the tomb monuments of William the Silent and Admiral Tromp).
As such, the conference intends to obtain a greater understanding of the use of Carrara marble in the sculpture and architecture of the Low Countries, while studying the success factors of this marble, those that stimulated it and brought it to such a development. One might even tentatively speak of a Carrara marble "revolution" in the Low Countries (from about 1600 onwards), completely changing the practice and perception of both sculptural and architectural endeavour in the Low Countries, a phenomenon that remains undervalued and understudied.
The conference will also have a natural follow-on with the one organised in September 2012 by the Musée provincial des Arts anciens at Namur on the extraction and use of Belgian marble, particularly that of Saint-Rémy.
Possible issues to be addressed (non-limitative list):

International exchanges between Carrara and the Low Countries
- The trade in Carrara marble
- Technical innovation between Carrara and Belgium
- Low Countries sculptors in Carrara

The introduction of Carrara marble in Belgium and the Netherlands and its flourishing in the 17th century
- Conrat Meit/Pietro Torrigiani
- The "Marble Temple" in Antwerp, the Jesuit church
- The Royal Palace of Amsterdam

The social prestige of Carrara marble

- The prestige of the association of Carrara white and Belgian black marble
- Carrara marble in Antwerp baroque altarpieces
- The imitation of Carrara marble in altarpieces
- The imitation of Carrara marble in historic interiors
- Portraiture in Carrara marble

Carrara marble in the third world power, Belgium, and in the Netherlands (c.1880-1914)
- The Brussels Cemetary at Laken
- The “Escalier des Ambassadeurs” of Versailles at the Egmont-Arenberg Palace in Brussels
- Carrara marble in Brussels architecture 1880-1914
- Carrara in Rotterdam

Low Countries artists and architects at home and abroad
- Aart Schonk
- Hilde van Sumeren

Historic Carrara marble floors
- Renaissance to Baroque
- The techniques and tradition of single-slab marble hallways

BACKGROUND AND OUTLOOK

The conference will constitute a follow-up from the study days it held in Belgium about the extraction and use of Belgian marble between 2003 and 2009. The Musée provincial des Arts anciens du Namurois will further organise an international conference about Saint-Remy marble in September 2012.

Reference:

CONF: Carrara Marble and the Low Countries (Rome-Carrara, 4-8 Jun12). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 12, 2012 (accessed Nov 3, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/3069>.