

## Ornament, between art and design (ISR Rome 23 Apr 09)

Ariane Varela Braga

"Ornament, between art and design: interpretations, paths and mutations  
in XIX century"

International study day, organised by Ariane Varela Braga (Swiss  
Institute in Rome / University of Neuchâtel)

Swiss Institute in Rome  
April 23th 2009

Organized by the Swiss Institute in Rome, in collaboration with the  
University of Neuchâtel, the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici and  
the University of Rome – La Sapienza.

Scientific comity:

Marc Bayard (French Academy in Rome - Villa Medici)  
Silvia Bordini (University of Rome - La Sapienza)  
Pascal Griener (University of Neuchâtel)  
Christian Michel (University of Lausanne)  
Ariane Varela Braga (ISR/University of Neuchâtel)

In the last few years, the study of ornament has been the subject of a  
revaluation in art history, in architecture and in contemporary art.

Whether ornament is considered as a representation of cosmic order,  
according to the Greek concept of kosmos, or whether it refers to the  
rhetorical notion of decorum, regulating the functionality of discourse,  
the theory of ornament has traditionally been limited to the dialectic  
between the functional and the useless. But is ornament only a vane  
adornment, or can it also be understood as a graphic structure, which  
generates meaning in its own way?

This study day intends to re-evaluate and reinterpret ornament through a  
new reading of the theories which have developed between the second  
half of the XVIII century and the end of the XIX century.

We will try to understand how the discourse of ornament evolves in the  
XIX century, what are the mechanisms which regulate it, what are the  
modalities of this evolution, in a historical as well a aesthetic and

philosophical perspective.

9.00

Welcome from the director of the Swiss Institute, Christoph Riedweg

Welcome from Marc Bayard, Chargé de mission for art history at the

French Academy in Rome

Introduction by Ariane Varela Braga (ISR/University of Neuchâtel)

Session I

Chair: Maria Grazia Messina (University of Florence)

9.30

Christoph Frank (University of Lugano) :

Johann Friedrich Reiffenstein's "Anmerkungen über die neuerfundenen Zierrathen" (1746) and the Ornamental Debate in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Europe

10.00

Valérie Kobi (University of Neuchâtel) :

De la gravure d'ornement à la théorie de l'ornement. La gravure au trait et sa fonction théorique à la fin du XVIIIe siècle

10.30

Odile Nouvel (Musée des arts décoratifs, Paris) :

La théorie de l'ornement autour de Percier et Fontaine 1800 - 1835

11.00

coffee break

11.30

Silvia Bordini (University of Rome "La Sapienza") :

Amédée Couder, dessinateur pour l'industrie: l'ornamento tra esotismo e utopia

12.00

Ariane Varela Braga (ISR/University of Neuchâtel) :

L'ornamento universale: Owen Jones e la Grammar of Ornament (1856)

12.30-13.00

discussion

13.00

lunch break

Session II

Chair: Tonino Griffiero (University of Rome Tor Vergata)

14.30

Harry Francis Mallgrave (Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago) :

## Animism, Empathy, and Ornament in 19th-Century Germanic Theory

15.00

Carla Subrizi (University of Rome "La Sapienza") :

L'ironia, il desiderio e la cosa: poetiche dell'eccesso alla fine del XIX secolo (gli umoristi, Mary Cassat e Rilke)

15.30

Andrea Pinotti (University of Milan) :

Ornamento, angoscia e origine dell'immagine

16.00

coffee break

16.30

Katrin Albrecht (ISR/ETH Zurich) :

"Architettura ed arti decorative" in Italia all'inizio del XX secolo.

Prime costruzioni di Angiolo Mazzoli

17.00

Christian Spies (University of Basel) :

Superficial? Ornament in between structure and decor

17.30

Massimo Carboni (University of Tuscia) :

Misura e dismisura dell'ornamento

18.00

Pascal Griener (University of Neuchâtel): conclusion

Final discussion

Reference:

CONF: Ornament, between art and design (ISR Rome 23 Apr 09). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 9, 2009 (accessed Dec 18, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/31472>>.