

Images at Work (Firenze, 30 Sep – 01 Oct 10)

Ittai Weinryb

Images at Work: Image and Efficacy from Antiquity to the Rise of Modernity

International Conference

According to legend, Virgil made a fly out of bronze and placed it above the gates of Naples. The sole purpose of the bronze fly was to prevent other flies from entering the city. The conference 'Images at Work' will set out to explore the intention, function, and reception of images like Virgil's fly: images made to influence the natural world. We seek to examine the theories behind the construction of these operative images, to interrogate how the production of apotropaic images related to the production of Art, and to question how the manufacture of such working images interacted with the production of other types of mechanical apparatus. In contrast to religious miracle-working images that perform multiple miracles of varying types, and which, crucially, are usually perceived as operating in the world only subsequent to their creation, the images with which this conference seeks to engage had, in most cases, very specific, predetermined functions. The objective of 'Images at Work' is thus to focus on the scientific and magical spheres of image production; it will consider these adjunctive images as both objects in space and actors in ritual. The goal of the conference at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz will be to map the central issues regarding images that function in the natural world. We aim to discuss the phenomena ascribed to this category of images historically, culturally, and geographically, employing a broad array of theoretical and disciplinary approaches. The conference will address the manufacture of images that work, their function in real as well as in imaginary realms, and their reception on both functional and aesthetic levels.

Date: September 30th, 2010 to October 2nd, 2010

Location: Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz - Max-Planck-Institut,
Palazzo Grifoni – Seminarraum, Via dei Servi 51, 50122 Firenze

Contact: Ashley Jones, E-mail: jones@khi.fi.it

Program:

Thursday 30 September:

17:30 Seminar: Efficacy, Magic and Anthropology

Screening of "Magia Lucana" by Luigi Di Gianni

Friday 1 October:

9:45 Welcome: Gerhard Wolf

10:00 Images at Work: Posing Questions to Art Historians,
Hannah Baader & Ittai Weinryb

Chair: Ittai Weinryb

10:45 Bloodstained, Beate Fricke

11:30 Coffee Break

11:45 Making Amulets Work in Late Antiquity, Ashley Jones

12:30 'quae sub luce videantur:' The Status of Images between
Magic and Art Theory, Ana Debenedetti

13:15 Lunch Break

Chair: Philippe Cordez

14:30 "Spiritus and Virtutes": What Renaissance

Psychophysiology Can Tell Us About How Images Worked, Tanja Klemm

15:15 The Charged Matrix: Printmaking's Productive Surfaces,
Lisa Pon

16:00 Manufacturing the Miraculous in Sixteenth-Century
Italian Painting, Christopher Nygren

16:45 Tea Break

17:15 Antidotism: Painting as 'Pharmakon,' Karin Leonhard

18:00 Concluding Remarks, Christopher Wood

Saturday 2 October:

Chair: Ashley Jones

11:00 Dragons at the Gates: Sympathy, Symmetry, and Sculpture
along the Thirteenth-Century Tigris, Persis Berlekamp

11:45 What Do We Mean When We Talk about Medieval Automata?
Elly Truitt

12:30 Animal, Vegetal, and Mineral: Ambiguity and Efficacy in the
Nishapur Wall-Paintings, Finbar Barry Flood

13:15 Lunch Break

Chair: Hannah Baader

14:30 The Eagle and the Snake: Looking at Sculpture with
Nicetas Choniates, Paroma Chatterjee

15:15 The Talismanic Value of Vermin on the Doors of the
Baptistry in Florence, Mauro Di Vito

16:00 Tea Break

16:30 Conclusion, Gerhard Wolf

17:15 Concluding Discussion

Reference:

CONF: Images at Work (Firenze, 30 Sep - 01 Oct 10). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 13, 2010 (accessed Apr 19, 2026),
<<https://arthist.net/archive/32967>>.