

First Annual International Women in Arts Conference (Rome/Lugano, 20-23 Oct 21)

Rome and Lugano / online, Oct 20-23, 2021

Deadline: May 15, 2021

Consuelo Lollobrigida

First Annual International Women in Arts Conference (AIWIAC)

Session Co-Chairs

Consuelo Lollobrigida, Ph.D. (University of Arkansas Rome Program)

Carla Rossi, Titular Professor (University of Zurich, Research Centre for European Philological Tradition, Lugano)

Throughout history, whenever a woman has appeared in a male artistic and cultural context, she has been opposed and, from the Middle Ages up to the last century, her femininity has been questioned, since, as Maestro Rinuccino wrote to Compiuta Donzella (the first female writer in the Italian vernacular), it is unnatural for a woman to use her intellect, so she is either a monster or a man in disguise. And yet, there have been many women who have made their mark in the arts for their wit, skills and intelligence.

They have often been abused and even killed for fighting for their independence and self-determination.

Women writers, illuminators, poets, painters, embroiders, etchers, sculptress as well as musicians, singers, scientists were often sharing the same social, economic and cultural background forming an international network which contributed to pave women's path and open a track within a masculine world. The aim of this is to bring together scholars from all over the world around a topic, that of women in the history of Western culture, which is still topical and International Conference significant in terms of research.

Conference Highlights:

One of the principal goals of the conference is, through new philological-historical and methodological perspectives, a comparative exploration on how female genius has helped shape European culture in its heterogeneity since the Middle Ages.

Participants are invited to explore:

- Gender perspectives on cultural heritage
- Innovative approaches to using gender legacy as a mode of enquiry
- Historically rounded readings of gender from the Middle Ages in order to map out the future of contemporary gender studies

This international conference also aims to advance the contemporary discussion of Gender Digital Humanities. It will offer to the scientific community – and to interested guests – the opportunity to present new digital proposals devoted to works of female genius (such as digital critical edi-

tions, or projects for the virtual fruition of women's works) and to learn more about some of the newest digital tools used by researchers.

LITERATURE

The image of woman in the Middle Ages is paradoxical: on the one hand, women were idealised through figures such as the Virgin Mary; on the other, antifeminist writings incessantly characterized their subjects as weak, evil, and dangerous. For this first Women Conference, we have decided to focus on women who had written stories, and illuminated them, across Europe, from the Middle Ages to the Baroque.

Suggested themes include but are not limited to:

- female poets from the North and South of France (possibly not exclusively Marie de France and Christine de Pizan), German women writers other than Hildegard, Italian and Spanish female writers

ILLUMINATION

From convents and courts to the first literary salons. Before the 12th century, less than 1% of manuscripts are signed by a woman. Even in women's monasteries, less than 15% of manuscripts can be attributed to a woman. However, many women's monasteries had a scriptorium. In the 9th century, the abbess of Chelles had a dozen nuns work on a three-volume commentary on Augustine's Psalms. In Germany, a study published in January 2019 shows, thanks to traces of blue pigment on the dentition of a nun who died almost 1,000 years ago, her role in making illuminations.

A study that suggests that copyists and illuminators were more numerous than we recognise.

This first conference aims to bring together as many experts on medieval women illuminators as possible.

Suggested themes include but are not limited to:

- Women in Religious Communities of the Middle Ages (Elisabeth Bissner, Sibylla von Bondorf, Katharina von Brugg, Gertrud Bungen, Claricia, Diemud or Diemudis Guda, Barbara Gwichtmacherin, Kunigunde Holzschuh, Gisela von Kerssenbrock, Magdalena Kremer, Magdalena Lengin, Adelheid von Owe, Agnes Rossin, "Sister Adelheid / Schwester Adelheid", Sister "H"/ Schwester "H", Elsbeth Toßpplin, Elisabeth von Winsen, Cornelia van Wulfscckercke)
- Laywomen artists, such as Bourgot Le Noir or Jeanne de Montbaston

ART

After 50 years from the publishing of *Why have there been no women artists?* by Linda Nochlin which is the corner-stone of a gendered art history, the discipline is still divided between the feminist and the socio-economical approach, and scholars' dedication to the topic is witnessing the demand of further multidisciplinary investigation.

The recent attention to the role and function of female patrons from Middle Ages to the Enlightenment is an additional testimony of the complexity and the interwoven cultural aspects which custom the theme.

Even if the very last decade has seen an increasingly number of study on women in the art, which have contributed to a booming exhibitions dedicated to them, such as Sofonisba Anguissola and Lavinia Fontana, Giovanna Garzoni, Artemisia at the National Gallery of London, the field still requires an objective critical reflection.

Suggested themes include but are not limited to:

- women artists: painters, embroiders, etchers, sculptress, musicians, singers, scientists;
- women patrons from Middle Age to 18th century;
- women artists and their writings.

ARCHITECTURE

The field of architecture is still a very masculine realm: on account of 100 affirmed architects, only 4 or 5 are women. This unbalance is a consequence of a cultural tradition which goes far back in the history. Indeed, we do know that women worked in buildings projects since the Middle Age and their presence is annotated in many archival documents all over Europe. On the other hand the activity of the architetrice Plautilla Bricci in 17th century Rome could not be explained simply as a rare accident of the history.

Women devoted to mathematic or geometry could have been the missing gap between the practice and the theory in the field.

The aim of this panel is to reunite research and investigation on the subject of women in architecture from the middle age until the end of the 18th century, trying to understand a complicated, though still forgotten chapter both in the history of women and architecture.

Suggested themes include but are not limited to:

- women architects;
- women patrons of architecture;
- women in mathematics, geometry and physic

To submit a paper (which will be limited to 20 minutes), please send an abstract no more than 500-word long in English, French, German, or Italian, along with a short 100-word biography, before May 15, 2021, to annualconferencewia@gmail.com.

The conference will be held in Rome, and Lugano, with the presence of the of the participants, or as a virtual event, pending future sanitary measures.

Reference:

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