

Materiality of Terracotta Sculpture 1400–1600 (online/Warsaw, 9–10 Sep 21)

University of Warsaw, Sep 9–10, 2021

Registration deadline: Sep 9, 2021

Zuzanna Sarnecka

Modelled, Fired, Transformed: Materiality of Terracotta Sculpture 1400 - 1600

Terracotta has long suffered from the view that it is merely an auxiliary medium, to be analyzed primarily in relation to its role as a building material or its preparatory use in the design of more prestigious bronze or marble sculptures. Yet in recent decades scholars have shown that terracotta sculpture revolutionized the Italian fifteenth-century art scene and during the sixteenth century its artistic significance resonated in other parts of Europe. The success of terracotta sculpture at that time should be credited to the technical ingenuity, including glazing its surface, believed in the Renaissance to have been unknown in antiquity and therefore artistically and intellectually innovative.

The growing field of studies of terracotta sculpture contributed to the re-evaluation of the material but at the same time it divided small-scale terracotta figurines from large-scale sculptures. The arbitrary distinctions into the fine art and the applied arts, with the latter category often dismissed as purely decorative, obscured the image of the artistic production and neglected the technical similarities between the two products. However, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries all terracotta sculptures solicited a complementary range of interactions through the agency of their material and form.

Modern conservation research assists art historians in thinking about the practice, artistic technique and production of terracotta sculpture. Various teams of conservators use similar methods to analyse small- and large-scale artefacts. This provides a scientific justification for inclusive examination of terracotta sculpture from that period. This two-day conference held at the University of Warsaw will offer a possibility of the full exchange of ideas between researchers working on terracotta as a sculptural material.

PROGRAMME

Day 1 — Thursday, 9th September 2021

9.20–9.30

Welcome and Introduction:

Zuzanna Sarnecka and Agnieszka Dziki (University of Warsaw)

9.30–11.00

Session 1 – Mimetic Ventures

Federica Carta (Université de Picardie-Jules Verne, Amiens/ Università degli Studi di Perugia):

Jeux d'échelle: glazed ornament between architecture and altarpieces

Erin Giffin (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München/ Villa I Tatti):

Exceeding Expectations: Traversing Material Boundaries through Terracotta (online)

Virna Ravaglia (University of Genova):

Antonio Begarelli and Small-Scale Terracotta Sculpture

Discussion

11.00–11.15

Coffee Break

11.15–12.45

Session 2 – Forging Identities

Jeanette Kohl (University of California, Riverside):

A Material Anthropology of Resemblance. Quattrocento Portrait Sculpture in Terracotta

Francesca Padovani (Università di Trento):

Hans Reichle's Contribution to the Practice of Terracotta Sculpture in Tyrol (online)

Oxana Smagol (Moscow State University):

The Problem of Terracotta Sculptural Cornice of Palazzo Bolognini, Bologna (online)

Discussion

12.45–14.00 Lunch

14.00–15.30

Session 3 – Terracotta and Design

Catherine Kupiec (Independent Researcher):

Luca della Robbia's Labors in Terracotta

Roberta Olson (New-York Historical Society):

The Transformation of Della Robbia Glazed Terracotta Garlands from Luca through Giovanni: The Promise of Immortality and Paradise in a Frame (online)

Dylan Smith (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.):

Clay Models in Verrocchio's Workshop (possibly online)

Discussion

15.30–15.45 Coffee Break

15.45–16.45

Session 4 – Sculpture and Painting

Andreas Huth (Technische Universität Berlin):

Face and Surface. Some Observations on Painted Quattrocento Terracotta Busts

David Lucidi (Independent Researcher):

The Primacy of Terracotta. Sculptures for Painting in the 16th-century Renaissance Florence (online)

Discussion

17.00–18.00

Keynote Lecture:

Marietta Cambareri (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) (online)

Day 2 – Friday 10th September 2021

10.00–11.00

Keynote Lecture:

Giancarlo Gentilini (Università degli Studi di Perugia)

11.00–12.30

Session 5 – Devotional Terracotta

Rachel Boyd (Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.):

Familiar Visions: Glazed Terracotta, Serial Production, and Devotional Experience in Renaissance Italy (possibly online)

Marco Scansani (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa):

Giovanni de Fondulis, a “scultor tere” for the Ordo Eremitarum

Zuzanna Sarnecka (University of Warsaw):

Popes’ Clay: Devotional Terracotta Sculpture in the Papal States

Discussion

12.30–14.00 Lunch

14.00–15.30

Session 6 – Agency of Clay

Bart van Eekelen (Utrecht University):

Materiality as Incentive to Stylistic Innovation in Earthenware from Bergen op Zoom (15th-16th century)

Nicola Jennings (Courtauld Institute of Art):

Making Necessity a Virtue: Lorenzo Mercadante and the Beginnings of Sevillian Terracotta (online)

João Rolaça (University of Lisbon/ Vicarte - Glass and Ceramics for the Arts):
Monumental Terracotta Sculpture in Portugal before and after Hodart- Artistic and Technical
Approach

Discussion

15.30–16.00

Closing Remarks

16.00–18.00

Visit to the National Gallery in Warsaw

The conference will be organised as a hybrid onsite/online event. It will be possible to listen to papers and join the discussions via Zoom. Please contact us at z.sarnecka@uw.edu.pl or dzikiagnieszka@gmail.com if you would like to join us in person or to request the event link.

Reference:

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