

The Imaginary Drinker (Reading, 11–13 Apr 2013)

39th Annual Association of Art Historians Conference and Bookfair, University of

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Deadline: Nov 12, 2012

DESBUISSONS, INHA

The Imaginary Drinker: Bodies and Beverages in Art and Society

Session convenors: Frédérique Desbuissons et Edward Payne

Drinks and drinkers permeate the history of art. Since the Renaissance, the social, cultural and symbolic functions of drinking have featured widely, in historical and religious painting, genre scenes, portraiture and independent still-lives. By representing the bodily act of drinking – simultaneously human necessity, pleasure and social habit – these works constitute a corpus rich in social, cultural and anthropological implications. The analysis of drinks and drinkers, however, has long been left to food historians. This session seeks to explore the fruitful exchange between art and food by examining the impact of drinks on the formal analysis of art, on aesthetic theories and notions of creation, as well as on artistic sociabilities and sensory encounters. If we consider the drink as a global object, then images of drinkers form an ideal perspective from which to investigate not only the relationship between sensory experience and the social and cultural dimensions of artistic representation, but also the underlying tensions between human production and necessity peculiar to any society. Topics for discussion may include, but are not limited to:

- Divine drinkers: the Feast of the Gods, Bacchic processions, the Last Supper
- The vice of intemperance: Noah and Lot
- The institution of drinking: social norms and representations
- Gendered drinkers
- The materiality of drinks: real and imaginary pleasures and correspondences
- Drinking and its associated rituals: eating, smoking, card playing...
- Artistic and drinking sociabilities: corporatist banquets, artist cafes, brasseries, ginguettes, pubs...
- Creativity and intoxication: from the Dionysian to the decadent

If you would like to propose a paper for this session please follow the proposal guidelines outlined on the paper proposal form on the AAH website:

<http://www.aah.org.uk/annual-conference/2013-conference>

Reference:

CFP: The Imaginary Drinker (Reading, 11-13 Apr 2013). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 19, 2012 (accessed Jul 15, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/3497>>.