

Copying and Imitation in Early Modern Architecture (Ghent, 15–16 Jun 23)

VANDENHOVE Centre for Architecture and Art - Ghent - Belgium, Jun 15–16, 2023

Nele De Raedt, UCLouvain

International Conference:

Practices of Copying and Imitation in Early Modern Architecture (1400-1700).

Organisers: Elizabeth Merrill (Ghent University) and Nele De Raedt (UCLouvain)

This international conference starts from the premise that practices of imitation and copying were integral to the making of architecture in early modern Europe. Theoretical discourses of the period posited that architecture was an art in constant evolution based on imitation (*imitatio*). Extending from classical rhetoric, imitation was said to entail an element of invention, which allowed for the adaptation and skilled use of models. Following this formulation, scholars of early modern architecture have written extensively about the numerous parallels between literary and architectural theory, mining the former in devising frameworks for the conceptualization of architecture.

By contrast, this conference seeks to direct attention to verifiable practices and material documentation of copying and imitation in the workshop and on the building site, and how this evidence sheds new light on the production of architecture. Individual conference papers address commonplace processes of copying and imitation, as manifest in techniques of traced drawing, the manipulation of models, the casting of ornaments, writing on architecture, and the reproduction of decorative details. In considering copying and imitation as part of routine practice, often motivated by needs of economy, efficiency, and scale, the conference aims to better understand the driving forces that enabled the rich and varied architectural culture of the early modern period.

PROGRAM

Thursday 15 June

13:30 Welcome

Session 1: Imitation as a design process I

14:00–14:35 David Hemsoll “Imitation and its Changing Means and Ends in the Architecture of Andrea Palladio”

14:35–15:10 Costantino Ceccanti “Sur les cinq manieres d’edifices: Serlian Architecture in Six-

teenth Century Tuscany"

Session 2: Imitation as a design process II

15:45–16:20 Gregorio Astengo "Composing a Model for Real Estate Development: Building Guides in Early Modern London"

16:20–16:55 Peter Heinrich Jahn "ars combinatoria: Practices of the Early Modern Pattern-based Architectural Draft"

17:30 Key-note lecture: Maarten Delbeke "Metonymy or Imitation? The Bones, Stones and Stars of St. Rasso in Bayern"

Friday 16 June

Session 3: Questions of authorship

09:00–09:35 Dario Donetti "Critical Copies: The Codex Mellon and Collective Design in Raphael's Rome"

09:35–10:10 Elizabeth Merrill "Architectural Tracings and the Fragility of Design Authorship"

10:10–10:45 Nele De Raedt "Designing an Urban Residence for the Prince and the Best Citizen: Practices of Direct Copying and Imitation in Platina's *De regimine principum* and *De optimo cive*"

Session 4: Production process and seriality

11:15–11:50 Merlijn Hurx "'Ikea-architecture' in the Middle Ages: the Emergence of a Commodity Market for Building Components in the Low Countries"

11:50–12:25 Jessica Gritti "Terracotta Architectures: Serial Production and the Diffusion of all'antica Models in Fifteenth Century Lombard Architecture"

Session 5: Techniques of copying

14:00–14:35 Anna Bortolozzi "Transparent Paper as Medium of Copying in the Early Modern Architectural Workshop"

14:35–15:10 Carolyn Yerkes "Monument as Matrix: Architectural Inscriptions, Squeezes, and the History of Printed Words"

Session 6: Imitation of exempla

15:45–16:20 Alina Aggujaro "Architecture's Code: Construction Techniques, Architectural Details and Imitation in the Palace of Adriano Castellesi"

16:20–16:55 Alexis Culotta "The Many Faces of Architecture: The Circle of Raphael and the Roman Frescoed Façade"

16:55–17:30 Maria Teresa Sambin de Norcen "Donatello and Ancient Models, Donatello as a Model. His work in the Basilica of Saint Anthony, Padua (1444-1454)"

Reference:

CONF: Copying and Imitation in Early Modern Architecture (Ghent, 15-16 Jun 23). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 28, 2023 (accessed Dec 18, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/39170>>.