The Power of Flowers, 1500–1750 (Ghent, 14–15 Jun 23)

Ghent, Belgium, Jun 14–15, 2023

Jaya Remond

The Power of Flowers, 1500-1750.

Flowers and fruits have been mobilized as expressions of power and counter-power since long before the poet Allen Ginsberg coined the slogan “Flower Power” in 1965 to encourage nonviolent protest and Hippies in San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury area weaved flowers in their hair. In the newly founded Dutch Republic, the house of Orange-Nassau relied on the orange not only as a short-hand for its name, but also a signifier of the trading empire it developed; Sultan Süleiman the Magnificent was known for his taste in gardens and incorporated flowers in his official insignia (Tughra), a complex work of calligraphy that conveyed the power and legitimacy of his rule. During the early modern (re)discovery of nature, flowers and their fruits, local and foreign, offered unique promises for profit while their pictorial representations promoted their commercial potential and could also stand as artistic objects. This interdisciplinary conference aims to investigate how flowers, and the fruits they produce, represented power in a myriad of ways in the early modern world. The speakers will address the function of flowers (including the flowering process, culminating in fruit) as tools of political, religious, or commercial power, as instruments of global and local knowledge transfer and appropriation, as well as their role in art-making, science, and the construction of gender between c. 1500-1750.

Organization
This conference is organized by Prof. dr. Jaya Remond, Assistant Professor of Early Modern Art History at Ghent University, and Dr. Catherine Powell-Warren, FWO Postdoctoral Researcher in Art History at Ghent University. For any practical questions, please contact Lien Vandenberghe (lien.vandenberghe@ugent.be) or Lisa Schepens (l.schepens@ugent.be).

Program

14 JUNE 2023 – Location: Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent

9:00-9:30 Registration and coffee

9:30 Welcome remarks

9:45 Far Removed from the Hortus Conclusus: Women Harnessing Flowers and Power (Part I)

Zara Kesterton (Cambridge)
Flower Girls: Pastoralism, Fashioning, and Gender Politics in Eighteenth-Century France

Lucia Querejazu Escobari (Zurich)
A Rose from Lima and Kantutas for Pomata: Saint Rose of Lima, Our Lady of Pomata, and the Construction of the Symbolical Garden of the Colonial Andes

11:00 Coffee Break

11:15 Far Removed from the Hortus Conclusus: Women Harnessing Flowers and Power (Part II)

Henrietta Ward (Cambridge)
Exchanging Seeds: Agnes Block and her Flower Drawings

Bożena Popiołek and Anna Penkała-Jastrębska (Krakow)
The Private Garden as a Symbol of Innovation and Power at the Noble Women's Courts in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century

12:30 Lunch Break

14:00 Philosophy and Medicine: The Intrinsic Power of Flowers and Fruits, Real and Imagined (Part I)

Fabrizio Baldassarri (Venice)
The Silence of the Lambs: Sensitive and Vegetative Powers in Plantanimals

Océane Magnier (Tours)
Violet Powder: The Perfume of the Flower and the Scent of the Iris

15:15 Coffee Break

15:30 Re-Centering the Garden: The Garden as a Backdrop for Memory, Art, and Networking

Arjan van Dixhoorn (Utrecht)
Re-Centering the Garden in Philosophical Life: Hondius's Dapes inemptae of 1618/1621

Tine L. Meganck (Brussels)
Bruegel's Spring Garden as Mastery of Nature

Klara Alen (Antwerp)
From Rubens's Garden to The Swan Inn. Tulips and Trust in Early Modern Antwerp

17:30 Keynote Address

Claudia Swan (St Louis)
Handling Flowers in Early Modern Europe: A Florilegium of Gestures

18:45 Reception

15 JUNE 2023 - Location: Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent

9:30 Trading, Exchanging, and Controlling Plants and Flowers (Part I)

Philippe Depairon (Kyoto)

New Flowers in Old Yamato

Elena Falletti (Castellanza)
How Botanical Gardens Helped to Shape International Law

10:45 Coffee Break

11:00 Trading, Exchanging, and Controlling Plants and Flowers (Part II)

James M. Córdova (Boulder)
Art in Bloom: The Polysemy of Flowers in Colonial Mexican Visual Culture

Daniel Margócsy (Cambridge)
The Flowers of St Thomas: Colonial Botany and the Hortus malabaricus, c. 1680

12:15 Lunch Break

13:30 Philosophy and Medicine: The Intrinsic Power of Flowers and Fruits, Real and Imagined (Part II)

Anna Svensson (Uppsala)
Arvid Månsson's Örta-Book: Translating Medicinal Plant Knowledge in Seventeenth-Century Sweden

Dominic Olariu (Marburg)
Herbal Books at Court as a Gesture of Medical Erudition and Medical Providence

14:45 Coffee Break

15:00 Paper Plants and the Epistemic Power of Flower Imagery (Part I)

Clio Rom (Springdale, Arkansas)
On Being Planted and Portrayed: Horticulture and Floral Imagery in Seicento Rome through the works of Anna Maria Vaiani

Lara de Mérode (Brussels)
Hortus floreus Archiducis Leopoldi or the Power of Flowers at the Service of the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm (1614-1662)

16:15 Paper Plants and the Epistemic Power of Flower Imagery (Part II)

Sheila Barker (Philadelphia)
Giovanni Battista Ferrari's "Flora, overo Cultura dei fiori" (1638)

Katherine M. Reinhart (Broome County, New York)
Painting Plants, Engraving Gloire

17:30 Concluding Remarks

Registration

The conference will take place in person at the Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent. The presentations will not be live-streamed or recorded.

Conference registration is required. The registration fee of 20 euros (10 euros for students) includes two lunches and a reception following the keynote address.

Registration link: https://congrezzo.ugent.be/power_of_flowers/
Conference website: https://www.ugent.be/lw/nl/power_of_flowers

Accessibility

Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent
Fernand Scribedreef 1
9000 Ghent

[Directions: https://www.mskgent.be/bezoek/toegankelijkheid]

The auditorium is wheelchair accessible.

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