

Horace Vernet (AAH Reading, 11–13 Apr 13)

University of Reading, Apr 11–13, 2013

Deadline: Nov 12, 2012

Daniel Harkett

Association of Art Historians Annual Conference 2013

Call for Papers for session on

Horace Vernet (1789-1863) and the Thresholds of Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture

"A sort of agile and frequent masturbation, an irritation of the French epidermis." So said Baudelaire of Horace Vernet's pictures in his Salon of 1846, articulating a negative view of the artist's work that has suffused accounts of nineteenth-century French art ever since. Despite Baudelaire's disdain for Vernet's "lowly" art that he thought bereft of stylistic conviction or artistic inspiration, the critic nevertheless recognized that Vernet might be thought of as "the most complete representative of his age." Scrambling hierarchies of genre, blurring boundaries between media, and eschewing grand-manner seriousness, Vernet's images seemed to many observers to reproduce the fluidity, the formlessness, even the futility of modern life.

If Vernet's minor role within master narratives of nineteenth-century art stems from the difficulty of placing him within traditional categories of "style" or movement, or the idea (pace Baudelaire) that his work simply does not qualify as "art," this AAH session places Vernet's multiple engagements at the center of a new effort to explore the sites of permeability and interchange that characterize nineteenth-century visual culture. It is precisely Vernet's status as a threshold figure—challenging divisions between "high" and "low," avant-garde and academic, public and private, emergent and established media—that make him compelling at a moment when art historians are calling these binaries into question.

In this session we propose to bring together a group of emerging and established scholars to revisit Vernet's work. We particularly welcome papers that explore the implications of Vernet's multivalent practice for how we understand the construction and contestation of nineteenth-century artistic and cultural categories.

Please send proposals (250 words) by 12 Nov 2012 to Daniel Harkett (Rhode Island School of Design, dharkett@risd.edu) and Katie Hornstein (Dartmouth College, khornstein@gmail.com).

Reference:

CFP: Horace Vernet (AAH Reading, 11-13 Apr 13). In: Arthist.net, Oct 24, 2012 (accessed Sep 21, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/4070>>.