Publics of the First Public Museums (Durham, 23-24 May 24)

Seminar Room, Institute of Advanced Study, Durham University (UK), May 23–24, 2024

Lucia Rossi

Publics of the First Public Museums (18th and 19th Centuries).
II. Literary Discourses.

Organized by:
Carla Mazzarelli (Università della Svizzera italiana)
Stefano Cracolici (Durham University)

The workshop Publics of the First Public Museums (18th and 19th Centuries). II. Literary Discourses is an integral part of the research project Visibility Reclaimed. Experiencing Rome's First Public Museums (1733-1870). An Analysis of Public Audiences in a Transnational Perspective. Marking the second of three encounters, this workshop delves into the examination of literary discourses vital to understanding the experiences of early museum-goers. Travel literature has long represented a privileged source for investigating the origins of the first public museums and the practices of access to public and private collections in Europe. However, in the light of recent studies aimed at deepening the material history of the museum and the encounter of the public with the institutions, these sources deserve a closer scrutiny in both methodological and critical terms. Following the inaugural Rome session that focused on institutional sources, the Durham workshop turns its gaze towards the rich literary narratives with the aim of analysing them also in a comparative perspective with the primary sources. As museums sought to define and engage their public, literature often became both a mirror and a mould, reflecting and shaping societal perceptions. With a spotlight on interdisciplinary and transnational approaches, the Durham workshop calls for a deeper probe into the visual and material realms of museums, emphasizing the interplay between literary discourses and artworks, collections, display, space, audiences "narrated" in the museum and the evolving institutional norms of the 18th and 19th Centuries.

Programme

Thursday 23 May 2024

9:00 Welcoming Remarks
Ita MacCarthy (Durham University, Institute of Medieval and Early Modern Studies, Director)
I. Methodological Reflections
This session serves as an introduction to the workshop, providing a shared reflection on the current state of research and the future prospects. It will focus on the comparative, interdisciplinary,

and intermedial analysis of literatures within the field of Museum Studies.
Chair: Christoph Frank (Università della Svizzera italiana)

9:15 Carla Mazzarelli (Università della Svizzera italiana)
Letterature e pubblici del Museo: fonti o modelli?

9:45 Stefano Cracolici (Durham University)
Musei d'Arcadia

10:15 Marco Maggi (Università della Svizzera italiana)
"Tutta l'arte del buon governo trastullando imparare in un passeggio": A Literary Rearrangement of the Duke of Savoy's Great Gallery

10:45-11:00 Discussion

Coffee Break

II. Museums at Hand
This session will analyse literary genres for museum visitors, like guidebooks, and the role of periodicals in broadening museum audience engagement. Discussions will cover the evolution of these texts and new reading approaches introduced by Digital Humanities.
Chair: Giovanna Capitelli (Università Roma Tre)

11:15 Damiano Delle Fave (Sapienza Università di Roma)
Pubblici dei musei a Roma nelle guide dell'Ottocento

11:35 Gaetano Cascino (Università della Svizzera italiana)
"I Romani non frequentano le gallerie di Roma": discussioni e stereotipi sui visitatori dei musei di Roma nella stampa di secondo Ottocento

11:55 Pietro Costantini (Università di Teramo)
Viaggio in Abruzzo: Vincenzo Bindi e I Monumenti storici ed artistici degli Abruzzi

12:15-12:30 Discussion

12.30 Keynote Address
Chair: Carla Mazzarelli (Università della Svizzera italiana)

Carole Paul (University of California, Santa Barbara)
The Museum Going Public in Eighteenth-Century Italy

13:00 Discussion

III. Museums on the Beaten Track
This session focuses on museum experiences in travel literature, including correspondence, diaries, and travel accounts. Discussions will specifically examine the unique perspectives of visitor-narrators and how published literary accounts of museum visits compare or contrast with unpublished sources.
Chair: Mauro Vincenzo Fontana (Università Roma Tre)

14:15 Rosa Maria Giusto (Napoli, CNR)
La “città-museo” e i resoconti dei viaggiatori: le Notizie di Roma scritte dal Sig.re Aless.o Galilei

14:35 Luca Piccoli (Università della Svizzera italiana)
Reise nach Italien dell’architetto Simon-Louis Du Ry: resoconti pubblici e privati sui musei in Italia a confronto

14:55 Ludovica Scalzo (Università Roma Tre)
“The torch, like Promethean fire, makes every statue live”: visite a lume di fiaccola nei musei romani dai resoconti di viaggio della prima metà dell’Ottocento

15:15-15:30 Discussion

Coffee Break

IV. Varieties of Sightseeing
This session explores the variety of visiting spaces, perspectives, and geographies in the 18th and 19th centuries, including museums, monuments, private palaces, and studios. Discussions will focus on what these diverse viewpoints reveal about sociocultural dynamics.
Chair: David García Cueto (Museo Nacional del Prado)

15.45 Daniel Crespo-Delgado (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)
Los monumentos y las colecciones de arte en la literatura de viajes española (y por España) de la Ilustración

16:05 Victoria Arzhaeva (EPHE-PSL, laboratoire Histara)
Les pensionnaires russes au Vatican: l’expérience muséale à travers
la correspondence artistique et les journaux intimes du XIXe siècle

16:25 Michele Amedei (Università di Pisa)
“The Studio was a monument of his intelligent taste and æsthetic
culture”: l’atelier dell’artista nei resoconti e diari di viaggio di visitatori nordamericani nella Toscana dell’Ottocento

16:45-17:00 Discussion

17:00 Keynote Address
Chair: Stefano Cracolici (Durham University)

Christoph Frank (Università della Svizzera italiana)
In the Shadow of the Americas: The Humboldts and Schinkel in the Rome of the Early 1800s

17:30 Discussion

Friday 24 May 2024

V. Literary Landscapes
This session aims to reflect on how literature provides a multiface- ted view of the museum experience, extending the analysis to landscape traversal. It will consider the poetic charm of narrative

evocations that capture the emotions of a setting and the ekphrastic descriptions that articulate artworks in written words.
Chair: Ita MacCarthy (Durham University)

9:00 Cecilia Paolini (Università di Teramo)
Il Controcanto di Clio: George Sand e l'inascoltata interpretazione del paesaggio italiano tra spazio barocco e romanticismo progressista

9:20 Elizaveta Antashyan (Sapienza Università di Roma)
"A Walk through the Hermitage": Russia's First Public Museum and its Reflections in Literature during the reign of Alexander II (1855–1881)

9:40-10:00 Discussion

VI. Museum Tales
This session is dedicated to literary texts that transform museum visits into narratives. It explores how notions of time and space during such visits compare with the temporal dynamics of literary narration and how the perception of the visited places differs from travel accounts.
Chair: Sara Garau (Università della Svizzera italiana)

10:00 Lucia Rossi (Università della Svizzera italiana)
Il "Museo di Roma" tra esperienza, ricordo e costruzione narrativa: I Miei Ricordi e le Lettere di Massimo d'Azeglio

10:20 Meghan Freeman (Yale University)
The Intimacies of Art Travel in Henry James

10:40 Corinne Pontillo (Università di Catania)
"S'arrestò davanti alla Gioconda": visitare il Museo del Louvre attraverso la letteratura

11:00-11:15 Discussion

Coffee Break

VII. Sensory Visits
This session explores how the concept of the museum as a space to "read" differs from its traditional perception as a space to "visit." It will examine, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the implica- tions of this distinction in literary and museological discourses, with a special focus on the sensory dimension of navigating through texts and the museum.
Chair: Marco Maggi (Università della Svizzera italiana)

11:30 Isabelle Pichet (UQTR, Trois Rivières) and Dorit Kluge (VICTORIA | International University, Berlin)
Experiencing 18th century art exhibitions in Paris and Dresden– a sensory interplay between exhibition and text

11:50 Sofia Bollini (Università Luigi Vanvitelli, Napoli / Università della Svizzera Italiana)
Il preparato anatomico come oggetto museale e letterario nella cultura tardottocentesca

12:10 Laura Stefanescu (Villa I Tatti, Harvard University)
Vernon Lee’s Gallery Diaries: An Aesthetic Bodily Experience of Italian Museums in the Early Twentieth Century

Discussion and Conclusion

The Workshop is part of Research Project Visibility Reclaimed. Experiencing Rome’s First Public Museums (1733-1870). An Analysis of Public Audiences in a Transnational Perspective (SNSF 100016_212922)

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Information and streaming on request visibilityreclaimed@gmail.com

Venue of the workshop
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