# 4 Sessions at RSA (Boston, 20–22 Mar 25)

Renaissance Society of America's Annual Meeting, Boston, Mar 20–22, 2025

ArtHist.net Redaktion

[1] Stepping Outside of the Workshop: The Lives of Drawings in the Early Modern Period.
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[3] Non c'è: Imagining and Reconstructing the Unbuilt in Early Modern Italy.
[4] The Global Genoese in the Atlantic World.

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[1] Stepping Outside of the Workshop: The Lives of Drawings in the Early Modern Period.
From: Rebecca I. Arnheim
Deadline: 1 August 2024

In 1501, two cartoons by famed Florentine artists, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, drew admiring crowds. According to Francis Ames-Lewis (2000), this event marked a shift in the public perception of drawings from a by-product of artistic production to works of art that possess aesthetic value while revealing the artist's creativity and genius. The rise in appreciation of drawings during the early modern period led to the autonomy of such objects.

With its broad scope, this panel invites papers from diverse perspectives that explore drawings besides their original purpose of assisting in creation and reconsidering their new purpose, or "afterlife," upon its fulfillment. It aims to delve into the subsequent phases of the drawings' existence, examining how they were repurposed, circulated, and recontextualized within and outside the workshop. Many artists, such as Raphael and Rubens, had collections of drawings for inspiration that merged works by the workshop's master, his pupils, and fellow artists. The level of finish does not necessarily indicate a drawing's afterlife. Thus, the exploration of drawn studies is also welcomed. The panel seeks to examine drawing beyond traditional debates of patronage and attribution to focus on the object itself. We warmly welcome papers investigating how drawings transcend their original function to gain independent significance, such as becoming collected objects or serving as tokens within the practice of gift-exchange.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- The evolution of drawings from workshop tools to collectible artifacts.
- The role of drawings in early modern gift-exchange practices.
- The impact of patronage and collecting practices on the status and value of drawings.
- Comparative analyses of drawings as artistic, social, and economic capital objects.
- The preservation, cataloging, and historiography of early modern drawings.
- The interplay between drawings' materiality and subsequent uses and interpretations.

Welcome methodologies include, but are not limited to, provenance, digital humanities, materiality, global

studies, social studies, collection studies, conservation studies, and curatorship studies.

Interested scholars are invited to submit a paper title (15-word max), an abstract of no more than 200 words, and a one-page resume to rarnheim@bu.edu by August 1. Selected participants will be notified by August 10.

We welcome submissions from historians, art historians, and scholars from related disciplines. Papers that incorporate interdisciplinary approaches and new methodologies are particularly encouraged. This panel aims to foster a rich dialogue about the diverse trajectories of drawings and their broader cultural, social, and economic implications in the early modern period. We look forward to your contributions to what promises to be a compelling and insightful discussion of the dynamic afterlives of early modern drawings.

Sponsor: The Netherlands Interuniversity Institute for Art History (NIKI), Florence.
Proposals Deadline: August 1, 2024
Notification Date: August 10, 2024

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[2] Early Modern Caves and Shadows.
From: Andrew Chen
Deadline: 1 August 2024

In philosophy and the arts, the cave is a place of ambiguity and mystery. It can be above ground (as in the inside of a mountain) or underground. By definition, there is little or no light inside a cave, yet once a light is introduced, the cave becomes a world of shadows, as is the case for Plato, for whom the shadow on the cave wall stands as the prototypical icon. The status of the shadow in Plato's cave is, itself, not clear at the outset to the observer. Like an image, it requires interpretation. Caves in ancient literature also invite interpretation. For example, one of the most wondrous places in Homer's Odyssey, with its honey and stone looms, is the Cave of the Nymphs in Ithaca, seen by Porphyry as an allegory of the cosmos and the human condition. A cave or grotto is also the locus of love and perhaps even divine intervention in Dido and Aeneas's tryst in Virgil's Aeneid.
From the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, caves captured the attention of artists and thinkers. The former produced myriad representations of mines and their entrances, mythological spaces such as Vulcan's forge, the natural dwellings of ascetics, and other grottoes. Caves were built in gardens to house sculptures such as Michelangelo's Prigioni. Scholars engrossed in optics and optical devices such as the camera obscura saw the cave as an analogue of these and the eye. Caves were also invitations for philosophers and natural scientists to reflect on the nature of light, shadows, optics, and the human condition.
We invite proposals that address caves and their shadows in art, literature, and philosophy.
The following is a list of possible topics: the interpretation of ancient caves in art, literature, philosophy, and archaeology; caves and optics; the philosophy of light and shadows; caves in Renaissance gardens; Aristotelian physics and Platonic metaphysics; the representation of caves in Renaissance art; and the aesthetics of the grotesque.

Please submit a 150-word proposal and a 2-page CV with your full name and e-mail address to Andrew Chen (ahc45@txstate.edu) and Denis Robichaud (drobichaud@nd.edu) by 11:59pm CST on August 1, 2024.

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[3] Non c'è: Imagining and Reconstructing the Unbuilt in Early Modern Italy.
From: Jasmine Cloud
Deadline: 26 July 2024

The streets of Italian cities abound with architectural specters: the buildings that were demolished by fire, war, and developing infrastructures; and the buildings that never were, those that were conceived but never born due to the lack of power, wealth, or labor. What methods and questions must we develop for such absent and modified architecture? How do we synthesize what exists with the speculative or ephemeral in the urban fabric? For this panel, we invite papers that resurrect and imagine the unbuilt environments of these cities. We seek abstracts that analyze or reconstruct demolished or drastically renovated buildings, as well as papers that propose hypothetical constructions of buildings that were designed but never built. We encourage both digital and non-digital projects that explicate and illustrate the historical record and appearance of spaces.

Please send your proposal to Alexandra Dodson (adodson@ndm.edu), Jasmine Cloud (cloud@ucmo.edu), and Braden Scott (braden.scott@mail.mcgill.ca). Proposals should include your title (max. 15 words), abstract (max. 200 words), and brief CV (max. 300 words) by 26 July.

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[4] The Global Genoese in the Atlantic World.
From: Rebecca Gill
Deadline: 22 July 2024

The Republic of Genoa was an idiosyncratic polity within early modern Italy, defined by the private wealth, mercantilism, and cultural adaptability of its citizens operating in Genoa and abroad. With the signing of a new constitution in 1528, which bound Genoa's fate to that of the Habsburg Empire, the Republic entered a "Golden Age". But as with other Golden Ages in Europe, Genoa's prosperity and cultural flourishing was intricately linked to wider global systems and networks.
Recent scholarship has reassessed the global entanglements of early modern Italian societies and the ways in which globality shaped Italian cultural and artistic life. However, the impact of mercantile, imperial, and colonial activities on Genoa's history and cultural landscape – and that of its extensive diaspora – are comparatively understudied.
This panel seeks to address these gaps by exploring the often overlooked roles played by Genoese actors on a global stage. With specific interest in exchanges occurring around and within the Atlantic World, this panel aims to unpick the secolo d'oro dei Genovesi and reassess Genoa's cultural impact from a decolonial and interdisciplinary lens. We particularly welcome papers that explore the Genoese in the Americas, Caribbean, and West Africa, and how diverse interactions in these places fuelled economic prosperity for the Genoese.
Paper topics may address:
- The Genoese presence within the Spanish Empire
- Cultural and material exchanges between Genoa and the Atlantic World
- The Genoese and the Atlantic Slave Trade
- Transatlantic networks of Genoese financiers and merchants
- Genoese cultural adaptability
- New approaches to the Genoese "Golden Age"

- The construction of Genoese identity during the Golden Age, as portrayed in art, architecture, material and literary culture.

Please send proposals via email to Rebecca Gill (rmg65@cam.ac.uk) and Ana Howie (ach278@cornell.edu).
The proposal should include a title (15 words max.), an abstract (200 words max.), and a non-narrative CV (max one page). Please also provide your full name, current affiliation, and email address.

Reference:
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