Sculptural Models, Themes & Genres between Britain & Italy (London,16-17 May 25)

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, May 16–17, 2025
Deadline: Sep 30, 2024

Kira d'Alburquerque

"Academy, Market, Industry: Sculptural Models, Themes, and Genres between Britain and Italy, c. 1742 – 1854".

Organised by:
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The University of Buckingham and the Victoria and Albert Museum are organising a two-day interdisciplinary conference on the role played by British-Italian artistic exchanges in shaping sculptural models, themes, and genres between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
The conference adopts a longue durée approach, focusing on the century when these exchanges were most intense: from 1742, when Prince Hoare of Bath the Elder arrived in Rome – the first documented English sculptor to spend a period of study in the city – to the opening of the Crystal Palace in Sydenham in 1854, whose sculptural decoration was directed by the Milanese Raffaele Monti.

Throughout this period, the two traditions became interdependent, developing an artistic dialogue that influenced sculptural models and themes not only in Italy and Britain but also across Europe and the territories of the expanding British Empire, from the Indian subcontinent to the Americas.

This conference adopts a typological approach, investigating how academic frameworks and patronage networks influenced the diffusion of sculptural models, themes, and genres, and how market dynamics – along with the industrial production of new materials – either reinforced or challenged these aspects. We are interested in exploring the evolution of established genres such as busts, ideal sculptures, funerary and public monuments, copies, and adaptations after the Antique, as well as the diffusion of models and themes in decorative figurative sculpture, including reliefs, medallions, chimneypieces, and in smaller artworks such as gems, cameos, impressions, ivories, or in objects produced in porcelain, earthenware, and various new artificial "stones".

While concentrating on sculpture, the conference embraces an interdisciplinary approach to evaluate how the development of new models, themes, and genres reflected or shaped cultural and national identities, social values, evolving canons, and shifting audiences in the different contexts of Italy and the Anglophone world.
Recent years have witnessed a surge in monographic publications and PhD dissertations by art

historians, social historians, and scholars focused on material culture, examining individual artists and themes connected to this trans-national movement. This two-day conference aims to assess the current state of research and explore future directions in the discipline.

We invite proposals for twenty-minute papers on topics that could include, but are not limited to:
• The impact of academic aesthetic and pedagogical frameworks in shaping sculptural models, themes, and genres, and their diverse manifestations.
• The influence of patronage and collecting in shaping sculptural models, themes, and genres, and their diverse manifestations.
• The market's role in the production and dissemination of "high art" models, themes, and genres, as well as commercial, religious, garden, and decorative sculpture.
• The impact of casts, copies, and adaptations on reinforcing or challenging academic canons and establishing new models, themes, and genres.
• The role played by new materials (such as porcelain, biscuit, Wedgwood "basalt" and Jasperware, Coade stone, Parian ware, electrotyping, etc.) in the diffusion and transformation of models, themes, and genres.
• The impact and adaptation of classical or early modern Italian models and themes in the Anglophone world and vice versa.
• The tension/dialogue between themes after the Antique and medieval or early modern themes from literature or history.
• The tension/dialogue between classical and Christian themes.
• The relationship between European and non-European models, themes, and genres.
• The relationship between painting and sculpture, and the links between making and viewing.
• The relationship between sculpture and prints in the diffusion and transformation of models, themes, and genres.
• The changing audiences of sculpture between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the progressive "commercialisation" of models, themes, and genres, exemplified by events such as the 1854 opening of the Crystal Palace (Sydenham).

Please submit a title and abstract of no more than 200 words, along with a short biography (about 100 words – please do not send CVs) to Albertina Ciani (2127054@buckingham.ac.uk) by noon (BST), 30 September 2024.
The abstract and biography should be combined in a single Word document and submitted as an email attachment. Incomplete or late submissions will not be considered. Notification of the outcome will be communicated via email by 31 October 2024.
The conference is part of a series of events organised to celebrate the launch of a new edition of Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny's Taste and the Antique in October 2024.

Reference:
CFP: Sculptural Models, Themes & Genres between Britain & Italy (London,16-17 May 25). In: ArtHist.net, Jul 10, 2024 (accessed Nov 22, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/42299>.