

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

71st Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America, Marriott Copley Place/Westin Copley Place, Boston, MA, Mar 20–22, 2025

Deadline: Aug 9, 2025

ArtHist.net Redaktion

[\[1\]](#) Creator or Maker? Gods as Artisans

[\[2\]](#) Made to Instruct: Early Modern Art & Education

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[\[1\]](#) Creator or Maker? Gods as Artisans

From: Max Hernandez, mherna45@jhu.edu

Date: July 26, 2024

Creation myths in which divinities make humankind from clay are a global premodern phenomenon. Pre-modern Christians conceptualized the notion that God created the first humans (and non-human animals) from earth with terms like artifex, factor, finctor, and figulus. Yet, as Pamela H. Smith has discussed, in the Renaissance acts of making were often conceived in relation to knowledge acquired through bodily practice, and thus as messy, unsystematic, and unintellectual. How might this have reframed the understanding of a god's act of creation?

Many 15th-, 16th-, and 17th-century authors and artists see divine creation in concrete and technical terms, though their work remains mostly undiscussed as an understanding of artisanal practice. Whether a potter or figure-maker, the image of the divine getting their hands dirty to make bodies could be part of the Renaissance imaginary. However, scholarship on premodern intellectual discussion of these stories has often relied on Neoplatonic articulations which framed creation as divinely inspired. Relying heavily on the figure of Prometheus, they have been more interested in the intellectualization of artists' acts of making, rather than the humanization of a deity's.

We invite proposals for papers on creator-gods as artisans and which reframe and reconsider the discussion of creation myths—Christian and non-Christian—in the Renaissance. Some questions we are asking include:

How did the understanding of artisanal practices shape the way divine creation was understood in the Renaissance?

Did non-Greco-Roman creation myths enter discussions of Antiquity?

How did artisanal practices reframe the conception of creation myths?

How would the idea of the artisanal abilities of creator gods impact the self-perception of makers?

How did early modern forms of globalization enrich, complicate, or entrench previous beliefs on this

theme in the Renaissance?

Organizers: Cristina D'Errico (Johns Hopkins University) & Max Hernandez (Johns Hopkins University).

Please send your proposals to us at [cderric4@jhu.edu](mailto:cderric4@jhu.edu) AND [mhera45@jhu.edu](mailto:mhera45@jhu.edu).

Please include:

- Full name, current affiliation, and email address
- Discipline area
- Paper title
- Abstract (200 words max.)

Panel supported by the Johns Hopkins University's Singleton Center.

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[2] Made to Instruct: Early Modern Art & Education

From: Andrew Sears, [a-sears@nga.gov](mailto:a-sears@nga.gov)

Date: July 29, 2024

These two panels explore the educational function and potential of early modern art and material culture. Divided chronologically—one panel devoted to the period context, the other to the status of early modern art since the 19th century—these panels take a *longue durée* perspective to trace how art and museum pedagogy has been (mis)shaped by social, political, and institutional forces.

The first panel, "Art as Education, 1400-1800," investigates how early modern artists, patrons, and viewers understood objects to shape minds, bodies, and habits. In recent years scholars across disciplines have broadened our understanding of period notions of "education," and considered its relationship to pedagogy, self-fashioning, collection-building, colonialism, and rigorous devotional practice. Building upon such key studies, this panel seeks to widen our purview beyond the church and courtly contexts to further articulate the social and societal implications of art education. Key concerns include: the role of images in guiding understandings of the self and others; embodied modes of interacting with and learning about art; the role of art in shaping social norms of age, race, gender, religion, and class; access to art education and the ways in which it was granted or limited; self-taught artists, connoisseurs, and theoreticians.

Panel two, "Art as Education, 1800-Present," examines the institutionalization of arts pedagogy in schools, universities, and especially museums from the 19th century into the present day. From the rise of teaching and university collections to the spread of public and national museums, such institutions became crucial sites for molding thinkers and citizens through encounters with art and artifacts. For this panel, we are especially interested in bringing together a group of speakers who can address the manifold problems of centering European art and Old Masters as well as the contemporary potentials for undoing such narratives in classrooms and galleries.

To apply, please submit a short abstract (max 250 words) and CV to Andrew Sears ([a-sears@nga.gov](mailto:a-sears@nga.gov)) and Maggie Bell ([mbell@nortonsimon.org](mailto:mbell@nortonsimon.org)) by August 9, 2024.

Reference:

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