Mettere mano: Reworking Early Modern Drawings (online/Rome, 4–7 Mar 25)

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Mettere mano: Reworking Early Modern Drawings.
Gernsheim Study Days.

"… con questo, che Taddeo potesse correggere e mettere mano nei disegni e cartoni di Federigo a suo piacimento …" In the Vita of Taddeo Zuccari, Giorgio Vasari describes the reworking of drawings — in contrast to that of paintings — as a common and spontaneous practice. The 2025 Gernsheim Study Days are dedicated to all aspects of reworking, retouching, and repairing early modern European drawings, engaging with both artistic and material issues.

Few other media are as easily and as quickly altered as paper: folding, pasting, trimming, and bleaching require readily accessible tools and minimal expertise in their handling. Reworking by another hand — highlighting, retracing, adding or erasing marks — as well as archival and curatorial practices — mounting and re-mounting, inscribing, stamping, and annotating — can alter the drawing's appearance, reception, attribution, and market value. Equally important is the slow material change of paper or ink over time, triggered by the most common environmental conditions. Being uniquely vulnerable, drawings are a productive starting point for thinking about the ways in which the material turn might be brought to bear on an object's material afterlife, and beyond the artist's initial conception and expression.

This conference brings together scholars, curators, and conservators to think critically about early modern practices of material interaction and manipulation as they applied to drawings.

PROGRAM.

Tuesday, March 4.

17:15 Welcome.

17:30 Opening Keynote by Jonathan Bober (formerly National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC), "Mettere mani: A Typology of Rework in Drawings".

18:45 Exhibition Opening.
"Rework, Retouch, Care: Case Studies from the Hertziana Collection," curated by Francesca Borgo (BHMPI/University of St Andrews), Camilla Colzani (BHMPI/Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo).

Wednesday, March 5.

10:00 Viewing session, Istituto Centrale per la Grafica [conference participants only]
Giorgio Marini (Istituto Centrale per la Grafica), Gabriella Pace (Istituto Centrale per la Grafica).

14:00 Welcome and Opening Remarks.
Tatjana Bartsch (BHMPI), Francesca Borgo, Johannes Röll (BHMPI).

14:30–15:30 SESSION 1: ORIGINS.

Chair: Francesca Borgo.

Alice Ottazzi (I Tatti – The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies), "Retracing 'Retouching: Historiography of a Concept".

Laura Moretti (University of St Andrews), "Assembling, Gluing, and Framing: The Role of Artist Portraits in Vasari's (and Gaddi's) 'Libro de' disegni'".

15:30–16:00 Coffee break.

16:00–17:30 SESSION 2: REWORK IN THE RENAISSANCE WORKSHOP.

Chair: Simona Vergassola (independent scholar).

Lorenza Melli (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz - MPI), "Discernimento dei ritocchi e accertamento dell'autografia: il caso di un disegno di Raffaelo".

Angelamaria Aceto (Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford), "Collecting and 'Reworking' Raphael's Drawings in the 20th Century: A Case Study".

Bruno Escobar (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid), "Overwritten Traces: Reuse and Transformation in Alonso Berruguete's Drawings".

Thursday, March 6.

10:00–11:30 SESSION 3: RETOUCHING AND COLLECTING.

Chair: Giorgio Marini.

Sietske Fransen (BHMPI), "Cutting and Pasting in the Archive: Preparing Drawings for Prints in the Royal Society".

Silvia Massa (Kupferstichkabinett, Kunstmuseum Basel), "'mitt blau zu schattiren': Reworked Drawings with Annotated Instructions from the Kupferstich-Kabinett, Dresden".

Francois Marandet (Musée départemental d'Art ancien et contemporain, Épinal), "Embellishing and Blurring: Michel II Corneille (1642–1708) as Restorer of Drawings for Everhard Jabach".

11:30–12:00 Coffee break.

12:00–13:00 SESSION 4: RETOUCHING AND CONSERVATION.

Chair: Tatjana Bartsch.

Elizabeth Mattison (Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College), "Foxed: The Environmental Making and Unmaking of Drawings in Early Modern Europe".

Birgit Reissland (Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands), Idelette van Leeuwen (Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam), "Washes in Brown, Blue or Frey? Additions or Original?".

13:00–14:00 Lunch [participants only].

14:00–15:00 SESSION 5: ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS.
Chair: Mauro Mussolin.

Cara Rachele (ETH Zurich), Antonio da Sangallo the Younger and Multi-"Author Drawings: The setta sangallesca Reconsidered".

Mari Yoko Hara (University of Notre Dame), "Extracted Fragments: Collecting Renaissance Architectural Drawings".

15:00–15:30 Coffee break.

15:30–16:30 SESSION 6: BAROQUE RETOUCHING

Chair: Mary Vaccaro (University of Texas at Arlington)

Stefan Albl (Alte Galerie, Universalmuseum Joanneum), "Testa and Mola: The Exchange of Ideas in 17th-Century Drawings"

Heiko Damm (GRASSI Museum für Angewandte Kunst), "Expanding Drawings: Rubens and His Contemporaries"

Friday, March 07.

9:30–13:00 Roundtable, chaired by Jonathan Bober and Johannes Röll.

The Gernsheim Study Days bring together scholars, curators, and conservators to think critically about early modern practices of material interaction and manipulation as they applied to drawings. The conference is also connected to “Rework” (2024/25), the Annual Research Initiative of the BHMPI Lise Meitner Group Decay, Loss, and Conservation in Art History; the Getty Paper Project “Touched/Retouched: Paper across Time, 1400–1800,” a collaboration with the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica; and the forthcoming Research Exhibition “Rework, Retouch, Care: Case Studies from the Hertziana Collection” (March 2025).

Please follow the event also on our VIMEO: https://vimeo.com/event/4883852

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