

Interpreting the Sculptural Canon (London, 10–12 Dec 25)

Institute of Classical Studies - Warburg Institute, London, Dec 10–12, 2025

Deadline: May 15, 2025

Adriano Aymonino, University of Buckingham

The Future of the Antique: Interpreting the Sculptural Canon.

The University of Buckingham, the Census of Antique Works of Art and Architecture Known in the Renaissance (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), the Warburg Institute, and the Institute of Classical Studies (University of London), are organising a two-day interdisciplinary conference to celebrate the publication of the new edition of Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny's seminal work *Taste and the Antique* (Harvey Miller/Brepols, December 2024).

This landmark publication provides an opportunity to review and coordinate recent achievements and new initiatives in the study and interpretation of the Greek and Roman sculptural legacy.

The original 1981 Yale University Press edition of *Taste and the Antique* significantly shaped the field's direction over four decades, influencing both academic research and curatorial practices. The revised and expanded three-volume edition, featuring numerous newly commissioned photographs, substantially updates the scholarship with research from recent decades. It broadens the exploration of these works' reception and influence, from Renaissance collectors to contemporary artists. The edition particularly examines how classical statues impacted European imagery beyond direct replication, including:

- Their adaptation across diverse media
- Their impact on art and architectural theory and pedagogy
- Their influence on anatomical study and proportional theory
- Their role in modernist culture and modern / postmodern popular culture
- Their enduring presence in contemporary imagery and conceptions of the human body

This two-day conference aims to assess the current state of research, rethink established methodologies and explore possible future directions in the field. Its primary goal is to foster discussion among different generations of scholars whose research outputs are often separated by language and methodological barriers.

We invite proposals for twenty-minute papers on interrelated topics such as the following, outlined by the book or extending beyond it. Priority will be given to innovative papers focusing on the legacy of antique sculptural models in European/Colonial art and culture since the Renaissance:

- Academy and Canon (examining their establishment, radical alteration, and dissolution in the

modern era).

- New Canons (the antique in modern and postmodern theoretical frameworks and practices).
- Antique/Modern Bodies (classical statuary's influence on human anatomical study; proportioned and disproportioned body concepts; the representation of the male and female body; physiognomy; conceptions of race and ethnicity).
- Empire and its Enemies (political and racial implications of the antique).
- Priorities and Display (the antique within modern museum contexts).
- Restorations and Forgery (reconfigurations of the antique and notions of authenticity).
- Narrative Patterns (the classical language of gesture, story-telling/narrative).

Please submit your title and abstract of no more than 200 words, along with a short biography (about 100 words – please do not send CVs) to Mattia Ciani (m.ciani8@student.unisi.it) by noon (BST), 15 May 2025. 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 1 July 2025. We intend to publish the proceedings of the conference.

The conference is organised by Adriano Aymonino and Kathleen Christian.

Reference:

CFP: Interpreting the Sculptural Canon (London, 10-12 Dec 25). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 7, 2025 (accessed Dec 16, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/47191>>.