The Global Baroque (York, 10–11 Jul 25)

King's Manor, University of York, Jul 10–11, 2025
Registration deadline: Jul 1, 2025

Adam Sammut

The Global Baroque: European Material Culture between Conquest, Trade and Mission, 1600-1750.
Part of The British Academy Conferences 2025/26.

The period of Western art history known as “the Baroque” has traditionally been interpreted as a stylistic phenomenon. However, artistic production in Europe circa 1600–1750 was enabled by a proto-industrial world system dominated by Spain and Portugal, the Netherlands and later Britain. As a result, material culture became entangled in networks of trade, colonial rule and Catholic global mission stretching from Naples to Nagasaki.

This conference will broaden perspectives on the Baroque, embracing its transcontinental and multi-media character. By culturally decentring Europe and with materiality a special focus, the programme will recast the continent as a constituent part of an expanding artistic world driven by war, the exploitation of ecosystems and the first information technology revolution. Bringing together scholars and museum curators from the UK and internationally, the conference will demonstrate how objects can offer intimate insights into global histories often characterised by vast, impersonal economic forces.

Convened by Adam Sammut, University of York and Tomasz Grusiecki, Boise State University.

// Programme

I Thursday, 10 July

9.00 I Registration and coffee/tea/pastries

9.40 I Opening remarks. Adam Sammut (University of York) and Tomasz Grusiecki (Boise State University)

Session 1: Baroque aesthetics.
Chaired by Adam Sammut (University of York)

10.00 I Black Beauty and the Canon: Nicolas Cordier’s Borghese Moor.
Lorenzo Pericolo (Florida State University)

10.40 I Ancient Greece and the English Baroque.
Matthew Walker (Queen Mary University of London)

11.00 l Discussion

11.20 l Coffee/tea

Session 2: New geographies of the Low Countries.
Chaired by Cordula van Wyhe (University of York)

11.50 l Global Conversions: Peter Paul Rubens, King Philip IV of Spain, and the Coiners of Antwerp.
Christine Göttler (University of Bern)

12.10 l Biting lines: Baroque violence in Rembrandt's Small Lion Hunt (1629).
Thomas Balfe (The Warburg Institute)

12.30 l A Taste for Blackness: Ebony in the Dutch Republic.
Claudia Swan (Washington University in St. Louis)

12.50 l Discussion

13.20 l Lunch (for participants only)

Session 3: Ottoman worlds.
Chaired by Richard McClary (University of York)

14.20 l Style, Society, and the State: Ottoman Baroque Identities in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul.
Ünver Rüstem (Johns Hopkins University)

14.40 l Object Circulation and Networks on the Periphery of Eastern Central Europe: The case studies of the Ottoman tributary states of Transylvania and Moldavia.
Robert Born (Bundesinstitut für Kultur und Geschichte des östlichen Europa)

15.00 l Discussion

15.30 l Coffee/tea

16.00 l Keynote address, K/133 Philip Rahtz Lecture Theatre
Necropastoral Worldscapes in Dutch-occupied Brazil.
Angela Vanhaelen (McGill University)

18.00 l Dinner at Ambiente Fossgate (by invitation only)

l Friday, 11 July

9.30 l Coffee/tea/pastries

Session 4: Where is Central and Eastern Europe?
Chaired by Tomasz Grusiecki (Boise State University)

10.00 l Corpisanti between Rome and the fringes of Catholicism: a case study in a centripetal approach to material culture of the late global Baroque.

Ruth Sargent Noyes (Estonian Academy of Arts)

10.20 I Black Bodies as Baroque Decorations: Objectification of Africans in the Self-Representation of Polish-Lithuanian Elites.
Vital Byl (University of Bonn)

10.40 I Discussion

11.00 I Coffee/tea

Session 5: The Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean.
Chaired by Tara Alberts (University of York)

11.30 I Objects and empire on the Portuguese India Run.
Elsje van Kessel (University of St Andrews)

11.50 I Indian Oceanic Travels of Coco-de-mer: Mythology and Materiality.
Peyvand Firouzeh (The University of Sydney)

12.10 I The Transcultural Body of the Mermaid.
Anna Grasskamp (University of Oslo)

12.30 I Discussion

13.00 I Lunch (for participants only)

Session 6: Atlantic crossings.
Chaired by Simon Ditchfield (University of York)

14.00 I What's in a name? The Low Countries and the global turn.
Stephanie Porras (Tulane University)

14.20 I A Counter-Baroque? Iroquois Town Planning and the Early Modern Imagination.
Lorenzo Gatta (University College London)

14.40 I Emptied Orbs, or, A Case Against the Global.
Aaron Hyman (University of Basel)

15.00 I Discussion

15.30 I Coffee/tea

16.00 I Roundtable discussion

17.30 I Wine reception, K/159 (all welcome)

Reference:
CONF: The Global Baroque (York, 10-11 Jul 25). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 29, 2025 (accessed Nov 13, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/49137>.