

5 Sessions at RSA (San Francisco, 19–21 Feb 26)

San Francisco, Feb 19–21, 2026

www.rsa.org/page/RSASF2026

ArtHist.net Redaktion

[1] The Medici Inventing the Medici

[2] Interrogating Sovereignty: Catholicism and Female Authority in Tudor-Habsburg Networks

[3] Boccaccio's Stories of Love, Marriage, Family, and Gender: From Botticelli to Rubens and More

[4] Showing Skin: Epidermal Surfaces in Early Modern Art

[5] Bodies and Representation in Early Modern Europe

[1] The Medici Inventing the Medici

From: The Medici Archive Project

Date: 18 Jul 25

After exploring how nineteenth- and twentieth-century historiography oftentimes produced warped, biased, erroneous, and even fabricated accounts of the Medici ("The Invention of the Medici", Palazzo Alberti, Florence 23 January 2025), we now intend to examine how the Medici refashioned their private and public histories in order to serve political, diplomatic, and cultural agendas. For this reason, we are organizing panels for the 72nd Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America (San Francisco, 19–21 February 2026) that address topics including:

- collecting patterns
- artistic and literary commissions
- biographies and panegyrics; print culture
- censorship, *damnatio memoriae*, and whitewashing
- histories and mythologies
- religious identities

These panels are tentatively divided into four sections: "The Medici of the Quattrocento"; "From Cosimo I to Cosimo II"; "Medici Women"; and "Medici Decadence (1621-1743)".

To be considered, please send the following material in a single PDF by 7 August 2025 to education@medici.org: (1) full name, affiliation and email address; (2) paper title (15-word max); (3) abstract text (200 words max); and (4) short curriculum vitae/bio (200 words max).

[2] Interrogating Sovereignty: Catholicism and Female Authority in Tudor-Habsburg Networks

From: Sarah Moran

Date: 18 Jul 25

Between the late fifteenth and early seventeenth centuries, dynastic alliances, religious reform, and imperial expansion profoundly shaped the political agency and cultural authority of women linked to the English and Spanish Habsburg courts. We invite papers that explore how female sovereignty was imagined, embodied, and contested by Catholic women operating within and across these spheres and networks, with particular attention to women who served as queens regnant, regents, governors, and queens consort. We are especially interested in how such women invoked their Roman faith to legitimize political and spiritual authority in an atmosphere of religious controversy.

Topics might include:

- The strategies of figures like Margaret of Austria and Mary I
- Religious patronage and pilgrimage as vehicles of dynastic or personal power
- Female participation in confessional politics, diplomacy, or court ritual
- Textual and visual strategies for representing female rule
- The role of Catholic institutions in advancing claims for women's sovereignty
- Networks among Catholic Hapsburg and Tudor women

We welcome interdisciplinary contributions from scholars working in history, art history, literature, religious studies, and related fields.

Please send a paper title, an abstract (maximum 250 words), and a brief CV (max 2 pages) to both Maria Prendergast (mprendergast@wooster.edu) and Sarah Moran (sarah.joan.moran@gmail.com) by July 24, 2025.

[3] Working Title: Boccaccio's Stories of Love, Marriage, Family, and Gender: From Botticelli to Rubens and More

From: Ianthi Assimakopoulou

Date: 8 Jul 25

Boccaccio's stories on love, marriage, family and gender have attracted an extraordinary number of approaches from different disciplines, allowing multiple readings of his narratives. Our goal in readdressing Boccaccio and the visualization of his stories is to touch upon less discussed aspects of his 'iconography' and its illustrations in various artistic media, both in Italy and in Northern Europe during the early modern period. Boccaccian tales that have not been the subject of frequent artistic treatment, are also part of our interest for this proposed session.

We welcome papers including, but not limited to the following topics/approaches:

- women in armor and other power insignia
- women outside the early-modern period norm
- the relationship to literary treatises on family
- women, nature and culture
- male transformations within prospective gender dynamics
- socioeconomic implications
- the visualization of extraordinary sexiness related to genre issues
- sexiness and tactility
- female fertility
- music and dance imagery
- animal imagery

Please send paper proposals to Ianthi Assimakopoulou and Nancy Litsardopoulou at:
iassim@arch.uoa.gr and nancylitsardo@hotmail.com.

Please include the following:

- Paper title
- 200-word abstract
- Brief CV
- Name, affiliation, and email

Papers are required to be 20-minute long.

Deadline for submissions: August 6, 2025.

[4] Showing Skin: Epidermal Surfaces in Early Modern Art

From: Andrew Casper

Date: 17 Jul 25

While skin is the largest organ of the human body, it is also a liminal one that equally contains, reveals, and conceals the body's interior anatomies and psychic states. As such, it has often achieved an uneasy status between visibility and transparency. Artists gaze intently upon the epidermal surfaces of nude models, but often with the intent to reveal underlying bodily structures. Physicians can diagnose from skin, but surgeons and anatomists also cut through it to access the internal organs. Fashion designers can adorn it, but just as often seek to cover or embellish skin with foreign materials in order to reveal class and status.

This panel will explore artistic representations of skin as a meaning-bearing site and subject in itself. What early modernists thought about epidermal surfaces says much about then-current understandings of anatomy, medicine, psychology, personhood, social standing, and even the body's exposure to natural environments. We seek papers that draw from interdisciplinary fields of knowledge to offer new perspectives for the display of skin in early modern art. We are particularly interested in papers that address altered, or even transgressive, bodies revealed through skin as a mutable surface that records conditional states by way of color, texture, and other visible and haptic qualities. These can include but are not limited to disease, violence, heightened emotional or psychological states, even the flesh of dead bodies that decay.

Proposals should include:

- Full name, current affiliation, and email address
- Paper title (max. 15 words)
- Paper abstract (max 150 words)
- 2-page CV

Submit proposals by August 1, 2025 to Andrew Casper (casperar@miamioh.edu) and Theresa Flanigan (Theresa.Flanigan@ttu.edu).

[5] Bodies and Representation in Early Modern Europe

From: Rebecca Howard

Date: 17 Jul 25

Co-organizers:

Rebecca M. Howard, University of Memphis

Christian K. Kleinbub, New Foundation for Art History

This panel investigates how early modern conceptions of the human body shaped visual culture, representation, and embodied knowledge. From the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries, the study of the body became central to artists' work, not only as a scientific endeavor, but as a framework for understanding perception, memory, judgment, and artistic practice. We are particularly interested in how representations of the body intersected with broader epistemologies of the period: How did anatomical thinking inform the ways early modern viewers saw, remembered, or interpreted images? In what ways did bodily theory—of organs, senses, humors, or faculties—condition the production or reception of art?

We welcome papers that explore the relationship between anatomy and the visual arts across a wide range of themes, including memory and mnemonics, vision and optics, cognition and judgment, emotional expression, or the moral and political body. Interdisciplinary approaches drawing from the histories of science, medicine, and philosophy are especially encouraged.

To submit a paper proposal, please email co-organizers Rebecca Howard (RmHoward2@memphis.edu) and Christian Kleinbub (Kleinbub@nfah.org) by August 3, 2025. Participants will be notified by August 8. Your email should include the following:

- Full name, current affiliation (if applicable, preferred email address, and PhD completion date (past or expected)
- Paper title (15-word maximum)
- Abstract (200-word maximum)
- CV (2-page maximum)
- Any audio/visual requirements

Reference:

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