Howard Burns Seminar Series on Architectural Drawings (Florence, 9-10 Jun 26)

Florence, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut, Jun 9–10, 2026
Deadline: Apr 20, 2026

Natalie Arrowsmith

Applications are now open for ten scholars under the age of 36 to apply for a scholarship to participate in the seminar Architectural Drawings in the Renaissance: Anonymous Artists, Copyists, Architects, organized by Guido Beltramini and Bianca de Divitiis, in collaboration with the GDSU.

This event inaugurates an annual seminar series on architectural drawing named after Howard Burns (1939–2025), a leading scholar in the field. The initiative stems from a collaboration between the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut (KHI) and the Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura Andrea Palladio (CISAAP) and will be held annually around June 10, the date of Burns' birth.

Each year, the Howard Burns Seminar will address the theme of architectural drawing as a constantly evolving field of study, considering different contexts, chronologies, and methodological approaches. The aim of the series is to periodically reflect on the state of research, pass on the wealth of philological knowledge within the field to new generations of scholars, and, at the same time, promote intergenerational and interdisciplinary dialogue. Each seminar will have different curators and, with the exception of this first event, which is by invitation only, will be organized through an open call.

One year after his passing, the first edition is dedicated to Renaissance drawing in Italy and is organized in collaboration with the Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe degli Uffizi (GDSU). It was here that Howard Burns conducted his early, seminal research, providing new insights into the drawings—and more broadly into the architecture and culture—of architects such as Baldassarre Peruzzi, Leon Battista Alberti, Francesco di Giorgio, and Giuliano da Sangallo, before moving on to the study of Michelangelo, Pirro Ligorio, and above all Andrea Palladio. Taking inspiration from his early studies of drawings, the 2026 edition of the Howard Burns Seminar Series will examine aspects of the graphic output of the great architects of the 15th and 16th centuries, while also focusing on corpora, sketchbooks, albums, and loose sheets that originated as copies or remain unattributed. Although not always attributable to a specific name, these materials are fundamental for reconstructing the artistic and cultural context within which well-known works are situated and, at the same time, possess an autonomous value that has not always been fully recognized by historiography. In this context, the seminar aims to reflect on the topics of authorship/non-authorship and the copy, understood as a creative process and as an integral part of cultural and architectural production.

The seminar will consist of two parts: a day of presentations open to the public (free admission subject to availability), to be held on June 9 at the KHI; and a second part, reserved for seminar scholarship recipients, which will take place on the morning of June 10 at the GDSU and will include a discussion of a selection of drawings.

Scholarship Application
The scholarship covers travel and accommodation expenses up to a maximum of 500 euros for those travelling from outside Italy and 250 euros for those travelling in Italy. These expenses must be documented. The scholarship is reserved for scholars who have not yet reached the age of 36 by the application deadline. Applicants must submit a brief CV (max 2 pages) and a statement of purpose (max 1 page) by April 20, 2026, to both of the following addresses: dirdedivitiis@khi.fi.it and courses@cisapalladio.org

Invited Speakers:
Cammy Brothers
Dario Donetti
Elisabeth Merrill
Laura Moretti
Carlotta Moro
Mauro Mussolin
Cara Rachele
Vitale Zanchettin

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Reference:

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