Rethinking the Artist's Biography in the 19th Century (Laren, 12 Jun 26)

Singer Museum, Laren, The Netherlands, Jun 12, 2026

Eveline Deneer

SALON 2026 conference.
Unreliable Lives: Rethinking the Artist's Biography in the Nineteenth Century.

How are artists' biographies constructed, and how do these narratives shape or distort our understanding of their work?

This one-day international conference examines biography not as a stable source of meaning, but as a constructed and sometimes unreliable framework that shapes how artists are understood, judged, and received. Focusing on the long nineteenth century - a period that codified the modern image of the artist and entrenched powerful narratives of genius, identity, and reputation - the programme brings together scholars who probe the limits, uses, and distortions of artist biographies.

PROGRAMME
- 9.30-10.00 Registration, Coffee & Tea
- 10.00-10.10 Doede Hardeman, Singer Museum Laren: Welcome
- 10.10-10.25 Charles Kang: Introduction to the Conference Theme
- 10.25-11.15 Keynote lecture Julie Codell, Arizona State University: "Indispensable Obstacle: Unraveling Biographical Genres"

- 11.15-11.30 Break

Session 1 – Sense and Absence of Source Material
Session chair: Ulrike Müller, University of Antwerp and Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium
- 11.30-11.50 Claire Dupin de Beyssat, Musée d'Orsay: "Lost in the Crowd? Reconstructing the Biographies of Salons Exhibitors in Nineteenth-Century France through Large-Scale Data and Seriality"
- 11.50-12.10 Heather Nickels, independent curator and Columbia University: "Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller's Paris Years (1899-1902) & The Value of the 'Intimate Archive'"
- 12.10-12.25 Session 1: Questions and Discussion
- 12.25-12.35 Suzanne Veldink, Singer Museum Laren: Introduction to the exhibition Masterpieces from Le Havre: Renoir, Monet, Dufy, Matisse & others and to the focus presentation on Etha Fles and Medardo Rosso.

Lunch & Exhibition
- 12.35-14.15 Lunch and visit to the exhibition

Session 2 – Old Masters, New Uses
Session chair: Charles Kang, Rijksmuseum
- 14.15-14.35 Laura Prins, Utrecht University and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam: "'Identify with another person's soul': Delacroix & the artist's biography"
- 14.35-14.55 Michela D'Agostino, Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata: "Properzia de' Rossi Between Mythmaking and Institutional Judgment"
- 14.55-15.15 Séverine Sofio, Center for Research on Arts and Language, Paris: "Forgotten and Reborn: Fluctuating Memory, Biographical Gaps, and the Re-Semantisation of Artistic Lives"
- 15.15-15.30 Session 2: Questions and Discussion

Coffee & Tea
- 15.30-15.50 Coffee & Tea break

Session 3 – Challenging Legacies
Session chair: Nina Reid, Van Gogh Museum and Radboud University
- 15.50-16.10 Oriane Poret, Université Lyon 2 / LARHRA: "Loving, Using, Killing: Rosa Bonheur and the Biographical Ambivalence of the Animalier"
- 16.10-16.30 Julia Griffin, independent scholar: "Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Victorian Stigmas of Madness and Adultery, and Suppressed Commemoration by the Rossetti Family (1882–1919)"
- 16.30-16.45 Session 3: Questions and Discussion

- 16.45-17.00 Wrap up

- 17.00-18.00 Drinks and bite

INFORMATION
- Singer Laren, Laren
- 12 June, 2026
- Tickets: €40,00 / €15,00 (Students) https://tickets.singerlaren.nl/museumsinger/nl/flow_configs/theater_no_trx/steps/start/show/1265831

Reference:
CONF: Rethinking the Artist's Biography in the 19th Century (Laren, 12 Jun 26). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 30, 2026 (accessed Nov 23, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/52352>.