

3 Panels at 73rd Annual Meeting of the RSA (Philadelphia 11–13 Mar 27)

Philadelphia, Mar 11–13, 2027

ArtHist.net Redaktion

73rd Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America (RSA).

[\[1\]](#) Liminal Bodies in Early Modern Europe

[\[2\]](#) Horizons of Uncertainty: Early Modern Storms and Obscured Vision

[\[3\]](#) The Renaissance Self

[\[1\]](#) Liminal Bodies in Early Modern Europe

Organizers: Rebecca M. Howard (University of Memphis), Christian K. Kleinbub (New Foundation for Art History)

Deadline: 07/31/2026

This panel seeks papers that examine the ways in which early modern bodies articulated, embodied, and negotiated thresholds, both material and imagined. From the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries, the study and representation of the human body assumed a central place in artistic production, while architectural forms and spatial frameworks appeared with increasing prominence across visual culture. We are particularly interested in how bodies functioned as thresholds, mediators, or sites of transition, as well as how representations of corporeality engaged with physical, spiritual, social, and epistemological boundaries.

Paper proposals may address the relationship between bodies and thresholds through topics such as domesticity, real and imagined architecture, ritual performance, pilgrimage, illness and healing, gender and identity, permeability and exchange, or encounters between human, divine, and nonhuman realms. Contributions employing interdisciplinary methodologies informed by the histories of religion, science, philosophy, architecture, and material culture are particularly welcome.

To submit a paper proposal, please email co-organizers Rebecca Howard (RmHoward2@memphis.edu) and Christian Kleinbub (Kleinbub@nfah.org) by July 31, 2026. Participants will be notified by August 8. Your email should include the following:

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

– Any audio/visual requirements

[2] Horizons of Uncertainty: Early Modern Storms and Obscured Vision

Organizers: Elisa Antonietta Daniele (University of Bologna), Francesca Toffolo (Independent Scholar), Bronwen Wilson (UCLA)

Deadline: 07/15/2026

The William Andrews Clark Memorial Library and the Center for 17th- and 18th-Century Studies (UCLA) will be sponsoring this panel (<https://www.1718.ucla.edu>).

For early moderns, the storm was not merely a meteorological crisis but an ontological one. As maritime expansion pushed European vessels into the waters of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, the "tempest" became a central trope for the limits of human agency and the failure of human sight. The vanishing of the horizon—the navigator's vital visual tool—became a site of profound anxiety. From Salvator Rosa's tenebrous landscapes to Claude-Joseph Vernet's shipwrecks, the storm evolved from a symbolic backdrop into a laboratory for atmospheric optics and epistemic doubt. Inland, phenomena such as alpine snows or freezing lagoons likewise disrupted sensory experiences; these events emerge as barometers of transformation, recording shifting weather patterns, semantic volatility, and the porous contours of perception.

This panel explores the intersection of early modern meteorology, sensory history, and the aesthetics of obscured vision, tracing the transition from providential readings of storms to a more skeptical empiricism. Bringing together the histories of science and art, literary and performance studies, climate studies and blue humanities, the panel investigates how early moderns experienced, recorded, and represented these transformative climate events in artistic and literary forms.

Potential topics:

- sea mists, blinding spray, and snowstorms destabilizing the certainty of perspectival vision
- atmospheric optics and realism: scientific and artistic interest in the scattering of light, density of air, and the rendering of "thick weather"
- the vanishing horizon: the "clouding" of sea-lanes and anxieties over a globalized, unreadable world
- geographies of obscurity: the Atlantic "gray," Mediterranean sciaregni (storm-clouds), and the perils of the hidden rock
- the storm as an immersive sensory environment and the theatrical staging of atmospheric phenomena
- beyond the ocular: tactile and auditory reckoning across oceans, waterways, alpine terrains

Please submit proposals with:

- title (15-word maximum)
- abstract (200-word maximum)
- brief cv (.pdf or .doc)
- PhD or other terminal degree completion year (past or expected)
- name, affiliation, email

by July 15, 2026 to all three:

Elisa Antonietta Daniele, University of Bologna, elisa.antoniettadaniele@gmail.com

Francesca Toffolo, Independent Scholar, ftoffolo1@gmail.com
Bronwen Wilson, UCLA, bwilson@humnet.ucla.edu

[3] The Renaissance Self

Organizer: Hayley Cotter (University of Massachusetts Amherst)

Deadline: 06/25/2026

This roundtable invites speakers to address any aspect of the so-called Renaissance self. Borrowing from Jan Goldstein, the cultural historian Elwin Hofman describes the self as “individuated mental stuff.” How might this definition inform our understanding of conceptions of the self that developed during the early modern period? What was the relationship between selfhood, self-consciousness, and identity? What kinds of evidence—artistic, confessional, visual, literary, legal, philosophical, textual, or medical—allow us to approach this question? What methodologies offer the most promise? Given the paradoxical nature of the self, both historically and in our own moment, how might it be treated as a proper object of study? If the self is made of “individuated mental stuff,” how can it be accessed at all? The session aims to be both theoretical and practical: alongside broader discussion of the “Renaissance self,” speakers will consider how they have grappled with the question in their own scholarship.

Scholars at any career stage and from any discipline are invited to participate; doctoral candidates and early career scholars are especially encouraged to apply. Please send a two-page CV and a brief statement describing what you would address to Hayley Cotter (hcotter@umass.edu) by June 25. Accepted participants will be notified no later than June 30.

Please note that the submission of a proposal constitutes a commitment to attend the conference in person.

On March 11–13, 2027, the Renaissance Society of America (RSA) will hold its Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. Further information can be found on the conference website:

<https://www.rsa.org/page/RSAPhilly2027>.

Reference:

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