

## Optical Illusions in Early Modern Art

Deadline: Dec 1, 2013

Lilian H. Zirpolo, WAPACC Organization

"The Most Noble of the Senses": Anamorphosis, Trompe-L'Oeil, and Other Optical Illusions in Early Modern Art

When Andrea Pozzo rendered his St. Ignatius in Glory at the Church of Sant' Ignazio in Rome in 1691-94, not only did he provide one of the most remarkable examples of quadratura painting in history, but also an anamorphic image that seems logical only when viewed from an optimal spot marked on the floor below. To achieve his mono-focal perspective, Pozzo stretched strings across the vault at the level of the cornice to form a grid. He then pinned full-sized cartoons onto the ceiling, viewed them from ground level, and made the necessary adjustments to ensure a successful composition. In the same era, catoptric anamorphic images were being created that became readable only when viewed with the aid of a reflective cylinder. In this way, artists could conceal political messages, erotic materials, and other secret images. These and other instruments, like the camera obscura and convex mirrors, permitted the rendering of optical illusions meant to fool the eye. Similarly, sculptors utilized methods of distortion to achieve believable figures, like Donatello and Michelangelo who elongated torsos and exaggerated features intended to be seen from below and at a distance. In architecture, Bramante's relief in perspective in the Church of Santa Maria presso San Satiro (beg. 1478) visually extends the shallow space of the apse.

Zephyrus Scholarly Publications LLC is seeking submissions for an upcoming anthology on the topic of anamorphosis, trompe-l'oeil, and other optical illusions devised by Early Modern painters, printmakers, sculptors, and architects. Discussions on the use of particular methods and instruments to achieve the goal of fooling the eye of the beholder are particularly welcome, as are theoretical papers on optics and art.

Submissions should be sent to the editor, Lilian H. Zirpolo (lzirpolo@zephyruspubl.com) via email by December 1st, 2013 and should include a cover letter, 500 word abstract, and CV. For information on Zephyrus Scholarly Publications, please visit <http://www.zephyruspubl.com>.

Reference:

CFP: Optical Illusions in Early Modern Art. In: ArtHist.net, Sep 11, 2013 (accessed May 29, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/5898>>.