Artists, Audiences, and Collectors of Biblical Imagery (New York, 17 Jan 14)

New York City, Museum of Biblical Art, Jan 17, 2014
Deadline: Nov 29, 2013

Sarah Schaefer

They Who Gathered Much:
Artists, Audiences, and Collectors of Biblical Imagery
Symposium

Organized in conjunction with Sacred Visions: Nineteenth-Century Biblical Art from the Dahesh Museum Collection, on view at the Museum of Biblical Art (MOBIA) from October 17, 2013, to February 16, 2014, this symposium will interrogate the intersection of two dramatic shifts in nineteenth-century culture: first, the reconfiguring of biblical representation amid shifts in Bible historicism. Second, the emerging markets for buying, selling, and exhibiting biblical art amid a rise of a new middle-class art patronage and the opening of the first modern museums for the public.

The objective of recent art historical analyses of religious art has been to study the influence of shifting biblical hermeneutics and expanding patronage in order to determine modules of innovation. Proof of the shift in these spheres was manifested in the growth of galleries, commissions and the changing role of the church around mid-century. Throughout the long nineteenth century, political partisanship also helped to influence biblical imagery, either to support or subvert members of the artistic avant-garde. As secularization became a dominating force in the nineteenth century (as sociologists Emile Durkheim and Max Weber argued in the twentieth century), evidence suggests that patronage contributed to reshaping a "modern religious imagery." Since the Enlightenment, the historical validity and relevance to modern life of the Bible has been a source of intense debate, challenging artists to explore Christian concepts amid competing cultural forces.

In America as well as in Europe, the historical shift in patronage in terms of kinship structures and patterns of collecting was linked to conserving religious symbolism and to economic concerns. Patronage contributed to expanding a religious repertoire for romantic or

topographical subjects but not solely as new subjects for religious paintings. Patronage was one factor that helped to shape how artists understood biblical subjects. The most important expression of these religious subjects synchronized with critical responses.

Organizers invite papers for 20-minute presentations that address any aspect of this topic, including, but not limited to:
- consideration of questions about patronage and purchase of biblical art;
- the market for contemporary nineteenth-century biblical art in relation to the market for biblical art in past eras;
- the role of cultural institutions (museums, churches, public collections) have played in maintaining the importance of biblical art;
- the significance or validity of spiritual conviction on the part of the buyer and/or artist.

Deadline for Paper Proposals: November 29, 2013
- Abstract of proposed papers (300 words maximum)
- Include C.V. and home and office mailing addresses, e-mail address, and phone number.

All proposals & inquiries should be directed to:
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Reference:
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