Emblems and Enigma (London, 26 Apr 14)

London, Burlington House, Apr 26, 2014
Deadline: Jan 10, 2014
heraldics2014.wordpress.com

Dr Peter N. Lindfield

Call for papers

Emblems and Enigma: the Heraldic Imagination
An Interdisciplinary Symposium at the Society of Antiquaries of London

'Time has transfigured them into / Untruth' (Philip Larkin)

In his 1844 short story 'Earth's Holocaust', Nathaniel Hawthorne sees heraldic signs reaching 'like lines of light' into the past, but also as encrypted and obsolete. Proliferating and arcane, unique, ubiquitous, and inscrutable, the heraldic has been a major presence across the arts since medieval times; yet it remains, culturally and critically, enigmatic.
The organisers of this interdisciplinary symposium, Professor Fiona Robertson (St Mary's University College) and Dr Peter Lindfield (University of St Andrews) invite proposals for twenty-minute papers on any aspect of the employment and perception of the heraldic in literature, history, art, architecture, design, fashion, and contemporary and historical practice. The programme will include a keynote address by Professor Vaughan Hart (University of Bath); a special session on the heraldry of Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill and William Beckford's Fonthill Abbey; and papers on eighteenth-century antiquaries' exploration of the heraldic, and on heraldry in nineteenth-century British and American literature.

Topics may include, but are not restricted to:

- the languages and grammar of heraldry

- armoiries parlantes, allusions and puns

- imaginary and fantastical heraldry

- decoration and display

- blazonry and identity: nations, groups, individuals

- mock- and sham-heraldics; parody and subversion

- practices of memory and memorialisation

- history, development, and modern practice

- blazon and the body

- heraldic revivalism; medievalism; romance

- enigma, error, and absence: the bar sinister and the blank shield

- individual designers, writers, and collectors

- gendered identity

- hierarchies of signs

- international and interdisciplinary perspectives

Proposals of 200 words should be sent to heraldics2014@gmail.com by 10 January 2014.

Fiona Robertson and Peter Lindfield plan to edit a collection of essays arising from the symposium.

Reference:
CFP: Emblems and Enigma (London, 26 Apr 14). In: ArtHist.net, Dec 2, 2013 (accessed Nov 7, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/6535>.