Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Religion (Chemnitz/Dresden, 3-5 Jul 2014)

Chemnitz/Dresden, Jul 3–05, 2014

Bertram Kaschek

International Conference at Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz and Technische Unversität Dresden

Location in Chemnitz (July 3–4): Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Museum am Theaterplatz, Theaterplatz 1, 09111 Chemnitz

Location in Dresden (July 5): TU Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek (SLUB), Vortragssaal (1. OG), Zellescher Weg 18, 01069 Dresden

All lectures are public. Registration isn't required. The conference language is English.

Concept and organization: Prof. Dr. Jürgen Müller, Dr. Bertram Kaschek

The role of religion in the work of Pieter Bruegel the Elder has been hotly debated for almost a century. Karl Tolnai (1925) and Carl Gustaf Stridbeck (1956) have argued that the works of Bruegel expressed a worldview that stood at the edge of Christian Orthodoxy (whether Catholic, Lutheran, or Calvinistic). Despite the skepticism with which the theories of Tolnai and Stridbeck have been met by many art historians, a number of their intuitions and insights have proven to be fruitful starting points for research in the last twenty years. The artist once thought of as "Peasant Bruegel" is now credited with a certain humanistic-theological sophistication, and his works are generally considered as both intelligent and innovative pictorial inventions.
However, current research on Bruegel remains divided on the question of the religious identity of the artist and his work. Whereas some researchers categorically rule out the possibility of identifying his religious position, others have attempted to reach new insights through detailed analysis of his images. In this controversy, the interest in the religious dimension of Bruegel's work is occasionally denigrated as an old-fashioned methodological paradigm, which has been superseded by new media-reflexive and epistemologically concerned inquiries.
The conference strives to relativize this seeming dichotomy as a fiction and as barrier to further research. As the individual contributions will demonstrate, the integration of religious and theological perspectives facilitates not only an iconographical analysis of Bruegel's work but also an analysis of the media-specific strategies that he employs in his images. Against the backdrop of iconoclasm and the revolt against Spanish rule, it is especially important to emphasize how interested the members of the cultural elite of the southern Netherlands were in questions of spiritual orientation, and that they apparently wanted to see these interests reflected in the visual arts.

Program

Thursday, July 3, 2014 (Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Museum am Theaterplatz)

15:00–15:45
Welcome Coffee

15:45–16:00
Ingrid Mössinger (Generaldirektorin der Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz): Greeting and Opening
Walter Moens (Flämische Repräsentanz, Berlin): Words of Welcome

16:00–18:00
Dr. Bertram Kaschek (TU Dresden): “Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Religion: An Introduction”

Prof. Dr. Jürgen Müller (TU Dresden): “What Makes a Bruegel a Bruegel? Reflections on Iconography and Visual Rhetoric”

18:00
Joint Visit of the Exhibition “Pieter Bruegel und das Theater der Welt”

Friday, July 4, 2014 (Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Museum am Theaterplatz)

9:00–10:00
Eric Piltz, M.A. (TU Dresden): “Dealing with Religious Diversity: Confession, Labeling and Ambiguity in Bruegel’s Antwerp”

10:00–10:30
Coffee Break

10:30–12:30
Dr. Jessica Buskirk (TU Dresden): “The First Temptation of Christ: An Evolving Iconographic Trope in Sixteenth-Century Antwerp”

Annett Gerlach, M.A. (Städel Frankfurt/TU Dresden): “Beyond Good and Evil: St. James and the Magician Hermogenes. Religiosity in Two Prints by Pieter Bruegel the Elder”

12:30–15:00
Lunch Break

15:00–16:00
Giorgio Mangani (Ancona): “Abraham Ortelius and Pieter Bruegel”

16:00–16:30
Coffee Break

16:30–18:30
Dr. Thomas Schauerte (Albrecht-Dürer-Haus, Nürnberg): “Pride and Humility: Christian Symbolism in Bruegel’s Representations of Ships”

Prof. Dr. Ralph Dekoninck (Université de Louvain): “Falling Idols, Rising Icons. The Flight into Egypt and the Image Debate in the Time of Bruegel”

Saturday, July 5, 2014 (TU Dresden, SLUB, Zellescher Weg 18, Vortragssaal)

9:30–10:30
Prof. Dr. Gerd Schwerhoff (TU Dresden): “Justice or Tyranny? Pieter Bruegel and the Myth of the Inquisition”

11:00–13:00
Prof. Dr. Reindert Falkenburg (NYU Abu Dhabi): “Pieter Bruegel’s Series of the Seasons: Divine Order and the Missing Painting”

Prof. Dr. Michel Weemans (EHESS Paris): “Double Image, Double Seeing in Pieter Bruegel’s Religious Paintings”

13:00–14:00
Lunch Break

14:00–15:00
Prof. Dr. Anabella Weismann (Universität Oldenburg): “Pieter Bruegel’s Blue Cloak: On the Disguised Religious Meaning of his Netherlandish Proverbs”

15:00–15:30
Coffee Break

15:30–17:30
Dr. Tine Meganck (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Brüssel): “Art, Life and Religion in Pieter Bruegel’s Census at Bethlehem”

Wolf Seiter, M.A. (TU Dresden): “After Beham: Bruegel’s Peasant Kermises as Criticism”

17:30–18:00
Concluding Remarks and Discussion

The conference is supported by “Gesellschaft von Freunden und Förderern der Technischen Universität Dresden e.V.”.

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