Ecclesiastical Patronage in Europe, 1400-1600 (London, 9 May 15)

The Courtauld Institute of Art, London, May 09, 2015
Deadline: Feb 2, 2015

Joost Joustra, Courtauld Institute of Art

Between Heaven and Earth: Ecclesiastical Patronage in Europe, 1400-1600
Third Annual Renaissance Postgraduate Symposium

In recent years, the artistic commissions of ecclesiastic and lay patrons – both individual and collective – have been a fruitful area of scholarship. Research addressing issues of sacred space, devotional practice, and the materiality of extant objects has generated new insights into the artistic provisions made for patronal commemoration and salvation. Often, however, the interests of lay and ecclesiastical patrons have been considered separately, with a lesser focus on how the differences in their status mediated a shared pursuit of commemoration in death. Clerical patronage of art in Renaissance Europe allowed for an expression of political identity and dynastic power during life, but how did their status and role in society affect their choices for the afterlife? Were ecclesiastical patrons more acutely aware of a pressing need to make provision for their personal salvation than their lay counterparts? If so, was this reflected when commissioning commemorative or devotional art? Was the desire to secure a wider intercessory audience expressed more consciously or emphatically in the art of the clergy?

This conference seeks to shed light on the ways in which ecclesiastical patrons utilised devotional and commemorative art. Was there a dialogue between their individual selves and the institutions in which they chose to locate their foundations? Crucially, how do these foundations comment on ecclesiastical life and afterlife? By examining a category of patrons that was highly aware of devotional and commemorative practice, this conference seeks to gain a better understanding of art commissioned for churches by those appointed to participate in and lead them.

We welcome proposals, exploring material across the stated time span, throughout Europe. Topics might include, but are not limited to:

- A re-assessment of the recent historiography and scholarship concerning patronage in an ecclesiastical environment, especially when this contrasts with contemporary lay patronage.

- The relationship between patron and artist or patron and religious institution.

- Depiction of ecclesiastical donor and votive figures.

- The implications of patronal choices of saints and iconography for the intended audience.

- The role of inscriptions, signatures and heraldry in commemoration.

- Reference to political stance and success in religious art.

- Conceptions of heaven and the afterlife as expressed in art.

- Ecclesiastical institutions prescribing limits to patrons and patronage.

- Positioning of chapels and memorials in churches.

- Rituals and liturgy of commemoration.

- The impact of the Reformation and Counter Reformation on ecclesiastical patronage.

The Renaissance Symposium offers the opportunity for research students at all levels from universities in the UK and abroad to present their research. Unfortunately, we cannot offer travel subsidies. Applicants from outside London are, therefore, encouraged to apply to other funding bodies for travel bursaries to attend the conference.

Abstracts for 15-20 minute papers, not exceeding 250 words, should be sent with a brief academic CV (100 words) to Lydia Hansell (lydia.hansell@courtauld.ac.uk) and Joost Joustra (joost.joustra@courtauld.ac.uk) no later than 2nd February 2015. Successful applicants will be notified by the 12th February 2015.

Organised by Lydia Hansell and Joost Joustra (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Reference:
CFP: Ecclesiastical Patronage in Europe, 1400-1600 (London, 9 May 15). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 29, 2014 (accessed Oct 30, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/9022>.