Know Thyself - A Conference on Early Modern Images (London, 2 May 15)

University College London, May 02, 2015
Deadline: Feb 2, 2015

Nathanael Price

Call for papers

Nosce te ipsum/ know thyself

Conference, UCL Department of History of Art Saturday 2nd May, 2015.

The tragedy of Narcissus was his failure to recognise the image he admired on the surface of the pool as his own. His fate might have improved, had he possessed the deeper self-knowledge implied by the Delphic maxim, "know thyself." The question prompted by Narcissus, of how images pertain to self-knowledge, is especially relevant to the Early Modern period, during which the ancient aphorism nosce te ipsum was engaged provocatively in a range of visual material: it is quoted in illustrations of anatomy, natural history and cartography, and evoked in religious and secular works of art. This renewed cultural imperative to self-knowledge is bound up with the scientific and technological advancements of the period. It is epitomised by the technical refinement of the looking glass, which enabled a person to admire - or better, scrutinise - her own face with unprecedented clarity.

The premise of this conference is that consideration of the Delphic maxim can be productively channeled into interrogating the role of the image in relation to the self: How might images mobilise the philosophical challenge to "know thyself"? What are the mechanisms within images that invite participation in the practices of selfdiscovery and self-representation?

The conference aims to explore the role of visuality in the early modern pursuit of self-knowledge in a broad sense. As such, it invites approaches to visual material by which the Delphic maxim is evoked knowingly, or otherwise. Focusing on images from the period c.1500-c.1800, proposals for papers may include, but are by no means limited to: mortality and bodily materiality, cultural identity and difference (race, religion, gender…), subjectivity and self-fashioning, and encounters with the new world and new technologies.

UCL Department of History of Art invites proposals for 20-minute presentations on the theme of 'self-knowledge' in early modern images.

Please send abstracts of no more than 300 words to Sophie Morris sophie.morris@ucl.ac.uk and Nathanael Price n.price.12@ucl.ac.uk by 2nd February 2015.

Please follow the link to the conference abstract for more details.
http://www.ucl.ac.uk/art-history/staff-research/call_for_papers/nosce-te-ipsum

Reference:

CFP: Know Thyself - A Conference on Early Modern Images (London, 2 May 15). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 22, 2015 (accessed Nov 16, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/9303>.