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Sponsor: Association for Textual Scholarship in Art History (ATSAH)

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Session III: Domes in Renaissance Art: Architectural and Conceptual

Brunelleschi's dome for Florence cathedral inaugurated a new phase of European architectural history, drawing nevertheless on multifarious cultural models and religious and symbolic connotations. The session will explore this key motif of architectural classicism, though with a view to expressions of inventiveness and departures from orthodoxy.

Chair: Ellen Longworth, Merrimack College (emerita)
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Bio: Ellen L. Longworth, PhD, is Professor of Fine Arts and Chair of the Department of the Visual and Performing Arts at Merrimack College, MA. She received her PhD from Boston University, MA from The University of Chicago, and BA from Mount Holyoke College. She specializes in Italian Renaissance sculpture, specifically funerary and Northern Italian (Lombard); life-sized polychrome terracotta sculpture groups and North Italy's sacri monti; Tridentine reform, San Carlo Borromeo and the Milanese church of Santo Sepolcro; related sculptures in Milan Cathedral; Michelangelo. Her recent articles are on "Michelangelo and the Eye of the Beholder: The Early Bologna Sculptures," *Artibus et Historiae*, Vienna-Cracow, 46 (XXIII) 2002: 77-82. "Stylistic and Iconographic Consideration: The Lamentation in the Church of Santo Sepolcro, Milan," *Artibus et Historiae*, Vienna-Cracow, 59 (XXX) 2009: 91-114.

Speakers:

Speaker 1. Andrzej Piotrowski, School of Architecture, University of Minnesota
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Title: The Lesser-Known Symbolism of Renaissance Domes

Abstract: This presentation will discuss the Renaissance domes' latent symbolism by examining their design features through the lens of religious and cultural traditions. The perception of the Renaissance as the rebirth of classical humanism changes when dome-covered sacred spaces reveal their Middle Eastern

and Scytho-Indian imports. Such structures referenced the ancient view of the two-part incongruous spiritual universe inherent in neo-Platonic philosophy, in which the geometric perfection of a hemisphere referenced as much the Platonic Form as it approximated the place of the Zoroastrian *mēnōg*, the intelligible mode of being. Traces of that legacy can be identified in Michelangelo's attempt to approximate the transition to the intelligible world by confusing perception and evoking abstract or intuitive thoughts in the Medici Chapel. More commonly, however, encapsulating the vision of the incongruous universe was accomplished by infusing domes with daylight, a symbolic operation following Byzantine and Armenian precedents. Yet not the abstract thought or daylight but representations of the Scytho-Indian visions of mystical vitality served a similar symbolic purpose in the dome-covered sacred structures in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. From Italian centers of power to culturally diverse communities on the eastern peripheries of Europe, the dome-covered architecture reveals how deeply the Renaissance was implicated in non-Western traditions.

Bio: Andrzej Piotrowski, an architect educated in Poland and a professor of architecture at the University of Minnesota, USA, combines in his scholarship theory and history of architecture. His research focuses on the epistemology of design with an emphasis on theoretical, historical, and educational aspects of representation. Covering global issues of architecture, religion, politics, and culture, his findings have been published in various journals and monographs and presented at many architectural and cross-disciplinary conferences. He is the author of *Architecture of Thought* (2011), which was translated to Polish in 2022, co-editor of *The Routledge Handbook on the Reception of Classical Architecture* (2019), and *The Discipline of Architecture* (2001). Currently, he is working on a new book, *A Heretical History of Architecture*.

Speaker 2: Charles Burroughs, Independent Scholar
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Title: Bizarre Brunelleschi: A Concord of Domes

Abstract: For Giorgio Vasari, himself an architect and admirer of Brunelleschi, the latter's *Tempio degli Angeli*, though unfinished, was "a most bizarre" structure. This is more remarkable in that the *tempio* was the first centrally planned building of the Renaissance, and it inaugurated a series of calm and dignified religious buildings, some very familiar to Vasari. His view of the *tempio* was perhaps shaped by his apparent unawareness that the *tempio* was conceived as part of a larger planned environment, with a portico running in front of it and crossing the street that led to the entrance of the convent to which the *tempio* belonged. I will propose that the building's exceptional design was in part shaped by its projected situation within this larger set of urban relations and connotations that was inspired by a prestigious model, not ancient but Byzantine, and urban as much as architectural.

Bio: Charles Burroughs is an art and architectural historian of late medieval and early modern Europe, especially Italy, though recently he has turned his attention to landscape design and urban planning in America before the First World War. After the BA in Classics at Oxford he took graduate degrees at the Warburg Institute of London University. In the US he taught mainly at Binghamton University of SUNY and at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, from which he retired in 2014. Subsequently he relocated to Rochester and joined the Department of Art History at SUNY Geneseo as an adjunct. He is currently working on Botticelli's "political *Primavera*," on Raphael's *School of Athens* as a tragic yet comic image in the spirit of Plato's *Symposium*, and on Paul Cret's design for the Pan-American (OAS) Building in Washington, DC, and the redefinition of architectural classicism.

Speaker 3: Lynette Bosch, State University of New York at GENESEO
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Title: A Dome of Gods in the Chaos of the Reformation: Giulio Romano's Sala de' Giganti

Abstract: Between 1532 and 1534, Giulio Romano decorated a series of rooms in the Palazzo del Te at Mantua for Federico II Gonzaga. The subject chosen for the Sala dei Giganti was the defeat of the Giants by the Olympian Gods, narrated by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*. The Sala is within a complex of mythological rooms in the palace designed by Giulio Romano, originally as a leisure palace for Federico's dalliances but which turned into a more formal reception palace for visitors such as the Emperor Charles V. The rooms, of which the Sala dei Giganti formed part, assemble a series of subjects that include the Sala di Psiche (1526-1528), the Sala dei Cavalli (c. 1526) and the Sala di Troia (1536-1540), which followed the Sala dei Giganti in the ensemble. While the Sala di Psiche addresses amorous encounters suitable for a leisure palace, the other subjects imply more serious pursuits employing the language of mythology and Classical history to emblematically represent current events. That all the mythological subjects in the rooms are subjects united by themes of snatching victory from defeat is indicative of a program that developed, perhaps accidentally or coincidentally over time and acquired meaning with hindsight as a unified series of symbolic messages. This employment of mythological subjects, during the earlier stages of the Reformation, continued the Renaissance tradition of addressing themes of power and rule through metaphor and simile, as the decorations of the Palazzo continued, and the function of the building changed from pleasure villa to a center of Mantuan power. Yet, such extensive use of mythological subjects, as the Protestant Reformation unfolded might indicate an assertion or extension of a status quo that was a resistance to the changes that were happening presaging those to come. This paper explores how the decoration of the Palazzo del Te functioned within the transformed ethos of the world that unfolded after Martin Luther broke with the Catholic Church and destroyed the unity of Christendom and the certainty of the order of things.

Bio: Lynette M.F. Bosch, SUNY Distinguished Professor at the State University of New York, Geneseo and founding Chair of the Department of Art History. Ph.D. from Princeton University; M.A. City University of New York, Hunter College; and B.A. City University of New York, Queens College. Her areas of publications are: Spanish and Italian Renaissance Art and Latin American Art. She has most recently published *Mannerism, Spirituality and Cognition: The Art of Enargeia*, Routledge (2019). Her publications include: *Demi*, Rizzoli Press (2019); *The Cuban and American Art of Alberto Rey* (co-edited with Mark Denaci), SUNY Press (2014) *Cuban- American Art in Miami: Exile, Identity and the Neo-Baroque*, Lund Humphries Press (2004); *Ernesto Barreda: Contemporary Chilean Painter*, Editorial Morgan (1996); *Art, Liturgy and Legend in Renaissance Toledo: The Mendoza and the Iglesia Primada*, Penn State Press (2000), which received the Eleanor Tufts Book Prize (2001), from the American Society of Hispanic Art Scholars.