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**SECAC Conference – Richmond, VA 2023 – ATSAH Affiliated Society**  
(ATSAH, Association for Textual Scholarship in Art History)

October 11-13, 2023

**Session Title:** Creativity in Renaissance Art, Patronage, and Religion

This session welcomes papers addressing aspects of creativity and innovations in Renaissance art, considering culture, patronage, and religion (spirituality).

**Chair:** Liana Cheney, University of Massachusetts Lowell (emerita)  
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**Speakers**

1. William R. Levin, Professor Emeritus of Art History, Centre College  
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**Title:** Two Confraternities, Two Saints, Two Paintings, and a Quandary

**Abstract:** Among charitable confraternities of late-medieval and Renaissance-era Florence, the Misericordia and the Bigallo count as two of the most significant. Members of the Misericordia acted in various ways to fulfill their philanthropic mission, while Bigallo members primarily administered hospitals and hospices. In 1425, the Florentine government joined the Bigallo, plagued by malfeasance, to the prosperous and well-supervised Misericordia, whose headquarters the Bigallo then shared even after dissolution of the unhappy union in 1489. Indeed, the two companies continued to occupy the premises together until about 1525, when the Misericordia abandoned it to the Bigallo and moved elsewhere. The *Bigallo Triptych* of 1333, property of the latter society, includes a Crucifixion scene prominently featuring Francis of Assisi, an inspirational figure specifically for the Misericordia. Another painting from about 1360 illustrates the establishment of the Bigallo by Peter Martyr, a saint often represented in artworks for that organization yet frequently credited as founder of the Misericordia, too. While unquestionably a Bigallo commission, Saint Francis—revered by the Misericordia—also appears in this second painting, though identified otherwise in an early inventory description. The challenge here is to unravel this tangle of ownership and saintly associations.

**Bio:** William Levin, a specialist in Italian late-medieval and Renaissance art, is professor emeritus at Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, where from 1986 to 2010, following brief periods of employment

elsewhere, he taught the entire chronology of Western art history as the lone art historian. He earned his bachelor's degree in history at Northwestern University, graduating Phi Beta Kappa in 1970, and master's and doctoral degrees in the history of art at the University of Michigan in 1973 and 1983, respectively. Now in retirement, Dr. Levin continues to lecture, research, and publish principally on expressions of the concept of charity in art, history, and literature, and on the artistic patrimony of philanthropic organizations in late-medieval and Renaissance Italy, with particular emphasis on the Misericordia Company of Florence. He regards images of neighborly love as important manifestations of the profound societal changes sweeping Western Europe during his period of specialization.

**2. Charles Burroughs, Independent Scholar**  
[charlesburroughs21@gmail.com](mailto:charlesburroughs21@gmail.com)

**Title:** On the Running Man: The Ancient Quarrel and the School of Athens

**Abstract:** For many years scholars have debated the identification of the figures included in the assembly of philosophers in Raphael's *School of Athens*. Not all are philosophers; a strikingly exceptional figure is the young man rushing in from the left just beneath the fictive statue of Apollo. He is, Oberhuber has suggested, a student, though I believe we can go further. I argue that the key source for the fresco is the lively, anecdote-filled *Lives and Opinions of the Philosophers* by Diogenes Laertius, whose *Life of Socrates* mentions his friendship – even collaborations -- with the tragedian Euripides, who brought to Socrates a manuscript of Heraclitus's radical and obscure treatise, which would be very important for Plato. In this paper I explore the implications of this indirect presence of Heraclitus in the fresco and suggest that the figure now usually identified as Heraclitus, and that was added to the fresco after completion, merely gave emphasis to an already-existing Heraclitean dimension of the fresco. Further, the running man challenges the division by disciplines of the Stanza frescoes and problematizes what Plato calls "the ancient quarrel of poetry and philosophy."

**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.

**3. Debra Murphy, University of North Florida**  
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**Title:** The Sala delle Aquile: Heroic Paragons of Virtue in the Palazzo dei Conservatori

**Abstract:** This paper explores one of the friezes completed in the Palazzo dei Conservatori during the papacy of Pope Paul III (1534-1549) depicting heroic women, all drawn from the early history of Rome. In their anonymity and in their small scale, the friezes are also reminders of the diminished roles of the Conservators both as administrators and as patrons. The choices of subject matter, however, reflect the Conservators' awareness of the great legacy of the Republican era, in which they saw themselves as the rightful heirs to a glorious past as they held onto their few remaining responsibilities, which included the staging of triumphal and carnival festivities, and the safekeeping of monuments and antiquities. The

selection of the subject matter of ancient Roman heroines for the Sala delle Aquile, can be understood in the context of these responsibilities, contemporary attitudes toward women, and the function of the room itself. The stories of Hersilia, Lucretia, Claudia Quinta, Cloelia, and Tuccia will be examined in the context of the function of the room, its location on the venerable Capitoline hill, and a variety of antecedents ranging from paintings on cassoni, frescoes on house facades, to depictions in festival decorations.

4. **Lynette Bosch**, State University of New York at GENESEO  
[lmfbosch@gmail.com](mailto:lmfbosch@gmail.com)

**Title:** Francesco Salviati's Frescoes for the Sala dell' Udienza, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence

**Abstract:** Francesco Salviati's fresco cycle in the Sala dell'Udienza was painted for Cosimo de' Medici between 1543-1545. The fresco cycle features scenes from the life of the Roman General, Marcus Furius Camillus framed by a series of allegorical figures. The combined imagery found in the room, alludes to aspects of Cosimo de' Medici's rule of Florence and to his hopes for dynastic rule over the city for generations of Medici to come. While the nature of the allegorical figures does not initially seem to form a cohesive program, once the imagery is considered, within the contemporary iconography developed at the Medici court for the exaltation of the Medici family and especially for representing Cosimo as an ideal ruler. This paper analyzes the individual figures found in the room towards presenting a cohesive program for the room's figures.

**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.