

RSA ATSAH Dublin, Ireland, April 2-4, 2021

Session 3: ATSAH affiliated Society of RSA

Session Title: Artistic Transitions: Literary and Visual Considerations II

Session Abstract: The focus of this session is to consider physical and metaphysical transitions in sixteenth-century art. Papers are invited that explore changes or modifications about interpretation or stylistic attributions in works of art. Observations about new artistic, cultural, literary and scientific investigations may have caused the artistic transition.

Organizer: Liana De Girolami Cheney, University of Bari, Italy, President of ATSAH
Liana_Cheney@uml.edu

Chair: Tina Bizzarro, Rosemont College, PA
rosieselavy@yahoo.com

Short Bio: Tina Waldeier Bizzarro is Professor of History of Art and Chair of the Department of History of Art at Rosemont College. She also teaches at Villanova University in the Irish Studies and Russian Studies Departments. She is a medievalist by training, having done her PhD at Bryn Mawr College on attitudes toward the medieval from the twelfth century through the nineteenth. Her other publications are on the history of the reception of medieval architecture (Cambridge University Press) throughout Western Europe and the revival of the Romanesque in the nineteenth century. Her work on Sicily began in 1998, when she devised and ran a summer studies program there through 2006. She has traveled and studied the island extensively and is preparing a book on the roadside shrines of Sicily and how they formed part of the Sicilian celebration of *feste* or saints' holidays.

Speaker I: Caroline Hillard, Wright State University
caroline.hillard@wright.edu

Title: A Medici *Venus all'etrusca*

Abstract: A statuette of Venus Anadyomene from the collection of Cosimo I de' Medici bears a curious feature on its base: a carefully carved Etruscan inscription. Scholars have long regarded the work as a Renaissance forgery, but its origin and precise date have been disputed. Through an analysis of the statuette's style and materials, as well as of new documentary evidence, this paper will present an interpretation of the work's form and function within the context of early sixteenth-century humanist culture. It positions the statuette alongside Etruscan epigraphic studies of the first half of the sixteenth century, and posits that it was intended not so much to deceive as to impress the viewer with its *all'etrusca* style. In doing so, this study provides insight into the genesis of this unusual

sculpture as well as into the relationship between visual art and epigraphy and Etruscan studies more broadly.

Short Bio: Caroline Hillard is an art historian whose work concerns the rediscovery of ancient Etruria in Renaissance Italy. Her recent articles include “Leonardo and the Etruscan Tomb” (Renaissance Quarterly, 2018), "Mythic Origins, Mythic Archaeology: The Etruscans in Sixteenth-Century Narratives of the Foundation of Florence" (Renaissance Quarterly, 2016), and "Vasari and the Etruscan Manner" (Sixteenth Century Journal, 2013). She is a recipient of grants from the Kress foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the RSA and others, and in 2018-19 she was Robert Lehman Fellow at Villa I Tatti, where she developed the ideas presented in this paper. She is currently Associate Professor at Wright State University, in Dayton, Ohio, where she teaches Renaissance, Baroque, and ancient art.

Speaker II Karen Goodchild, Wofford College
GoodchildKH@wofford.edu

Title: Delight and Possession: Using Architecture to Control the Charms of Women and Landscape across the 16th century

Abstract: In 1604, Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga wrote a letter saying he would like to “fare una camera...di tutte le piu belle dame del mondo.” This talk traces the emergence of the use of women as room décor, discussing examples of women as actual architecture, in works such as Dosso Dosso’s Rooms of the Caryatids at the Villa Imperiale and Belriguardo and Niccolò dell’ Abate’s caryatids at the Palazzo Poggi, women eternally framed by Architecture as in the “beauties” inhabiting the Palazzo Salvadego in Brescia, and concluding with permanently-installed portrait groups such as the one posited by the Duke above. The manners of depiction and level of ancient reference in these images shift as the century progresses, but, in most cases, the women are connected to landscapes, either real or fictive. I argue these images of women and landscape relate to the development of an aesthetic of virtuosic ornamentation in which displays of artistic skill reflect the patron’s ability to command and control visual pleasures.

Speaker III: Patricia Likos Ricci, Elizabethtown College

Title: The Nature of Knowledge: Natural History in Sixteenth-century Illustrated Texts

Abstract: During the sixteenth century, the illustrated natural history treatises published by Otto Brunfels (1532-42), Leonhart Fuchs (1542), Andrea Mattioli (1549), and Conrad Gessner (1551-58) were criticized by humanists who maintained that the transmission of knowledge was the prerogative of the word. Since the purpose of these books was the identification of plants and animals, why was the truth-value of the image suspect at a time when Leonardo, Michelangelo, Durer and lesser artists had mastered techniques of verisimilitude in visual representation? Neither professional rivalry nor textual authority sufficiently explains the humanists’ rejection of illustration. This paper will argue that in

the absence of standardized practices and methodologies of natural history, humanists raised legitimate concerns about artistic interventions in the production of knowledge that shed light on sixteenth-century concepts of experience, perception and observation. Knowledge traditionally preserved in manuscripts and communicated by and for specialists in academic settings was being replaced with widely disseminated printed texts. Exotic species arriving from the New World were not found in the writings of Galen, Pliny and Dioscorides. The conflict between word and image was symptomatic of a deeper cultural transition that ruptured the rapport humanists and artisans had established during the quattrocento.

Short Bio: Patricia Likos Ricci is Professor of the History of Art and Director of the Fine Arts Department at Elizabethtown College. She received her doctorate from Bryn Mawr College. Her research interests include the interaction of artists and sciences from the Early Modern era to the twentieth century. She has published on Étienne-Louis Boullée's cenotaph for Isaac Newton, the architecture of Joseph Priestley's Pennsylvania residence, Edwin Austin Abbey's astronomical mural *The Passage of the Hours*, and the literary and artistic roots of the American environmental movement. Her recent work in this field is "The Inquiring Eye: Illustration and the Production of Knowledge," a chapter in *A Companion to Illustration* published by Wiley-Blackwell in 2019.