

# HAA 2300: Image, Art, Thing in the Renaissance

Thursdays, 2:30-5:20, Frick 104

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Frick 118a

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2-4pm (or by appointment)

The stakes of studying Early Modern art history have come into high relief in the last twenty years or so. Numerous scholars have pointed to the “moment of 1500” as a definitive rupture in the development of Western aesthetics, the moment at which the march toward “the modern” finally slips into gear. Renaissance art has been investigated as evincing the hypostasis between different paradigms of picture-making: “image” and “art” (Belting), “substitution” and “performance” (Nagel and Wood), or “representation” and “agency” (Gell/Latour). These are the novel paradigms that art history brings to bear upon the Early Modern period; yet they often leave art historians skeptical for the materials that they neglect. At the same time the social sciences have begun to manifest an intensified concern with the material world and the “things” it encompasses. This New Materialist emphasis on object-based-ontologies has blurred traditional boundaries between “things” like subject and object, intention and agency, art and gift, as well as broader disciplinary distinctions. This seminar, then, will read art historical literature against the recent foundational works of Bruno Latour, Jane Bennett, Bill Brown, and Web Keane – among others – in an effort to appreciate how things – both “images” and “art” – helped mediate social relationship in the Early Modern world and how this complicates the image-art dyad that currently dominates the field.

## Required Texts

Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting* (trans. Grayson)

## Recommended Texts

Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* (Dover)

Gabriele Paleotti, *On Sacred Images* (Getty)

Lorenzo Valla, *Dialectical Disputations*, v. 1 (I Tatti Library)

Nicholas of Cusa, *Selected Writings* (Paulist).

## Course Requirements

1. Class attendance and participation.
2. Eight brief (approx. 1 page, typed and double-spaced) responses to each week’s readings (Weeks 2–13). You get to choose which weeks you would like to write a response. *These are emphatically not meant to be summaries of the arguments set forth in the reading*, but rather a reflection on some aspect of the reading that struck you as noteworthy, meriting further investigation, etc. You are *encouraged* to use these response papers to connect the readings to your own sub-discipline. These response

- papers will be read out loud in class to stimulate and guide discussions each week. These should be emailed to the professor by 9am the morning of class.
3. In-class presentation
  4. A final independent presentation and formal written essay, approximately 15-20 pages, on a topic of your choice in consultation with the professor. All students are required to make an appointment to discuss their project with the professor during week 6 or week 7 of the class in order to allow ample time to develop an independent bibliography.

### *In-Class Presentations*

Over the course of the semester, participants will occasionally work in groups of two or three to prepare and deliver brief (20–30 minute) presentations of key works, theories, themes, and issues related to that week's topic and readings. Details to follow.

### *Final Presentation*

Students should prepare a conference style paper, no longer than 20 minutes, with a carefully integrated digital presentation component. Practice your presentations in advance in order to regulate the timing. "Spectators" will be expected to offer cogent, insightful questions and comments, in the spirit of helping the presenter to further develop their thinking and writing on this topic.

### *Final Project*

Following the presentation, each participant will submit a formal written essay, in the form of a Word or PDF document, emailed to the professor by 11:59pm EST on Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup>. These papers should be approximately 15-20 pages with Chicago Style footnotes and bibliography. All students should begin meeting individually with the professor early in the semester to discuss the shape of the final research project, and should also set up an appointment with Kate Joranson, the Fine Arts Librarian, to talk with her about your research interests.

### *Formatting Guidelines for Written Work*

All art history essays should be double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman or a similar font, and with 1" margins. They should include Chicago Style footnotes, a separate Chicago Style bibliography, and fully captioned illustrations of all relevant figures, each on a separate page (with some exceptions) and following the bibliography. When in doubt, refer to the Chicago Manual of Style, available online through PittCat.

## **Week 1**

### Jan. 7<sup>th</sup> – Introductions

\* Visit to CMOA – group exercise

## **Week 2**

### Jan. 14<sup>th</sup> – Image Part I: Picture

Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*

Caroline Walker Bynum. *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe*. New York: Zone, 2011: 15-123.

Joseph Masheck, "Alberti's 'Window': Art -Historical Notes on an Antimodernist Misprision," *Art Journal*, 50, 1 (March 1991), pp. 35-41.

Yves Bonnefoy. *The Lure and the Truth in Painting*. Chicago: 43-58 and 71-84.

### **Week 3**

#### Jan. 21<sup>st</sup> – Image Part II: Image

Paleotti, Gabriele. *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, translated by William McCuaig. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2012. Book 1

Nicholas of Cusa, *De vision dei*, Preface – Bk. 12, in *Nicolas of Cusa's Dialectical Mysticism. Text, Translation, and Interpretative Study of De Visione Dei*, ed. and trans. Jasper Hopkins (Minneapolis, 1988), pp. 680-703

Hortst Bredekamp. "A Neglected Tradition? Art History as *Bildwissenschaft*." *Critical Inquiry*, 29 (2003), 418-28.

Moxey, Keith. *Visual Time: The Image in History*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013: 53-75.

Belting, Hans. *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body* (Princeton), 1-36

### **Week 4**

#### Jan 28<sup>th</sup> – NO CLASS

### **Week 5**

#### Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> – Image Part III. Image / Text

Augustine. *On Christian Doctrine*, books 1-3.

"Oriental Script in Italian Painting" from *Bazaar to Piazza*.

Acres, Alfred. "Rogier van der Weyden's Painted Texts." *Artibus et Historiae* 21 (2000): 75-109.

Nagel, Alexander. "25 Notes on Pseudo-Script." *Res*.

### **Week 6 (Meetings to discuss paper topics)**

#### Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> – Images Part IV. The Agency of Images

Mitchell, W.J.T. *What do Pictures Want?*, intro and chapter 1.

Gell, Alfred. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998: 96-154.

Bennett, Jane. 2005. The agency of assemblages and the North American blackout. *Public Culture* 17(3): 445-65.

From: Caroline van Eck. *Art, Agency and Living Presence: From the Animated Image to the Excessive Object* (Leiden, 2015)

### **Week 7 (Meetings to discuss paper topics)**

#### Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> – Art Part I: Genealogies of Modernity

Giorgio Vasari, "On Painting" chapter 1

From: Williams, Robert. *Art, Theory, and Culture in Sixteenth-Century Italy: From Techne to Metatechne*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

From: Didi-Huberman, Georges. *Confronting Images: Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art*, translated by John Goodman. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005.

Belting, Hans. *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art* (University of Chicago Press, 1994), 458-90

Nagel, Alexander. *The Controversy of Renaissance Art*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011: chapters 8-10.

## **Week 8**

### Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> – Art Part II

Heidegger, Martin. “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, translated by Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper Collins, 2001.

Boehm, Gottfried. “Representation, Presentation, Presence: Tracing the Homo Pictor,” in *Iconic Power: Materiality and Meaning in Social Life*, edited by Jeffrey Alexander, Dominik Bartmanski, and Bernhard Giesen. New York: Palgrave, 2011: 15-23.

Ann Dunlop, “On the Origins of European Painting Materials, Real and Imagined,” *The Matter of Art* (Manchester, 2015), 68-96.

Regina Stefaniak, “Replicating Mysteries of the Passion: Rosso’s *Dead Christ with Angels*,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 45 (1992), 677-738.

## **Week 9**

### March 3<sup>rd</sup> – Art Part III. Miraculous Images -

Examination of Giovanni Angelo Lottini, *Scelta d’alcuni miracoli e grazie della Santissima Nunziata di Firenze* (Firenze: Landini, 1636), held in the University Art Gallery.

Maniura, Robert. “The Icon is Dead, Long Live the Icon: The Holy Image in the Renaissance,” in *Icon and Word: The Power of Images in Byzantium. Studies Presented to Robin Cormack*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003: 88-103.

Keane, Webb. “Calvin in the Tropics: Objects and Subjects at the Religious Frontier,” in *Border Fetishisms: Material Objects in Unstable Spaces*, edited by Patricia Spyer. New York: Routledge, 1998 pp. 13-34.

Holmes, Megan. “Miraculous Images in Renaissance Florence,” *Art History* 34 (June 2011), 432-465.

Jacobs, Fedrika. “Rethinking the Divide: Cult Images and the Cult of Images,” in *Renaissance Theory*, edited by James Elkins and Robert Williams. New York and London: Routledge, 2008: 95-114.

## SPRING BREAK

## **Week 10**

### March 17<sup>th</sup> – Thing Part I

Heidegger, Martin. “The Thing,” in *Poetry, Language, and Thought*. Harper Collins, New York: Harper Collins, 2001, pp. 165-182.

Brown, Bill. Thing theory. *Critical Inquiry* 28(2001), 1-22.

Paula Findlen, “Introduction,” in *Early Modern Things*

Marianna Koos “Wandering Things: Agency and Embodiment.” *Art History*

Luke Syson and Dora Thornton, *Objects of Virtue: Art in Renaissance Italy* (London, 2001), 229-262.

## **Week 11**

### March 24<sup>th</sup> – Thing Part II

Lorenzo Valla, *Dialectical Disputations*, v. 1

- Latour, Bruno. "Though Shalt Not Freeze Frame, or How Not to Misunderstand the Science and Religion Debate," in *On The Modern Cult of the Factish God*.
- Christopher S. Wood, "Image and Thing: A Modern Romance," *Representations* 133 (2016), 130-51.
- Rothstein, Brett. "Making Trouble: Strange Wooden Objects and the Early Modern Pursuit of Difficulty," *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 13 (2013).

### **Week 12**

March 31 – NO CLASS, RSA BOSTON

### **Week 13**

April 7<sup>th</sup> – Thing Part III. Collecting things

- Jean Baudrillard. "The System of Collecting," in *Cultures of Collecting*.
- Appadurai, Arjun. "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, edited by Arjun Appadurai. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 3-63.
- Findlen, Paula. *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy*. Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1994
- Stephen Campbell, "Antico and Mantegna: Humanist Art and the Fortune of the Art Object," in *Antico. The Golden Age of Renaissance Bronzes* (Washington DC, 2010),

### **Week 14**

April 14<sup>th</sup> – Presentations (perhaps extending beyond class time limit)

### **Week 15**

April 21<sup>st</sup> – Presentations (perhaps extending beyond class time limit)

## University-Wide Policies

*Academic Integrity:* Cheating or plagiarism on any exam or assignment will not be tolerated. Simply put, plagiarism is using someone else's words as if they are your own. If you ever use someone else's text word for word in your own writing, you must enclose those words in quotation marks and cite the source; if you paraphrase from a source, you must cite it as well. If you try to pass off someone else's writing or research as your own in any exam or assignment, or otherwise cheat in the course, you will receive an F grade in the course and you will be reported to the dean's office for disciplinary action pursuant to the School's Academic Integrity Code (see <http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/policies/academic-integrity>.)

*Disability Accommodation:* If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you must contact me and the Office of Disability Resources and Services [<http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drswelcome>; 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890], within the first two to three weeks of the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

*Email Policy:* Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address will be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their email via other service providers (e.g. Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students who choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address. To forward e-mail sent to your University account, go to <http://accounts.pitt.edu>, log into your account, click on Edit Forwarding Addresses, and follow the instructions on the page. Be sure to log out of your account when you have finished. (For the full E-mail Communication Policy, go to [www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-10-01.html](http://www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-10-01.html).)

*Recording Classroom Sessions:* To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.