

2015 Lovis Corinth Colloquium

Art History Department, Emory University

October 29-31, 2015, 9:00 am–4:45 pm
Reception Hall, Michael C. Carlos Museum

‘*Ut pictura amor*: The Reflexive Imagery of Love in Artistic Theory and Practice, 1400-1700’

Organizers: Walter Melion (Emory University), Joanna Woodall (Courtauld Institute), and Michael Zell (Boston University)



First published in 1435, Leon Battista Alberti’s art treatise *De pictura* codified the notion that love, like painting, operates by means of affective images that make absent persons intensely present to consciousness. Painting thus exemplifies the imaging faculty that sustains the community of humanist friends, whom Alberti therefore urges to consider what painting is, the parts of which it is constituted, and the mimetic ends those parts may best be made to serve. Implicit in his account is the far-reaching assumption that the discourse of love licenses the theory of painting, and conversely, that the practice of painting, if properly parsed and understood, sheds light on the processes of love. The analogy between *amor* and *pictura* was further propagated within the courtly culture of love: Isabella d’Este, for instance, construes *natura* and *eros* as forms of knowledge analogous to (indeed translatable into) the mimetic and seductive properties of painting and sculpture. Within the poetic and scholarly precincts of her *studiolo*, the power of human artifice is closely compared to the power of love, for both love and artifice inspire desire. In the early and mid-sixteenth century, the poetic conventions of *petrarchismo* became linked with the criteria of pictorial beauty, to such an extent that the portrayal of beautiful women was appreciated as a synecdoche for the beauty and desirability of painting itself. The conditions of affective viewing that define the poetic subject’s relation to an absent beloved were seen likewise to define the relation between the viewer and the pictorial image. Image theory and the doctrine of love also combined in the emblem tradition, as the famous emblem books of Otto van Veen, enshrining the themes of profane and sacred love, amply testify. Van Veen observes frequently that love, since it operates in and through images, is an essentially pictorial enterprise. Consequently, if one is to understand love, love’s images must be investigated, and questions posed about how and why they transmit, sustain, or inflame desire. Imitative doctrine pervades the emblem books of

Van Veen and his contemporaries, on whose amorous scenes of daily life (often featuring Amor in the role of burgher), as has recently been argued, the canon of Dutch genre painting, comprising scenes of trade, commerce, festivity, courtship, and domesticity, seems largely to have been based. This helps to explain why the theme of love underlies so many of the descriptive episodes that typify this pictorial genus, and further, why the attention they direct toward issues of manufacture, not least the manner in which they have been painted, goes hand in hand with questions concerning the artifice of love, its devices and stratagems.

Precisely because the imagery of love is bound up with the topic of pictorial artifice, this imagery, more often than not, functions reflexively to make the beholder mindful of the form and function, manner and meaning of the pictorial or sculptural image qua image he is beholding. Between 1400 and 1700, many artists produced reflexive images of this kind, that appraise love by examining the pictorial or sculptural image, and conversely, appraise the pictorial or sculptural image by examining love.

Thursday, October 29 (Reception Hall, Carlos Museum)

Opening Remarks: 9:30-10:00

Professor Robin Forman, Dean of the Emory College, Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Mathematics

Co-organizers: Walter S. Melion, Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Art History, Emory University; Joanna Woodall, Professor, The Courtauld Institute of Art; Michael Zell, Professor of Art History, Boston University

Session 1, 10:00-11:30

Henry Luttikhuis, Calvin College

‘Intimacy and Longing: Geertgen tot Sint Jans, Jacob Cornelisz van Oostanen, and the Distance of Love’

Laura Gelfand, Utah State University

‘What’s love got to do with it?: Unlacing the love knots in Margaret of Austria’s royal monastery at Brou’

11:45-12:45 — Lunch

Session 2, 1:00-2:45

Haohao Lu, University of Leiden

‘The Affecting Image and *Aemulatio* of the Body in Sixteenth-Century Burgundian Visual Culture’

Edward Wouk, University of Manchester

‘“For the love of art”: History, Community, and Practice in the *Vita of Lambert Lombard*’

Joanna Woodall, The Courtauld Institute, University of London

‘“For Love and Money”: The Creation of Value in Abraham Ortelius’s *Album Amicorum*’

2:45-3:00 — Coffee Break

Session 3, 3:00-4:45

Els Stronks, Utrecht University

‘*Amor Dei* in Emblems for the Dutch Youth’

Joshua Mostow, University of British Columbia

‘Hishikawa Moronobu and the Imprinting of ‘Love’ in Early Modern Japan’

Walter Melion

‘Anthropomorphosis and the Trope of the Living Tree in Hendrick Goltzius *Portrait of Frederick de Vries* 1597’

Friday, October 30

Session 1, 10:00-11:45

Margit Thøfner, University of East Anglia

‘Exemplary Love: Marten de Vos’s Portrayals of the Virgin Mary’

Wietse de Boer, Miami University

‘Love, Vision, Imagination: The Problem of Lovesickness in the Italian Counter-Reformation’

Joseph Chorpenning, Saint Joseph’s University

‘The Dynamics of Divine Love: Francis de Sales’s Picturing of the Biblical Mystery of the Visitation’

12:00-12:45 — Lunch

Session 2, 1:00-2:45

Jonathan Unglaub, Brandeis University

‘Bernardo Accolti and Raphael: The Poetics of Desire and Pictorial Generation’

Ursula Härting

‘Diana and her Nymphs: Tableaux dont les sujets conviennent au Lieu - Bathroom, Country House, and their Decoration in 16th- and 17th-Century Flanders’

Lisa Rosenthal, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

‘“Achilles Revealed”: Artifice, Desire, and the Performance of Identity in the *Constkamer*’

2:45-3:00 — Coffee Break

Session 3, 3:00-4:45

M.A. (Thijs) Weststeijn, University of Amsterdam

‘The Painting Looks Back: Reciprocal Desire in the Seventeenth Century’

Dawn Odell, Lewis & Clark University

‘Depicting Desire: Chinese “Paintings of Beauties” and Images of Asia in Jesuit Texts’

Michael Zell, Boston University

‘The Mirror as Rival: Metsu, Mimesis, and Amor in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Painting’

Saturday, October 31

Session 1, 9:00-10:45

Joost vander Auwera, Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium

‘Fertility, Love, and Moderation: Reconsidering Jordaens’s “Allegories of Fertility” within the Framework of 17th-Century Concepts of Nature, Marriage, and Procreation’

Stephanie Dickey, Queen’s University, Ontario

‘Eros, Agape, and Conjugal Love in Paintings by Rembrandt and Van Dyck’

H. Perry Chapman, University of Delaware

‘Rubens, Rembrandt, and the Spousal Model-Muse’

Session 2, 11:00-12:45

Natasha Seaman, Rhode Island College

‘Desire by Candlelight: Honthorst’s Old Woman with a Coin’

Kishwar Rizvi, Yale University

‘The Materiality of Love in Safavid *Majalis al-Ushhaq* (Assembly of Lovers)’

H. Rodney (Rod) Nevitt, Jr., University of Houston

‘Vermeer’s *Milkmaid* in the Discourse of Love’

Closing remarks, 12:45-1:00

1:15-2:00 — Lunch