**Translating Cultures in the Hispanic World**

A conference hosted by Art in Translation

University of Edinburgh

Teviot Row House, 13 Bristo Square, Edinburgh

7-8 November 2013

**Abstracts**

|  |
| --- |
| **Session 1: Visual Culture and Translation in Medieval Spain** |

**Lost and Found in Translation: Visual Interpretation in Medieval Astrological Iconography**

*Alejandro García Aviles, Universidad de Murcia, Spain*

Astrological images are typical historiographical witnesses of how classical iconography changed during the Middle Ages. While scholars since Aby Warburg have traditionally focused on the continuities with the classical tradition, it is obvious that there are a number of examples in medieval astrological iconography in which textual and visual mistakes are the source of iconographic creation. This talk will focus on medieval interpretations of ancient astrological iconography, with reference to some Spanish examples, and taking the iconography of the planets as case-studies.

**Islamic Objects in Christian Contexts: Gift Exchange and Relic Translation**

*Mariam Rosser-Owen, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK*

Among the many reliquaries housed in the church treasuries of northern Iberia are a large number of caskets made in the Islamic world. These mainly come from al-Andalus, the territory of the Iberian Peninsula under Muslim rule during the medieval period, while others may be imports from Egypt or further afield. These containers were created as secular objects, to store perfumes, jewellery or other luxury goods, and usually bear Arabic inscriptions in honour or praise of their original Muslim owners. This paper will address the apparently contradictory phenomenon of Muslim secular objects re-used to house the relics of Christian saints. Many of these saints were martyrs who were buried in territory under Muslim rule, and this paper will also examine the instances of relic translation from Islamic to Christian Iberia as one probable means by which these precious containers were themselves translated from south to north of the Peninsula.

**Texts and Talismans in Medieval Castile**

*Tom Nickson, Courtauld Institute of Art, London, UK*

This paper focuses on the Victoria and Albert Museum’s so-called ‘Botica de los Templarios’, a fourteenth-century ‘cupboard’ from Toledo with Arabic, Latin and Castilian inscriptions. I first  explore the significance of the juxtaposition of different languages, the meaning of the inscriptions, and their parallels with talismans and other ‘magical’ texts. I then consider how these and other inscriptions were studied by scholars in the nineteenth century, and how the internet has transformed their study in our own time.

**Translating Cartography: The *Mappaemundi* of the Beatus Commentary on the Apocalypse**

*Emily Goetsch, University of Edinburgh, UK*

This paper will examine the unusual inclusion of the *mappaemundi* within the primarily apocalyptic programme of the Beatus manuscripts. In addressing four tenth-century maps, this paper will argue that visual and ideological aspects of earlier maps were incorporated into the Beatus images in order to convey messages pertinent to the monastic communities producing these works in northern Iberia. By identifying and addressing cartographic features that were translated into the Beatus context, this paper will suggest the relevance of the inclusion, placement and form of these world maps. Furthermore, it will demonstrate that those features chosen to develop these illustrations were designed to encourage the spread of Christianity and the triumph of the faith at judgment, ideas that were particularly poignant for those living in the isolated northern regions of a Muslim-occupied Iberia.

|  |
| --- |
| **Session 2: Spain and the New World** |

**Towards a Theory of Mudejar Art**

*Maria Judith Feliciano, Independent Scholar, USA*

Since the second half of the nineteenth century, when the term mudéjar became widely used by art historians to designate the integration of the "Islamic" aesthetic on "Christian" art, our understanding of the history of cultural exchange in medieval Iberia has grown immensely. Yet, the use of term mudéjar--with its reliance on religious difference to explain a common visual vocabulary, traditional neglect of contextually-driven interpretation in favor of aesthetic formalism, and ahistorical perspective that understands the concept of Islamic influence as a monolithic element of medieval and early modern Iberian art--remains problematic vis-à-vis the historical record. Despite its established use, the suitability of the mudéjar as a category of analysis must be questioned.

I propose to move beyond the traditional associations of the label “mudéjar” in order to interpret the reasons behind the selection of salient Andalusi aesthetic features. The Iberian visual repertoire was never composed simply of “Christian” and “Islamic” forms. Rather, since the early medieval period, it was a thoroughly mixed bag of aesthetic options that included visual information from across Europe and the Mediterranean, anchored by strong native Iberian traditions, where the assimilated arts of al-Andalus must be identified. Within this context, the idea of an "American Mudejar" must also be reconsidered. I propose that it should no longer be considered an extension of the arts of Islam in the viceroyalties, but rather part of a quintessentially Iberian aesthetic.

**The Matter of Metaphor: An Ambiguous Image of Empire in a 16th Century Peruvian Manuscript**

*Tom Cummins, Harvard University, USA*

Abstract to follow

***Translation/Translatio: Importing Sacred Images in the New World"***

*Felipe Pereda, Johns Hopkins University, USA*

Abstract to follow

|  |
| --- |
| **Session 3: Foreignisation, Domestication, Adaptation**  |

**Melchiorre Cafà's sculpture of Sta Rosa of Lima. The Export of a Baroque Marble Sculpture from Rome to Peru**

*Marjorie Trusted, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK*

The marble figure of *Sta Rosa of Lima* by Melchiorre Cafà (1636-1667), the Maltese sculptor active in Rome, was sent to Lima in 1669. It remains an extraordinary work, isolated in style and surface from its immediate architectural and sculptural surroundings. Works of art had been exported to Viceregal America from the sixteenth century onwards, but a marble sculpture such as this seems to have been virtually unique. Cafà’s Roman baroque figure stood out in isolation from the gilt polychromed wood of its surroundings, and spawned virtually no artistic progeny. I want to investigate why it remained isolated in this way, comparing it above all with the alabaster and wood sculpture produced in Lima in the seventeenth century, and the Spanish sculpture shipped to Peru during this period. The Cafà *Sta Rosa* was not imitated partly because marble was unavailable in Central and South America, but more importantly because the very nature and colour of the material gave an aura and meaning to the image of the saint. Displayed like a relic, and resembling white flesh, this solemn marble work evoked different responses from those who were stirred by the coloured and gilded sculptures around it.

**Whitening the African body in Early Modern Spain**

*Carmen Fracchia, University of London, UK*

The visual representation of Afro-Hispanic slaves during the dynasty of the Hapsburgs is a largely neglected area of research, considering that the Iberian empire was the epicentre of the transatlantic slave trade in sixteenth-century Europe. Its impact is evident in depictions of chained slaves in the crowns of Castile and Aragon by Northern European artists. These rare images had no resonance in Spanish art. This paper will thus explore the complex notions of slaves and the problematization of the whitening of the African body in the Spanish depiction of *The Miracle of the Black Leg.* It will argue that the Castilian version foregrounds the new phenomenon of ethnic intermixture in imperial Spain.

**Madrid and the Wider World: Domestic Architecture and the Spanish empire in the Sixteenth century**

*Laura Fernandez-Gonzalez, ESALA, University of Edinburgh, UK*

With Madrid as the capital of the Spanish empire from 1561, the Castilian monarchy designed new spaces in the old city that were intended to reflect imperial glory. Philip II regulated the building fabric in Madrid to conform to a homogeneous imperial city model. The relationship between the legislation enacted in Madrid and other cities in Iberia will be compared with architectural policies in America and Europe. This paper proposes a novel perspective on the utopian planning of Madrid in the period 1561-1584, through comparison with urban legislation enforced in other domains of the empire. With the use of comparative analysis, historical data and digital re-creation tools this paper proposes that we must reassess our understanding of Habsburg urbanism as a "transnational" phenomenon.

|  |
| --- |
| **Session 4: Modernity, Memory and Historiography** |

**Translating Presence: Photographing Actors**

*Andrew Ginger, University of Bristol, UK*

The paper will look at the basis upon which it was plausible to

nineteenth-century minds that the visual image of and created by a

performer could act as a transmitter of the presence of another person's

being. Subjection to the demands of an alien presence becomes,

paradoxically, the means by which bodily forms are liberated to take on

new shapes. The paper would explore potential parallels between such

photographic work and contemporaneous interest in hypnotism and speaking with spirits.

**In True Facsimile? : The Invention of Photography and the Reproduction of Spanish art**

*Hilary Macartney, University of Glasgow, UK*

This paper examines the relationship between traditional prints and photography in the reproduction of art, the development of photomechanical processes in book illustration, and the impact of all of these on the methodology of the emerging discipline of art history and the establishment of a canon of Spanish art during the nineteenth century. Focusing on pioneering writers on Golden Age in Spain such as Sir William Stirling Maxwell and Karl Justi, it explores some of the concerns they expressed around the reliability of both new and established methods of reproduction of art and translation of meaning, and considers their continuing relevance in today’s digital age.

**Translations of Concepts: Brazil, Hanna Levy and the Neo-Baroque**

*Jens Baumgarten, Universidade Federal de São Paulo, Brazil*

The paper intends to understand translation of concepts as double intertwined and focus on the circulation of concepts of the Baroque in Central Europe and Brazil as well as the re-appropriation of this variously reflected historical Baroque in the Neo-Baroque. A historiographical and analytical reading of Hanna Levy’s articles who immigrated to Brazil from Europe and has written in the 40s and 50s of the 20th century about the Colonial Brazilian arts and theories about Baroque shows not only a first “postcolonial” understanding of the colonial arts’ production, but also emphasizes an approach that combines formal and iconographical analysis beyond national stereotypes. Postcolonial theory defines the ‘in between’ as a central theoretical and methodological position. As an early Brazilian position in the art historical discourse in the first half of the 20th Century, it had its predecessors in the modernist concepts of ‘anthropophagy’. This ‘digestion’ of different cultures created a genuine autochthonous Brazilian art is related to notions of Renaissance and Baroque from a European perspective. Parallel to the modernist art production, a variety of different simulacra were created in a complex visual system – constructing and deconstructing layers of identity discourses. The art historical debate depreciated, for example, copies of Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel in Brazilian churches of the 20th century as kitsch. The focus of the paper will be on the aesthetic, religious, and political contexts and on the problem of the Western canon of art in regards to South America and the proper definition and place of postcolonial debates.

**Faraway Tools for Local tales: Uses and Appropriation of European**

**Theories and Methods in the Construction of a National Art History in**

**Argentina**

*Gabriela Siracusano, Instituto de Investigaciones sobre el Patrimonio Cultural Universidad Nacional de San Martín (UNSAM), Argentina*

This talk will focus on the uses and translation of foreign ideas and

concepts concerning the writing of art history in the South American

region, specially in Argentina.