



FONDAZZJONI PATRIMONJU MALTI



ICOM - ICFA Annual Meeting, Malta 2011
'The Mediterranean as a Hub for Artistic Ideas'

The ICOM-ICFA Annual Meeting 2011 seeks to explore the artistic ideas which converged within, and spread from, the Mediterranean. Located between Europe, Africa and Asia, the Mediterranean has provided significant trade routes throughout history, which continue today. From prehistoric times these trade routes have enabled artists and craftspeople to trade and culturally exchange ideas, political and religious thought, and inspire artistic influences hailing from the different continents which border the Mediterranean.

The selection of papers chosen to be presented during this year's conference cover an array of subjects and periods in the history of art of the Mediterranean region: artists who visited, worked in or drew inspiration from the Mediterranean and who took back influences to their home countries; the Grand Tour and its influence on artistic commissions; the art trade and transportation of artworks to mainland Europe, religious and pilgrim routes and the influence of the Orient on lands bordering the Mediterranean.

A round table discussion which will ensue in the afternoon will explore the theme *Research and Fine Art Collections*. In recent decades, art history research has been propelled by academic institutions, yet little is known about research conducted by museums. The ICFA Malta conference will debate this question in a bid to reaffirm the core strength of Fine Art museums as study collections and research centres.

Programme

09.00 - 09.15 Welcome

09.20 – 09.35 Key note speech

- Judge Giovanni Bonello – *The Mediterranean as a Hub for Artistic Ideas*

09.40 – 10.25 Presentation of Papers

- Klaus Weschenfelder – *The Coburg Hedwig Beaker – the career of a glass of Mediterranean origin in art and history*
- Theresa Zammit Lupi – *A Journey through the L'Isle Adam Manuscripts: a supreme example of 16th century bookmaking*

10.25 – 10.35 Questions

10.35 - 11.00 Coffee Break

11.00 – 12.35 Presentation of Papers continued

- Anne Aaserud – *Hans Johan Frederik Berg, Norway's first Orientalist and Watercolourist*
- Giampaolo Pes – *Oriental Fascination in Italy and Italian Artists in the Orient*
- Ellen J. Lerberg – *Jens Thiis – young man on a grand tour*

12.35 – 12.45 Questions

12.45 - 13.45 Buffet Lunch

14.00 – 15.30 Round Table Discussion – *Research and Fine Art Collections*

KEY-NOTE SPEAKER

Judge Giovanni Bonello

The Mediterranean as a Hub for Artistic Ideas

The Mediterranean has always been a significant location for the interaction of cultures and people of the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. At its centre, Malta has been a hub of artistic activity throughout its history. The last four hundred years of Malta's art and patronage have given forth numerous works of art and decorative objects that now grace the collections of several museums of fine arts.

From prehistoric to Classical times, Malta had its share of works of art that embellished its temples and later its residences, with hauntingly evocative figurative sculptures in terracotta and marble. With the Christianisation of the Islands from the eleventh century, religious art and architecture on the Islands reflected aesthetic concerns that were shared with the western Mediterranean basin. The arrival of the Order of St John in the sixteenth century heralded a new era of artistic activity and exchange that reflected the pan-European cultural sources of the Order's Hospitaller knights, as well as the aspirations of Maltese artists who travelled to, and practised in the cultural centres of Europe, a pattern that, to varying degrees, continued into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Giovanni Bonello is a former Judge of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. He is today editor of the periodical 'Treasures of Malta' and has published twenty books on history and art-related subjects.

SPEAKERS

Dr. Klaus Weschenfelder

The Coburg Hedwig Beaker – the career of a glass of Mediterranean origin in art and history

The Hedwig beakers derive their name from St. Hedwig of Andechs (d. 1243) who was using this type of glass when water miraculously turned into wine. The Coburg Hedwig beaker is said to have been in the property of St. Elizabeth of Thuringia (d. 1231), and later, it formed an important part of the collection of relics of Elector Frederic the Wise from Saxony. When his collection was disseminated after the Reformation, the glass came into the possession of Martin Luther, a distinctive opponent of relics. However, today it adopted some features of a sort of Luther relic. Other examples of Hedwig glasses were mounted in gold and used as chalices in Catholic services.

These beakers form a group of glasses which consist of about thirteen complete examples as well as fragments from a further twelve glasses. They were traded throughout Europe, as an export article of great luxury. Previously considered to be Islamic glasses from Egypt, more

recent research (R. Lierke, *Die Hedwigsbecher*, 2005) tends to localize their provenance to the Hohenstaufen court in 12th century Norman Sicily, where Fatimid style was adopted in different ways at that time. Some decorative elements found on the beakers, the lion, eagle, griffin and shields with a triangle motif (Trinacria), could refer to the Norman rule of Sicily.

Klaus Weschenfelder studied art history, prehistory and pedagogy in Munich, and received his D. Phil. in 1980. He has worked as a museum educator in Munich, a trainee in Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum Hannover, curator of Museum in Ritterhaus Offenburg, director of Mittelrhein-Museum Koblenz, and has been director of Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg since 2002. He has published in the field of museums education and cultural action as well as contributions on art history from the Middle Ages to the 20th century. He is chair of ICOM Germany and treasurer of Prince Albert Society Coburg.

Dr. Theresa Zammit Lupi

A Journey through the L'Isle Adam Manuscripts: a supreme example of 16th century bookmaking

The L'Isle Adam graduals consist of a collection of 10 illuminated manuscripts that are housed at St John's Co-Cathedral Museum, Valletta. They were commissioned by Grand Master L'Isle Adam in 1533 from a French scriptorium. This paper gives a historical overview of the manuscripts including the changes that took place in the liturgy with the Council of Trent, and later interventions that were carried out in the 18th century and their effects on the choir books. It will look into the making of the books which includes their codicological make-up and their manufacturing techniques. The production of such a lavish and enormous collection of choir books certainly involved the collaboration amongst several craftsmen including scribes, illuminators, illustrators, decorators, bookbinders as well as parchment and leather workers. Art historical considerations and comparisons with other illuminated manuscripts in collections both in Malta and abroad are also discussed. Parallels with the works of the French illuminator Jean Pichore are drawn and the attribution of the L'Isle Adam manuscripts to his collaborator is emphasized.

Theresa Zammit Lupi holds a first degree in art history from the University of Malta. She studied book and paper conservation in Florence and London, and holds a PhD in the conservation of manuscripts from Camberwell College, London. She currently works as a conservator in a private laboratory in Cambridge, UK.

Ms. Anne Aaserud

Hans Johan Frederik Berg, Norway's first Orientalist and Watercolourist

Hans Johan Frederik Berg (1813-74) was born in Nesna in Northern Norway. As a young man in the early 1830's he worked as a clerk of Count Adam Trampe, the County Governor of Nordland

and later of Trondheim. Eventually, he decided to become an artist, and became a pupil at the Royal Drawing School in Christiania (Oslo) in 1835. In 1836-37 he studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen. Back in Norway, he made his living as a portrait painter.

In 1843, Berg left Norway and travelled around Europe, painting cities, landscapes and people. He lived for several years in France and Italy, and later in England. In 1848 he travelled around the Mediterranean, visiting Malta and Corfu. In Malta he painted Sliema and also The Harbour, and Rue St. Christophe in Valletta. In autumn of 1849, Berg arrived in Alexandria, Egypt. He then visited Cairo, Luxor and Edfu. He painted several watercolours of topographical subjects – cities, villages, landscapes and monuments – as well as people.

From the early 1860's onwards, Berg spent most of his summers in Northern Norway, and winters on the Continent. His most important watercolours are those from Northern Norway depicting Sami subjects.

The watercolours from Berg's travels reveal an interest in the ethnographic as well as the topographic, whether of Egyptian or of Sami subjects, typical of the mid-19th century. They are therefore not only of art historical interest, but also of documentary value.

Anne Aaserud obtained her PhD in Art History on "Signe Scheel 1860-1942: Life and work" at the University of Oslo in 1993. From 1994 to 2008 she was director of The Art Museum of Northern Norway in Tromsø. She then retired and is currently working on a book about the North-Norwegian painter Adelsteen Normann (1848-1918).

Mr. Giampaolo Pes

Oriental Fascination in Italy and Italian Artists in the Orient

The Mediterranean and Arab Lands offered an endless source of fascination for Italian artists of the 19th century; many gave light to a remarkable production inspired by such exotic subjects, and a good number also devoted their life to travelling those lands, documenting their populations, habits and beauties. This determined the birth of a long-term Oriental fashion in Italian taste that marks most of the century, and also contributed to the shaping of the imagery of the Colonial era. This paper aims to illustrate some of the most significant aspects and personalities of this process.

Carlo Bossoli, an Italian born in Louvain, but who grew up in Odessa. He was a young, gifted scenographer who moved to Italy when twenty-three for his classical art studies, crossing the Black Sea, the Bosphorus and Constantinople, and the Mediterranean. He resided in Malta, Naples, Milan and Turin. When in Constantinople in 1843 he probably met the Maltese painter Amadeo Preziosi, a well known expert in landscapes and exotic subjects, and also Jean Brindisi, an Italo-Turkish artist active on the British market.

Stefano Ussi and Cesare Biseo were also talented painters who documented a diplomatic mission in Morocco in 1876 with paintings and illustrations in books and reviews gaining immense popularity, which determined a growing interest for those Mediterranean countries: genre scenes then became a must in the production of any relevant artist of great fame and European connections, as Mariano Fortuny, Domenico Morelli, Francesco Hayez.

Giampaolo Pes is an independent art historian interested in woodcuts, prints and drawings, an archivist, and a professional in museum didactics and cultural tourism.

Ms. Ellen J. Lerberg

Jens Thiis –A Young Man on a Grand Tour

In the autumn 1890, Jens Thiis (1870–1942) spent some time in Copenhagen. This was the beginning of a very long and important educational journey for the young student. Jens Thiis was a student of art history at the University of Oslo, and the main goal for his journey was Italy and its staggering treasures of art and architecture. Jens Thiis had only seen this in books and black and white wall charts.

Thiis travelled through Europe mainly by train, but also by carriage. He wrote letters to his professor and friends back home, and through these, and some articles for Norwegian newspapers, we can follow his trip, and enjoy some of his experiences. In a letter to Miss Dagny Bang he tries to describe his future plans for his trip in Italy: Bologna, Padova, Ferrara, Firenze, Ravenna, Empoli, Siena, Orvieto, Roma, Napoli, Pestum, Roma, Assisi, Perugia, Firenze, Pistoia, Parma, Certosa, Pavia, Mantova, and Milano. We know he visited a lot of these places, but not all. Instead, he included some days in Sicilia. He studied the architecture very closely, and in the museums he had good companions in Burckhardt's and Lermolieff's guidebooks. In fact, Thiis regarded himself as a "Morellian", and was very much into connoisseurship as a young man.

In his late teens, Jens Thiis was an art student in Oslo, at the same time as Edvard Munch. In his writings during his travels, he often describes what he sees as though he was trying to draw or paint a picture.

Ellen Lerberg is an art historian from the University of Oslo. She has worked at the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design since 1998. She is now senior curator of education in the department of Old Masters and Modern Art. She is also former editor of Kunst og Kultur and Kunsthåndverk. Ellen is currently conducting research for a book on Jens Thiis.