

## Sister Act: Female Monasticism and the Arts across Europe ca. 1250 – 1550

13.45 – 18.30, Friday 13 March 2015 (with registration from 13.15)

09.30 – 16.30, Saturday 14 March 2015 (with registration from 09.00)

Kenneth Clark Lecture Theatre, The Courtauld Institute of Art, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN

From important research undertaken over the last three decades, it has become evident that the institutionalisation of late Medieval and Renaissance religious women developed under very different conditions from that of their male counterparts. Furthermore, monastic foundations for women rarely adhere to a set of norms. Architecturally, female religious settlements range from large complexes erected in the most fashionable styles of their time, to basic dwellings within converted secular buildings. Diversity can also be observed in the commissioning and use of works of art, from second-hand or inherited artworks to specially-commissioned, lavish monuments and vast cycles of wall paintings. In short, artworks in the female religious context escape generalisation.

This conference will compare, contrast and juxtapose recent scholarly approaches to the art of religious women from approximately 1250 to 1550. Its primary aim is to foster exchange between scholars working on different European regions, ranging from the German-speaking areas of Europe, across the Italian peninsula to the still heavily understudied material in England, Spain, Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. The speakers will examine female monastic art and architecture in terms of devotion and ritual, patronage, space, communal identity and artistic practice. This rich programme, chronologically bridging the gap between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, seeks to initiate a broader scholarly conversation, which is long overdue.

Organised by Laura Llewellyn and Michaela Zöschg (The Courtauld Institute of Art).

Ticket/entry details: £26 (£16 students, Courtauld staff/students and concessions)

BOOK ONLINE: <http://ci.tesseract.com/internet/shop> Or send a cheque made payable to 'The Courtauld Institute of Art' to: Research Forum Events Co-ordinator, Research Forum, The Courtauld Institute of Art, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN, stating 'Sister Act'. For further information, email [ResearchForum@courtauld.ac.uk](mailto:ResearchForum@courtauld.ac.uk).

### PROGRAMME

FRIDAY, 13 MARCH 2015

13.15 – 13.45

Registration

13.45 – 14.10

Introduction: Laura Llewellyn and Michaela Zöschg (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

14.10 – 15.30

SESSION I

In the Choir: Images, Prayer and Devotion (Chair TBC)

Jennifer Atwood (Museum of the Bible, Oklahoma City): 'How Can I Find Words to Tell About the Burning Love With Which You Sought Him': Understanding Female Devotion and Priorial Use in the Littlemore Anselm

Giuseppe Capriotti (University of Macerata): The Choir as *machina memorialis*. The Mystical Experience and the Artistic Patronage of Sister Battista da Varano

Daniela Rywíková (University of Ostrava): 'Veni sponsa Christi...'. Female Monastic Spirituality and Art in Late Medieval Bohemia

Discussion

15.30 – 16.00

Coffee & Tea

16.00 – 17.20

SESSION II

Beyond the Choir: Negotiating Gendered Space

(Chair: Joanna Cannon)

Jonathan Kline (Temple University, Philadelphia): For the Clares, and for their Salvation: The Duecento Frescoes of Santa Maria inter Angelos in their Clarissan Context

Sue Sharp (Birkbeck College, University of London): The Lacock Abbey Crucifixion: Thirteenth-century Devotion and Patronage in an Augustinian Nunnery

Eva Lindquist Sandgren (Uppsala University): A Birgittine Nuns' View. Books, Images and Space in the Monastery of Vadstena, Sweden, around 1500

Discussion

17.20 – 17.30

Break

17.30 – 18.30

KEYNOTE LECTURE

Carola Jäggi (University of Zurich): Acting as Sisters: Medieval Nunneries as Cultural

## Networks

18.30 – 19.30  
Drinks Reception

SATURDAY, 14 MARCH 2015

09.00 – 09.30  
Registration

09.30 – 10.50  
SESSION III  
Visualizing Community: Agency and Self-Representation (Chair: Susie Nash)

Christian Nikolaus Opitz (Independent Scholar): Enclosed on the Altar: Two Clarissan Altarpieces from Fifteenth-century Franconia

Alexandra Gajewski (CCHS/CSIC Madrid): Perceived Limitations, Visualized Possibilities: Activities and Agencies through Art in the Late Medieval Convent

Veronique Bücken (Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels): The Canonesses of Nivelles and the Processional Chariot of Saint Gertrude: Artistic Patronage and Propaganda

Discussion

10.50 – 11.20  
Coffee & Tea

11.20 – 12.15  
SESSION IV  
Painting and Stitching: Artists in the Convent  
(Chair: Laura Llewellyn)

Fausta Navarro (Galleria Palatina & Museum of San Salvi, Florence): 'Orate pro Pictora' (Pray for the paintress). Suor Plautilla Nelli as a professional nun painter in Florence mid XVI century

Ingela Wahlberg (Uppsala University): In the Nun's Style: A Discussion of Ornamentation and Technique in Birgittine Embroidery from Sweden and Finland in the Late Fifteenth Century.

Discussion

12.15 – 13.30  
Lunch

13.30 – 14.50

SESSION V

Family and Memoria: Royal and Aristocratic Patrons

(Chair: Tom Nickson)

James D'Emilio (University of South Florida, Tampa): Aristocratic Women and Cistercian Nunneries in León: Family Politics and Religious Reform

Stefanie Seeberg (CCHS/CSIC, Madrid): Commemorative Function of Art in the Female Monastery of Altenberg under Gertrud of Thüringen (1227-1297)

Diana Lucía Gómez Chacón (University Complutense of Madrid): Servire a Dio eì regnare. Queenship and Dominican Spirituality in Beatrice of Portugal's Sepulchre

Discussion

14.50 – 15.20

Coffee & Tea

15.20 – 16.15

SESSION VI

Nuns and the City: Female Monastic Communities within the Urban Fabric

(Chair: Michaela Zöschg)

Paper tbc

Sandra Weddle (Drury University, Springfield): Venetian Convent Architecture in Its Topographical Contexts

Discussion

16.15 – 16.30

Closing Remarks: Scott Nethersole (The Courtauld Institute of Art)