

# from manuscripts to multimedia: NEW APPROACHES TO ART HISTORY



UNIVERSITY OF  
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third year PhD symposium  
Department of History of Art

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# Acknowledgments

# Notes

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# Notes

## **9:30 - Richard Braude** (Pembroke College)

Supervision and Rebellion: English Building Contracts, c. 1250-1450

The significant corpus of late medieval English building contracts has, in general, only been mined for evidence of the specific buildings for which they were made. Taken as a whole, however, and put in their legal and historical context, they become an invaluable source for understanding the organisation of capital and the conflict of classes which produced the Gothic cathedrals. In this talk, I account for the origin of these documents in the late thirteenth century, and their transformation in the fourteenth, which correlates with the development of the Decorated and Perpendicular styles.

## **10:00 - Bláithín Hurley** (St. John's College)

Contrapuntal Conundrums: Using Musicology to Answer Art Historical Questions

Musicologists have for some time used the visual evidence available to them in paintings, frescoes and books, along with the theoretical writings of Art Historians, to help them in their investigation into music practices and musical performances in the early modern period. However, Art Historians rarely use the theoretical musical evidence available to them when carrying out their research into the same time period, thus missing out on the opportunities such evidence provides. This paper makes equal use of the visual and musical documentary evidence available in order to investigate the interior of the Renaissance Venetian casa and the influence music had on furnishing, decoration and allocation of room function. Many paintings which portrayed music are useful in demonstrating how music was perceived in Renaissance Venice. But for a more accurate picture of domestic music in the casa we should refer to the instructional illustrations which appear in

# Notes

# Schedule

**9:00 - Gabriel Byng** (Clare College)

Planning and Paying for Parish Church Building in the Later Middle Ages

My research is best understood as the answer to a question: how did a country beset by famine, plague and extraordinary inequalities of wealth manage to construct over 9,000 local churches? Cathedrals and abbeys could rely on vast quantities of landed wealth to pay for their building projects but parishes had to raise income from peasants, many or most of whom barely survived on subsistence farming, or townfolk. I argue that there are two answers to this question: the first is organisational, that parishes employed efficient managerial and administrative structures to ensure the completion of building work on time and to budget; the second is financial, that the distribution of wealth in medieval England created a local elite, who, although highly variable in size, were capable of paying for building work in most parishes.

These conclusions have important implications for understanding the operation of local communities and the significance of church construction. Church building provided a venue for cooperation that reflected local hierarchies of wealth and status, and reinforced networks of patronage and group solidarity. However, my work casts serious doubt not only on the role of the parish 'community' as a single cohesive unit for either fund raising or management, but also on the importance of manorial lords and ecclesiastical institutions. I argue that the popular supposition that medieval church building was haphazard, poorly organised and short-termist is incorrect. As a whole my research restores economics to the story of the English parish church: placing changes in the distribution of wealth, prices and the availability of money at the heart of temporal and geographical patterns in church building.



**11:00 - Rachel Parikh** (Magdalene College)

Persian Pomp, Indian Circumstance: The Khalili *Falnama*

In the mid-sixteenth century, Safavid Persian ruler Shah Tahmasp commissioned a distinct manuscript known as the *Falnama*, or 'Book of Omens'. He relied upon the book's pages of unusual illustrations – based on Qur'anic verses, Shi'i concepts, legends, and poetry - to cast horoscopes. The *Falnama* was born out of period of great political and religious transformations to the Persianate world. Not only were the Safavids under constant threat from the Ottoman Empire, but they were also gripped with fear as the new Islamic millennium approached, especially with its apocalyptic connotations.

There are many characteristics of the Book of Omens that separates it from its contemporaries. For instance, it is the only illustrated manuscript solely dedicated to the art of divination. Then there is its unique text-image relationship, in which the former supports the latter. But what is just as intriguing as the *Falnama's* content and character is its proliferation beyond Persia's borders. My research looks at an unexamined, a seventeenth century Deccan Indian copy known as the Khalili *Falnama*. Although it demonstrates links to the Shah Tahmasp *Falnama*, much of its character and content is entirely unique to it. While the majority of my work involves analyzing and identifying the images, as well as translating of the text, it also investigates the intention behind the manuscript's creation.

The art of this Indian region has remained largely undocumented. By focusing on the only known, extant Indian copy, I look at how Perso-Islamic artistic and cultural concepts were adapted into the Deccan's indigenous culture and manuscript production, and how these modifications reflect upon the different ways these images were used and interpreted, as well as how Islam was embraced, especially through seemingly unconventional methods.

**11:30 - Hannah Malone** (St. John's College)

Death, Architecture and Nation in Nineteenth-Century Italy

This paper explores the role of architecture as a medium for political exchange, or the manner in which architecture is shaped by a political context, and may come to act as a bearer of political meanings. To that end, Italian cemeteries of the nineteenth century have been adopted as a case study for their capacity to mirror the socio-political structures of their 'parent' cities. More specifically, the monumental cemetery is examined as a new architectural type that emerged in direct response to political changes associated with the struggle for Italian independence and the establishment of the nation-state.

From the mid-eighteenth century, a radical reformation in funerary customs resulted in the prohibition of church interment and the construction of new, public cemeteries on the outskirts of many Italian cities. Through monumental architecture, the new burial-grounds of the nineteenth century expressed social and cultural changes tied to Romanticism and the emergence of the bourgeoisie. In that they symbolised both the city and the emergent nation, Italian cemeteries embodied the contrasting forces of nationalism and local patriotism –forces that were translated into different architectural styles. Throughout the 1800s, burial-grounds reflected efforts to construct a national history and a new Italian identity through a shared memory of the dead. Cemeteries also acted as a platform for conflicts between Church and State, particularly in terms of the development of cremation, which was driven by anticlerical, liberal, and radical forces that impacted the architecture of crematoria.

## **12:00 Josephine von Perfall** (Christ's College)

### Kosmos Kippenberger: Mapping an Artistic Network, 1979-1997

My research focuses on the German artist Martin Kippenberger (1953 - 1997), whose work is widely recognized but not really understood. His art production was extremely prolific and thus difficult to comprehend in its entirety, as he also engaged with all possible media from painting and drawing to sculpture, as well as installation and photography, making his body of work appear chaotic. Owing to the provocative and playful nature of both his art and his character, Kippenberger's work continues to provoke extremely polarised opinions today. Thus, in and beyond Germany Kippenberger's standing remains unclear. He is considered to be an artistic genius, a joker but also an avant-garde enfant terrible.

It is the intended goal of my research to rectify his position within and beyond German postwar art by mapping out the creative network, which made up Germany's art scene in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. At the centre of this network, I shall place Kippenberger and the role his personality and art played for his contemporaries' readiness to engage with unknown territory – artistically, art theoretically and politically. Within this context my research will look at the formation of Kippenberger's artistic subjectivity, which was very much inspired by the collective creativity his network produced.

'Network' - in the context of this research - will be defined as a complex, interconnected and thus extended group of people with similar interests or concerns, which interact and remain in informal but also close contact for mutual assistance and support. By looking at Kippenberger and his network, this project will attempt to reassess his indispensable role in an important chapter in post-war German art. Further I wish to show that Kippenberger not only played an essential part in creating the network but also consciously exploited the potential of his environment. Thus he created the "Kosmos Kippenberger", which I will define as an open system: contingent, unpredictable, and productive.

music theory and instrument teaching manuals. These visual representations, by definition, did not portray an idealised lifestyle but the reality of music-making by amateur musicians in their domestic surroundings. Music manuals were quickly seized upon by a population eager for a musical education, and the musical education of Renaissance Venetians marked the starting point for music's participation in the on-going restructure of the furnishing, decoration and allocation of room function which eventually manifested itself in the provision of a designated space for music practice and performance within the casa. This space is now universally known as the Music Room.

## **10:30 - Coffee Break**