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# ITALIAN ART SOCIETY

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*Dedicated to the study of Italian art and architecture  
from prehistory to the present*

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## **NEWSLETTER XXXII, 2, SPRING 2021**



Giacomo Balla, *Velocità d'automobile (velocità 1) (Automobile Speed, Speed 1)*. MART, Trento

### *President's Message from Sarah Wilkins*

June 8, 2021

Dear Members of the Italian Art Society,

I'm happy and honored to be writing my first address to you as the President of the Italian Art Society, having begun my term in February. I'd like to open by thanking all of you for your continued involvement with—and support of—the IAS during these difficult times, and most especially thanking my predecessor Mark Rosen, with whom I have been privileged to work over the last two years. His leadership enabled us to continue to thrive and ushered us into a new digital age with a revitalized and much more functional website.

As of our election in February, the IAS has many new officers and committee members who have volunteered their time and expertise to the benefit of our organization. I'd like to warmly welcome our new Executive Vice President, Tenley Bick; our new Treasurer, Antje Gamble;

An Affiliated Society of:

College Art Association  
International Congress on Medieval Studies  
Renaissance Society of America  
Sixteenth Century Society & Conference  
American Association of Italian Studies

our new Chair of the Nominating Committee, Sarah Cantor, and the new Nominating Committee members Lucia Colombari, Francesca Fiorani and Gilbert Jones; the new Chair of the ESC, Rebecca Howard, and ESC Committee member Linda M. Mueller; and lastly, Janis Elliott as a member of the Program Committee. Additionally, Bradley Cavallo, who previously served as our interim Secretary, has begun a full term in this position, Melissa Yuen is our new Webmaster, a position she also previously filled on an interim basis, and Samantha Hughes-Johnson is now the IASblog Editor (formerly our interim blog editor). Continuing on in their positions are Cristelle Baskins as Vice President of Program Coordination, who was elected to a one-year term extension; Max Grossman as Chair of the Awards Committee; and Nicola Camerlenghi (Development) and Katherine T. Brown (Membership) who were elected to another term as Co-Chairs of the Membership, Outreach, & Development Committee. Our entire stellar communications team remains in place. In addition to Melissa (Webmaster) and Samantha (IASblog) mentioned above, it consists of Livia Lupi (Publications Coordinator and Newsletter Editor), Elizabeth Ranieri (Social Media Coordinator) and Tiffany Lynn Hunt (Events Coordinator). Congratulations to those elected and our gratitude for those who continue to serve!

I'd also like to thank those officers and committee members whose terms ended this year for their service. In addition to Mark Rosen, a great debt of appreciation is owed to our

former Treasurer Janna Israel. We're also thankful for the service of Valerie Palazzolo, former Program Committee member; Sharon Hecker, former Chair of the Nominating Committee; and the former Nominating Committee members Cristiana Filippini, Elizabeth Lisot-Nelson and Madeline Rislow. As an all-volunteer organization we rely on your involvement to keep things going. Several terms will end in February 2022, including Vice President of Program Coordination and Chair of the Awards Committee, and our Nominating Committee will soon be accepting nominations for those positions via our [website](#). If you have any questions please contact the Chair of the Nominating Committee, [Sarah Cantor](#) or [me](#). We'd love to have your participation!

Although things are certainly still not back to normal, we at the IAS have been working hard to adapt, and dare I say it, thrive, in this current state of the world. Thus far, all of the conferences for 2021 have been held virtually, and thanks to the hard work of our VP for Program Coordination, Cristelle Baskins, and the Program Committee, the IAS has had a robust presence at the annual meetings of CAA, RSA and, most recently, ICMS (Kalamazoo) and AAIS. Sadly, our annual IAS/Kress Lecture in Italy, made possible by the continued generous support of the Samuel H. Kress foundation, was once again a casualty of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the continued uncertainty, and lack of vaccine access in many places, it was simply not possible to conceive holding it this summer. We expect (fingers crossed!) to resume the series in 2022.

At CAA in February, our new Executive Vice President Tenley Bick organized a vibrant session titled "'Italianness is not Italy': Questioning Italian Art History," and we held our first virtual annual IAS Business Meeting via Zoom. This idea of Virtual IAS Business Meetings is something we are strongly considering continuing even after in-person conferences resume in order to make participation in the IAS more accessible to **all** of our members, not just those who are able to attend CAA.

Our diverse slate of RSA sessions in April were all carried over from the cancelled conference of 2020. We sponsored four seminar sessions on "New Perspectives in Italian Art, I-IV" organized by Kelley Helmstutler Di Dio and Ilaria Andreoli, the session "Visual Networks of Healing in Renaissance Italy," organized by Sandra Cardarelli and Valentina Živković, and two sessions on "Women and Gender in Italian Trecento Art and Architecture, I-II" organized by Judith Steinhoff. We also held our first Virtual IAS Reception on April 16<sup>th</sup>, envisioned and organized by our amazing and resourceful Events Coordinator, Tiffany Lynn Hunt. We opted to turn the disappointment of not being able to gather together in

person into something positive for our community, opening the reception to all IAS members and potential members, not just those attending RSA, thus enabling people from across our membership to become better acquainted with each other. Additionally, as creating equity opportunities and building community bonds are a real priority for the IAS Board, we used the reception to help support our members by collecting donations to fund three small awards for Emerging Scholars and Independent Scholars/Part-Time Faculty that were raffled off during the reception to the lucky winners Sandra Cardarelli, Cristiana Filippini, and Johanna Heinrichs. This Zoom reception was such a success that we are looking into holding an annual Virtual IAS Reception unaffiliated with any conference—in addition to those we hold in person at conferences—to help bring our entire membership together as a community.

At Kalamazoo, the IAS sponsored three sessions titled, "*Quo vadis?* Medieval Italian Sculpture Studies in the New Millennium in Honor of Dorothy F. Glass, I-III," focusing on liturgical furnishings, experiencing sacred space, and the afterlives of Italian Romanesque sculpture. The sessions were organized by Francesco Gangemi and Alison Locke Perchuk. We also held a virtual reception in Dorothy Glass's honor. As part of the celebration of Dorothy's legacy, the IAS also created a new travel award, The Dorothy F. Glass Travel Award, which will support an emerging scholar in the field of sculpture to attend the ICMS conference in 2023. Read more about this in the IAS News section below and on our [website](#). Thank you to those who have already contributed to this award!

Lastly, we have just held two sessions at the 2021 Virtual Association for Italian Studies Conference (AAIS): a roundtable titled "Bodies of Water: Man-Made Natural Disaster," organized by Giuditta Cirigliaro and Angelica Federici, and a session titled "Italian Art and Architecture on Film: An Interdisciplinary Overview," organized by Ornella Castiglione. As I come to the end of this lengthy roundup of recent sponsored sessions and receptions, I'd like to remind you that all of our upcoming (and past) sponsored sessions can be viewed on the website at the [Conferences at a Glance](#) page.

In addition to the numerous sessions we sponsor at established annual conferences, the IAS is also working hard to create our own online events independent of these. The first of such endeavors to come to fruition was a free Zoom discussion on June 2<sup>nd</sup> organized by the ESC, but open to all. "Citing Truth to Power: Advancing Equity In & Through Academic Footnotes" was the first event in a new series centered on equity and inclusion in academia as part of the ESC's running theme of Antiracism and Intersectional Equity in Italian Art History. This innovative forum featured brief discussions from Allison Levy, Julia Delancey, and PhD

Candidates Angela Zhang and Christine Zappella, as well as a representative from the [Cite Black Women Collective](#). Look for more such events soon!

Due to the pandemic moving all of the conferences online, the IAS was not able to offer any Conference Travel Grants this year. We did, however, award two Dissertation Research Grants and two Research and Publication Grants, instead of our usual one in each category, thanks to the hard work of Max Grossman and the Awards Committee. The winning projects are listed in the IAS News section below and on our [website](#), where you can also find abstracts. We congratulate all of the awardees and wish them the best of luck with their projects! We'd also like to note the exceptional quality of all the applications we received, and encourage you all to apply for our grants in the future via the [website](#).

I assure you that my usual missives will not be this long, but there were many things to report on, more than I could even fit in, like the ongoing robust efforts of our Membership, Outreach, & Development Committee! I remind you to check in with our website regularly; you'll find announcements of important events and news on the main page, as well as lots of other useful information throughout. Tenley and I, as well as the entire IAS Board, wish you all a very happy, healthy, and productive summer, and look forward to seeing you at events both virtual and (*tocchiamo ferro!*) in person very soon.

A presto,

Sarah

## ITALIAN ART SOCIETY NEWS

### NEW DOROTHY F. GLASS TRAVEL AWARD

The Italian Art Society is pleased to announce the creation of a new award honoring the career of Dr. Dorothy F. Glass and her incredible contribution to the field of medieval sculpture. The Dorothy F. Glass Travel Award will support an emerging scholar in the field of sculpture to attend the ICMS conference in 2023. Full details on how to apply for the award will be listed on the IAS website and circulated via the listserv.

**It is our hope to make this an award that can be granted in perpetuity, and to that end we seek your support. For those interested in contributing to the Dorothy F. Glass Travel Award, donations can be made to the IAS via our [PayPal](#) or by emailing our [Treasurer](#), Antje Gamble. For further details on check donations, please visit [this page](#).**

## Contents

### Italian Art Society News

3 New Dorothy F. Glass Travel Award

4 IAS Award Recipients

New ESC Discussion Series: *Citing Truth to Power*

A Note from the Programs Committee

IAS at CAA 2022

5 News from Our Members

### Special Features

5 Exhibition Review: *Silent Revolutions: Italian Drawings from the Twentieth Century*, Menil Drawing Institute, Houston  
By Aja Martin

7 Curatorial Insights: An Interview with Erin Campbell, Curator of *Life Stories*, Legacy Art Gallery Downtown, Victoria BC  
By Jaiya Anka

9 Book Review: Karen E. McCluskey, *New Saints in Late-Medieval Venice, 1200-1500: A Typological Study*. Abingdon, UK and New York: Routledge  
By Debra Pincus

10 *2021 Exhibitions*

12 *News and Notes*

## IAS AWARDS RECIPIENTS

Congratulations to the recipients of our Dissertation Research Project Grants and Research and Publication Grants! Abstracts of their projects can be viewed on the [IAS website](#).

### Dissertation Research Grant recipients:

[Lucia Colombari](#) (PhD candidate, University of Virginia): “Conflicting Cultures: Exhibiting Italy at the 1915 Panama-Pacific international Exposition in San Francisco”

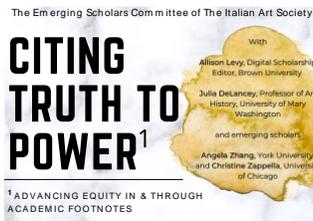
[Alexa McCarthy](#) (PhD candidate, University of St. Andrews, Scotland): “Blue Paper in Amsterdam and the Italian Tradition”

### Research and Publication Grants Recipients:

[Joanne Allen](#) (Senior Professorial Lecturer in Art History at American University): *Transforming the Church Interior in Renaissance Florence*.

[Jennifer Griffiths](#) (Art Historian & Academic Coordinator, University of Georgia Cortona Program): *Marisa Mori and the Futurists*.

## EMERGING SCHOLARS COMMITTEE LAUNCH NEW DISCUSSION SERIES



The IAS Emerging Scholars Committee launched a new series of events exploring equity and inclusion in academia. The first, very well-attended, open

forum discussion of the series, entitled “Citing Truth to Power: Advancing Equity in and Through Academic Footnotes,” took place on June 2, and featured Allison Levy (Digital Scholarship Editor, Brown University), Julia DeLancey (Professor of Art History, University of Mary Washington), Angela Zhang (York University) and Christine Zappella (University of Chicago).

A recording of this session can be requested by emailing [Rebecca Howard](#), ESC Chair.

## A NOTE FROM THE PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

We would like to encourage IAS members to submit proposals for sponsored conference sessions. The pandemic affected our usual process, with cancelled conferences and new formats. Many delayed panels were “rolled over,” and folks may have felt - understandably - that new submissions were not needed. But, as we

gradually return to a new normal, the committee is eager to resume its work.

We will be delighted to consider proposals for the 2022 RSA and AAIS meetings (deadlines in the summer – specific dates to be announced soon). Please keep checking our [Conferences at a Glance](#) page for the most up to date information and for submission forms. Queries should be directed to [Cristelle Baskins](#), Vice President for Program Coordination. We look forward to hearing from you!

## IAS AT CAA 2022



Advancing Art&Design

We are soliciting contributors for our IAS-sponsored session at CAA 2022

## Beyond Transfer and Revival: Narrative Creativity in Medieval Italian Mural Decoration (11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> C.)

Organizers: Armin Bergmeier and Alison Locke Perchuk

The period 1000–1250 saw vibrant artistic and intellectual creativity in medieval Italian wall paintings and mosaics. Large-format narrative sequences were deployed in new ways to elevate viewers spiritually, perform exegesis, shape communal identity, teach history and theology, and display power. Authors and artists offered sophisticated theorizations of the aesthetic, affective, and communicative capacities of images. While some sequences drew on existing models, notably the paintings and mosaics that accrued to Old St. Peter’s, many more were ad hoc creations, mixing old and new motifs, styles, and artistic strategies to generate distinctive compositions intended for specific spaces, sites, and purposes. The historical and conceptual weight of Rome (then as now) and the natural coherence of pictorial recensions versus the heterogeneity of unaffiliated narrative sequences has resulted in a historiographical privileging of passive transfers and revivals over discrete acts of artistic and patronal creative agency. This panel seeks to reset that balance.

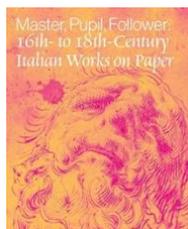
Narrative creativity played out in the development of new iconographies, narrative structures, and framing systems, and in the reimagining and repurposing of old ones. New pictorial strategies were generated for new architectural forms and spatio-liturgical arrangements; Byzantine decorative practices were integrated with Latin architecture and vice versa. Collective analyses generally cluster by iconography, region, or artisans; we seek instead to bring together papers underscoring how creativity manifested itself in discrete monuments, whether well-known, like Santa Maria in Cosmedin or Sant’Angelo in Formis, or deserving of greater

fame, like San Tommaso ad Acquanegra sul Chiese or San Calocero in Civate.

Interested speakers should submit an abstract of 250 words by **September 10** to the chairs ([alison.perchuk@csuci.edu](mailto:alison.perchuk@csuci.edu) & [armin.bergmeier@uni-leipzig.de](mailto:armin.bergmeier@uni-leipzig.de))

For further information on this and other IAS-sponsored sessions, please visit our [Conferences at a Glance](#) page.

## NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

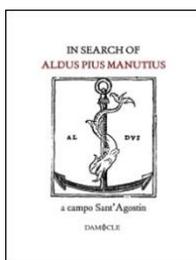


The catalog of the exhibition [Master, Pupil, Follower: 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>-Century Italian Works on Paper](#) (Georgia Museum of Art, Dec. 2019 – Mar. 2020), co-curated by IAS member [Robert Coleman](#) (University of Notre Dame), was selected as a finalist for both the 2020 [INDIES Book of the Year](#)

[Award](#) from Forward Reviews and the 2021 [Eric Hoffer Book Award Grand Prize](#).

[Alexis Culotta](#) (Tulane University) was awarded a Summer Stipend grant from the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) for her project “*Fare la Bella Figura: Mapping and Documenting the Vanishing Tradition of the Roman Frescoed Façade*.” This research will inform an online database as well as a publication.

[Johannes Knoops](#) (Fashion Institute of Technology/ SUNY) was awarded this year’s [Media Award](#) by the Interior Design Educators Council (IDEC). The award honors his investigation in to the location of Aldus Pius Manutius’s Aldine Press in fifteenth-century Venice, which involved extensive use of new media technology: [In Search of Aldus Manutius a Campo Sant’Agostin](#).



[Christopher Nygren](#) (University of Pittsburgh) has been appointed [Samuel H. Kress Senior Fellow](#) at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts for the academic year 2021-22. During his time at CASVA, Christopher will work on his second book, which tracks the history of painting on stone in early modern Rome.



Two of our members recently curated exhibitions: [Nora S. Lambert](#) curated *Lust, Love and Loss in Renaissance Europe* (Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago), and [Christopher Platts](#) curated *The Great Wonder: Violet Oakley and the Gothic Revival at Vassar* (Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College). Read about them in our List of Exhibitions below.

Congratulations and all best wishes to them all from the IAS community!

## SPECIAL FEATURES

### EXHIBITION REVIEW

*Silent Revolutions*  
*Italian Drawings from the Twentieth Century*  
November 14 – April 11, 2021  
Menil Drawing Institute, Houston

By Aja Martin

The Menil Drawing Institute’s exhibition [Silent Revolutions: Italian Drawings from the Twentieth Century](#) opened last November and concluded in April with a virtual symposium. The curators of the exhibition, Irina Zucca Alessandrilli (Collezione Ramo, Milan) and Edouard Kopp (John Eckel, Jr. Chief Curator, Menil Drawing Institute), argue that drawing is a medium particularly suited to formal, social, and even political revolution. The works gathered here picture upheaval as a serial occurrence, and in doing so highlight it as a characteristic of the twentieth century.

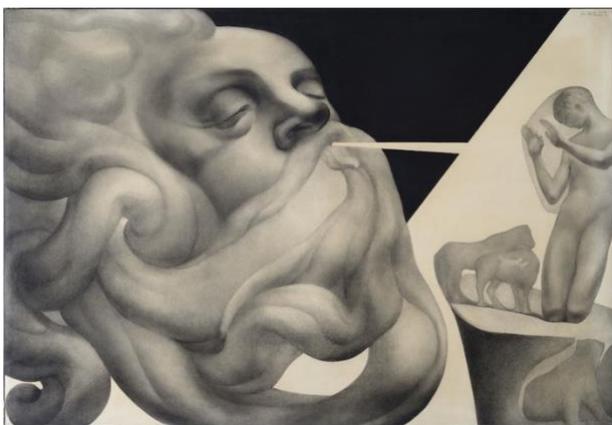


Tancredi, *Untitled (Facezie)*, 1960. Tempera, gouache and watercolor on paper (?), dimensions unknown. Collezione Ramo, Milan.

The act of drawing is shown in the exhibition to provide an ideal field, a kind of low-stakes tabula rasa encouraging conceptualization, experimentation, even the reimagining of the medium. Against this protean thrust, the curators argue that the works included will resonate as complete works of art, and most do. Rarely do we encounter works that seem only preparatory.

The objects on display challenge our assumptions about drawings beyond what the viewer could have imagined – even given the show's dramatic title. Rather than a homogenous group of small, black and white works on paper, the variety of exhibits illustrates Kopp's flexible approach to the medium. Despite its seventy works, the show feels small, but this means viewers find it easier to examine each work for longer periods and return to galleries for a second or third viewing.

Beyond its surprising visual impact, the show is noteworthy in what it accomplishes. The seventy works, drawn mostly from Milan's Collezione Ramo and discussed in Irina Zucca Alessandrelli's *Italian Drawings of the Twentieth Century*, represent the first exhibition of its kind and scope to be presented in the US. This detail is surprising, but also reflects the increasing interest in twentieth-century Italian art and its American reception among historians. While the exhibition is not intended as a survey or conclusive presentation, we still gain a lucid picture of significant artistic developments that both spread to and, perhaps more importantly, originated in Italy, leading to major shifts across Western art.



Adolfo Wildt, *Animantium Rex Homo*, 1925. Graphite pencil and charcoal on paper applied on canvas, 89,8 x 103,70 cm. Collezione Ramo, Milan

The initial group of drawings tugs the viewer in multiple directions. For example, Tancredi's large drawing, *Untitled (Facezie [Jokes])*, from 1960, greets the viewer with saturated strokes of tempera mixed with aqua and tangerine gouache and watercolor. Its placement at the

first entrance proclaims from the start the exhibition's expanded definition of drawing. Stepping back to take in the whole of *Facezie*, viewers catch a glimpse of Adolfo Wildt's powerful *Animantium Rex Homo* (1925), which evokes the colors and three-dimensionality of marble figurative sculptures as much as it does traditional definitions of drawing.

Moving toward the works in the first gallery, we are surrounded by distinct, yet entwined artistic movements



Domenico Gnoli, *Boat IV*, 1957. Pen, ink and watercolor glazes on cardboard, 52 x 68,5 cm. Collezione Ramo, Milan

from the earliest decades of the century which all had something to do with revolution, artistic or otherwise: the Symbolist movement, which Wildt carries into the new century ushering in an anti-academy tendency; intimate examples from two distinct veins of avant-garde abstraction from the north; and Futurism, the movement that seemingly 'detonated' in the visual arts. Its impact can be felt not only throughout the exhibition, but until recently in 'transgressive art,' and still today in performance art, to name a few of its more obvious descendants. The exhibition quietly suggests the lesser-known, but momentous impact that a movement like Futurism had on European and American practices, and in that way the drawings on view in the institute reach across the intimate but substantial campus to the larger collections on view at the main museum, The Menil Collection. In particular, De Chirico's metaphysical musings, the last of four movements represented in the first gallery, could be paired with the many Surrealist works there, having inspired that movement's founder, Guillaume Apollinaire.

Exiting the first gallery, we encounter a group of works by two of Wildt's students: multi-media artist Lucio Fontana and sculptor Fausto Melotti. These Italian lineages can be traced throughout the exhibition and offer the viewer a unique opportunity to compare teacher to student through multiple generations. Fontana, who also had ties to the Futurists, and whose Spatialist movement can be seen partially in light of that wave, makes one of the most revolutionary, if not iconoclastic drawings in the exhibition. Breaking through the surface of the paper, he expands and re-articulates the dimensionality of the support. While he is most well-known for his cuts on canvas, we are here reminded that this move actually took place on paper first.

The second half of the exhibition proposes further reinterpretations of the medium of drawing. The room holds additional works that reflect the experimental impetus for working on paper, and here the materials applied to paper

supports become increasingly technologic, as do the tools and procedures. In effect, these media provide the works with a polish that complicates Renaissance notions of *disegno*, traces of which are implied in Domenico Gnoli's *Boat IV* (1957). On the other hand, Enrico Castellani's darkest blue field, realized with almost mechanical precision, foregrounds surface and texture with its contoured grid of points, underscored by the flash of light that manifests as the viewer approaches the work. Castellani's *Untitled (Blue Surface)*, from 1967, pushes drawing in new directions and interactions with the environment, all the while emanating a tangible, yellow aura at its edge which challenges its mechanicity.

The final, fourth bay offers, refreshingly, a substantial number of works by women artists, and they are easily cast here as respondents to the male-dominated galleries. Most sarcastically, a work by Mirella Bentivoglio spells out 'Oca,' 'goose' or 'silly woman,' on an upside-down sheet of newsprint ads, framing it in giant, red cursive C's akin to the Coca-Cola logo. The work, *Il cuore della consumatrice ubbidiente* ("The heart of the obedient female consumer"), is a tongue-in-cheek critique of at least one of the troubled and outright sexist ideas promoted by Futurists, that women are primarily greedy consumerists. On the other hand, Betty Danon's subtle musical measures and Tomaso Binga's *E is for Erba*, working to record the spoken or aural elements that are typically manifest through writing, emphasize communication and its possibilities.



Mirella Bentivoglio, *Il cuore della consumatrice ubbidiente (The heart of the obedient female consumer)*, 1975. Serigraph on newspaper, dimensions unknown. MART, Trento.

Complicating any simplistic notion of reading, Maria Lai's *Diario* (1979) is protected by a vitrine and shows only two pages at a time, but the 'text' from other pages leaks out in the threads that refuse to stay within the framing space of the page. The diary's illegibility confounds book

standards, whilst at the same time highlighting the wholesale privileging of the written word and the implications such prioritizations have on the archive.



Maria Lai, *Diario (Diary)*, 1979. Fabric, paper, and thread, 23 x 17,5 x 0,8 cm. Collezione Ramo, Milan. Archivio, Maria Lai.

The exhibition is complemented by extensive virtual programming, which ironically antagonizes the concept of silence present in the title. The MDI and Collezione Ramo hosted a number of talks related to the exhibition that remain online. One of the highlights of the talk offered by the co-curators was the

opportunity to view a dozen or so pages from Giuseppe Capogrossi's 'visual poems' to Ada Zunino, from 1962. Offering further insights, the half-day symposium convened by the two curators and IAS member Saskia Verlaan (Pre-Doctoral Fellow, Menil Drawing Institute), and featuring presentations by Emily Braun, Teresa Kittler, Silvia Bottinelli, Lucia Re, Raffaele Bedarida and Francesco Guzzetti, provided refreshing and, in some cases, speculative discussions on artists that only confirmed the ongoing nature of repeated revolution that took place in drawing in twentieth-century Italy.

## CURATORIAL INSIGHTS

### *Life Stories*

December 2, 2020 – April 10, 2021

Legacy Art Gallery Downtown, Victoria BC

An Interview with Erin J. Campbell, Professor of Early Modern European Art, University of Victoria (Canada) and Curator of *Life Stories*

By Jaiya Anka

[Life Stories](#) explores the pivotal role of the home in our lives and, in particular, how art and material culture shape life stages. Bringing together a broad range of objects from the University of Victoria's collection, and representing different cultures and historical moments, the show highlights the home as an ecology of people and objects entangled with life's passages, demonstrating how domestic artifacts join with human agency to create a dynamic, organic environment. Curator and art historian Erin Campbell

discusses the exhibition and the research on early modern Italy that inspired it.

**What sparked your initial idea for *Life Stories*? Describe how the show is connected to your core research on the domestic interior of early modern Bologna.**



Erin Campbell in the exhibition's Childhood gallery

This exhibition is a way to investigate how art, furnishings, textiles, ceramics and other objects shape our life stories. My interest in art and the stages of life started with my investigation into portraits of elderly women in early modern Bologna. I wondered: what role did these images play in people's lives in the past? I started delving into the history of the home, looking to the environmental context for an explanation of their meaning, especially since the sitters and patrons were unknown. I developed a keen interest in the domestic interior as a place where important life passages and rituals were mediated by art and other domestic objects. Inspired by exhibitions such as *At Home in Renaissance Italy* (V&A, London, 2006), the work of Jacqueline Musacchio on artworks, objects, and furnishings related to childbirth and marriage (*Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Early Modern Italy*, Yale University Press, 1999; and *Art, Marriage, and Family in the Florentine Renaissance Palace*, Yale University Press, 2008), and the exhibition *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2008), I began to approach art as a tool for living, in dialogue with other objects within the home.

As my interest in art as part of the ecology of the home grew, I realized I wanted to work with actual artworks and objects, to assemble them according to their role in life passages and family rituals, and in groupings that emphasized their interaction. During this period, I had the opportunity to work with the University of Victoria collections on an exhibition celebrating the 50th anniversary of our department. The University of Victoria has one of the largest teaching collections in Canada, including a broad range of objects and a variety of artistic media. It therefore enabled me to highlight my approach to art in the home by working with more contemporary material available in Victoria, as a way of using the present to interrogate the past. This dream became a reality in 2016, when I received a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Insight Grant for the project "Art and the Stages of Life in the Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior." The grant included funds for an

exhibition, website, and films that would connect my historical research to current experiences of growing up, aging, and life passages.

**How did you choose the objects for the exhibition?**

The exhibition was co-curated with graduate students Jaiya Anka and Holly Cecil. We worked as a team to brainstorm keywords related to life passages, and as we searched the collection databases with these keywords, we looked for a mix of life stages, media, chronologies, and cultures. We met frequently to discuss the selection criteria alongside the works under consideration. Once we had a working long-list, we carefully edited each section so the objects would work well together. We also dialogued with faculty members and the experts at the Legacy Gallery, the University gallery where the exhibition was to take place, to shape the vision for the exhibition.

**Tell me about the Italian objects**

There are several beautiful Italian or Italian-inspired objects in the exhibition, including a small devotional painting by Giovanni Bolognese of St. Bartholomew praying with the aid of a crucifix (ca. 1640), and a majolica plate decorated with the figure of a monk praying at a cross. We were able to group these objects together in a single display case along with a small prayer book, as items that would form part of domestic devotion. These objects resonate with my research on devotional practices in the early modern Bolognese home, and on how they transform the home into a place where the domestic and the holy are intricately intertwined.

To underscore the transformative power of these objects, we placed them within a small inner gallery dedicated to the theme of "Passages." In this space we placed artworks and objects that support people through transitional phases in their lives, including death. Religion, as a key



Three devotional Italian objects in the Passages gallery

site of comfort in the face of life's mysteries, played a role in the selection of objects in this space, which included such items as an Islamic prayer rug and mosque lamp, a Byzantine-style icon, a ceramic grave attendant from China, and a Tibetan silver prayer wheel. One of the key artworks, Brad Pasutti's evocative pastel *The Entombment* (1999), which depicts a scene of mourning as the deceased is laid to rest, evokes Caravaggio's *The Entombment of Christ* (1603-1604), originally in Santa Maria in Vallicella in Rome. Donna Balma's 1981 painting *My Father's Last Request*, with family members

gathered by the bedside of their dying father, similarly evokes early modern Italian religious paintings, and especially bedside scenes of the passage from life to death such as the Death of the Virgin.

### What inspired the design of the exhibition? What aspects do you find most compelling?

Inspired by exhibitions such as *At Home in Renaissance Italy* and *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, we designed the exhibition according to life stages, from Beginnings to Age of Experience, adding a section called Passages. We also created a further section entitled The Bed Room, designed to showcase the power of furniture to shape our lives. For this section, we commissioned contemporary artist, Elly Heise, to create an installation to complement a seventeenth-century Jacobean Bed. The resulting work, *Related Repose*, featured chiffon bed hangings printed with archival photographs of family moments, to evoke the workings of memory and dreaming that so often centre on the bed as an important site of life passages, including conception, birth, and death.



View of Passages gallery

To avoid the sense of prescriptive stages, and recognizing that life passages and rituals are culturally specific, we included quotations from writers across the globe commenting on life stages, which we placed in each section. These quotations provided an array of voices on the experience of growing up and growing older. We also included four films of conversations with seven curators, artists, and academics speaking from various perspectives about their research or creative practice on life stages and life passages.

### How did the global pandemic of 2020 affect *Life Stories*?

We had always planned to have a website, but with the advent of the pandemic the value of a virtual exhibition really hit home. Holly Cecil, the website designer, moved quickly to add features to the website such as 360 views of the installation, thinking of people who might not be

able to visit in person. We had to abandon plans for in-gallery interaction with 3-D replicas of selected objects, and also had to redesign the in-gallery printed materials and visitor engagement center to keep visitors safe. Above all, we learned the importance of being flexible, nimble, and solution-oriented.

### How has this exhibition informed your core research project?

The opportunity to group together works that would be found in a domestic setting according to life stages, according to how people use them as tools for living, as part of their life stories, rather than by artist, period, style, or medium, reaffirmed the research methodology of my historical work. The power of art and objects in our lives today is no different from their power in the lives of people in the past. The stories visitors left about their attachments to objects in their own lives inspires me to continue to unearth the historical voices that bear witness to the enduring role of paintings, furnishings, ceramics, and other objects in the life stories of the past.

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## BOOK REVIEW

Karen E. McCluskey, *New Saints in Late-Medieval Venice, 1200-1500: A Typological Study*. Abingdon, UK and New York: Routledge.

268 pages, 31 color illustrations. Hard cover \$160. Paperback \$48.95. Ebook \$48.95

By Debra Pincus

Karen McCluskey, Senior Lecturer and Discipline Head in History at the University of Notre Dame, Sydney, Australia, shows herself in this book to have an extensive command of saint veneration throughout Italy in the later middle ages. Her focus here is on a group of thirteen figures – “*santi novellini*” – who emerge in Venice in the period 1200-1500 as subjects of devotion. Technically, the majority of these newly venerated figures were *beati*, the preliminary step on the road to canonization. All were citizens of Venice, operating in the area of the lagoon, and their deaths generally fall within the living memory of their followers.

This is the period when city states across Italy were assiduously acquiring relics for a roster of saints that bring favor to their communities and provide for a colorful liturgical calendar. Not so in Venice. The much-celebrated association with Saint Mark, going back to the captivating account of the acquisition of his relics in the ninth century, would allow little room for other veneration – the familiar B-movie gunslinger’s taunt comes to mind: “This town ain’t big enough for both of us!”



Tomb of Beato Giacomo Salomoni (d. 1314), ca. 1340, originally San Domenico, Forlì, now Pinacoteca Civica, Forlì

With one or two exceptions, the *santi novellini* were not high-profile individuals. Compiling a dossier for each of them presented a serious challenge. McCluskey has scoured wills, patriarchal reports, government decrees and other relevant materials, correlating this with the evidence of altarpieces and tomb monuments. The vision here is that of an historian rather than an art historian, but the author works carefully to knit information supplied by the visual material into the larger

narrative. The terms of sanctity derived from the research have been codified in a typological chart set forth in the introduction that serves as the ground plan for the analysis that follows – hence the subtitle of the book.

Not surprisingly, Mark emerges as the major model. More to the point is the centrality of Mark to the book’s major theme, that the new saints serve to amplify the message embodied in Venice’s major patron. In effect, their presence functions as confirmation of the promise brought to Venice by Mark of Venice’s divinely-ordained destiny as the well-ordered city of peace, harmony, prosperity and success (the so-called “Myth of Venice”), a note sounded early in Venetian chronicles and repeatedly invoked by local historians. The sanctity and pious acts of the new saints, the author argues, are affirmations of this concept.

The new saints are overall tied to Venice’s patrician class but there is a range in terms of status. The most prominent is Lorenzo Giustiniani (d. 1456), first patriarch of Venice and member of an important Venetian patrician family. The single remnant of his tomb, a three-quarter standing sculpted portrait, is located in S. Pietro di Castello, the original cathedral of Venice. One of Venice’s earliest doges, Pietro Orseolo (d. 987), was resurrected by the state bureaucracy in the fourteenth century as a figure of outstanding piety and given a prominent mosaic in Baptistery of San Marco. Out of Venetian parishes come less illustrious figures such as the priest Angelo Semitecolo (d. 1255), honored by a plaque in the Chapel of the Santissimo Chiodo in the church of San Pantaleon, and Giuliana of Collato (d. 1267), whose relics were venerated in the demolished church of SS. Biagio e Cataldo on the Giudecca, later transferred to Sant’Eufemia.



Bon family tomb, 1430s. Terracotta. right transept, S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice

Figures such as these add to our understanding of the religious life of the city as practiced on a more modest level. Some were venerated, although Venetian by birth, outside Venice, such as the Benedictine monk Giovanni Plebiano (d. 1348), whose relics are housed in the church of St. Blaise in Vodnjan, Croatia. Particularly intriguing is the case of the Dominican friar Giacomo Salomoni (d.1314), a Venetian who preached and died in Forlì, honored by a handsome tomb commissioned by the Venetian government and sent to Forlì

several decades after his death. And then there is the outlier Pacifico Bon, interred in the Frari in the excessively elaborate terracotta Bon family tomb, and whose very existence seems to have been fabricated to bring luster to the Bon family.

The research that underlies the book is substantial. The introduction stands as an excellent up-to-date review of the bibliography on medieval saints, providing background to the particular nature of the situation in Venice. The analysis of the individual saintly figures is preceded by a review of the religious climate of Venice and a recapitulation of the process by which Mark and the fortunes of Venice become entwined. McCluskey’s book stands as a very useful complement to the standard complications of Venetian saint biographies, rounding out our picture of the religious life of Venice and emphasizing its special charter.

## 2021 EXHIBITIONS

***The Great Wonder: Violet Oakley and the Gothic Revival at Vassar***

[Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center](https://www.vassar.edu/exhibitions/violet-oakley), Vassar College  
February 27 – June 13



This exhibition features drawings, watercolors, illustrated books, and other objects that illuminate Violet Oakley’s decorative scheme for Alumnae House at Vassar College. Inspired by Italian

Gothic and Renaissance art, these artworks reveal how the painter developed the dynamic composition of Gothic revival painting *The Great Wonder*. The show, **curated by IAS member Christopher Platts**, is complemented by a [virtual](#)

[exhibition](#) and a [3D tour](#) of the Alumnae House living room at Vassar College.

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***Lust, Love, and Loss in Renaissance Europe***

[Smart Museum of Art, Chicago](#)

April 8 – June 13

Curated by IAS member [Nora S. Lambert](#) and shining a light on

artworks created for private homes, this exhibition explores their interrelated subject matters in four sections: 'At Home in the Renaissance', 'The Realm of Venus', 'Paragons of Virtue' and 'Morality and Mortality'. If you can't make it in person before the exhibition closes, you can enjoy a [virtual tour](#).



***Body and Soul: Italian Renaissance Sculpture from Donatello to Michelangelo***

[Louvre, Paris](#)

October 22 – June 21



Organised in collaboration with the Castello Sforzesco, *Body and Soul* at the Louvre explores the conjunction of the physical and the emotional in sculpture of the late Quattrocento and is organised around three main

themes – 'Fury and Grace', 'Affect and Persuasiveness' and 'From Dionysus to Apollo'.

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***Le Signore dell'Arte: Storie di donne tra '500 e '600***

[Palazzo Reale, Milan](#)

March 2 – July 25



This delayed exhibition reunites over 130 works of art by 34 artists from more than 67 different global lending institutions to spotlight the creativity, skill, and entrepreneurship of women artists from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Highlights include works by Artemisia Gentileschi,

Sofonisba Anguissola, Lavinia Fontana, Elisabetta Sirani and Giovanna Garzoni.

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***Onorevole e antico cittadino di Firenze***

[Bargello, Florence](#)

May 11 – August 8

Opening in May instead of April and extended until August, *Onorevole e antico Cittadino di Firenze* celebrates the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dante's death by reconstructing the diverse historical and cultural links between Florence and one of its most celebrated sons.



***Treasure of Chianti: Silver Coinage of the Roman Republic from Cetamura del Chianti***

[Museo di Santa Maria della Scala, Siena](#)

May 29 - September 3, 2021

This exhibition showcases the Roman coins that were discovered in [Cetamura](#) (Gaiole in Chianti) in 2015. Produced between 169 and 27 BCE, the coins have been restored and are now exhibited as part of a collaboration between several organizations.



***Caesar's Heritage and the Conquest of Time***

[Capitoline Museums, Rome](#)

February 8 – December 31



This multimedia exhibition project combines video-mapping, graphics and audio commentary to bring to life the Fasti Capitolini, allowing visitors to discover more about the history of Republican Rome.

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***Tota Italia. Alle origini di una nazione***

[Scuderie del Quirinale, Rome](#)

May 14 – July 25



The Scuderie reopens with an exhibition dedicated to the unification of the Italian peninsula under Emperor Augustus. The show features a selection of evocative objects spanning pre-Roman Italy to the height of the Julio-Claudian age. Loans are derived from museums from across the country.

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## Biennale Architettura 2021

[Venice](#)

May 22 – November 21



This edition of the Architecture Biennale is curated by Hashim Sarkis, Dean of the School of Architecture and Planning at MIT. The Biennale's theme, 'How will we live together?', is particularly timely given the challenges that the pandemic, as well as global socio-political issues, pose for the built environment. This Biennale features a diverse slate of 112 participants from 46 countries.

## Nero: The Man Behind the Myth

[The British Museum, London](#)

May 27 – October 24



The British Museum reopens with not one, but two major exhibitions. The first is *Thomas Becket: Murder and the Making of a Saint*. The second turns the focus on to the Emperor Nero, using 200 objects to interrogate the commonly held view of Nero as mad tyrant.

## The Medici: Portraits & Politics, 1517-1570

[The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York](#)

June 26 – October 11



This loan exhibition highlights portraiture at the court of the Medici at a watershed moment in Florence's history – the transition from republic to duchy under Cosimo I. In particular, it explores the use of these portraits as individual and state propaganda, featuring paintings, drawings, medals, engravings, sculptures, books and more.

## Bellotto: The Königstein Views Reunited

[The National Gallery, London](#)

July 22 – October 31



This small exhibition reunites five monumental views of the Saxon fortress of Königstein in the Elbe valley, painted while Bellotto was court painter to Augustus III. Included in the general ticket price, it seeks

to highlight a painter who is often overshadowed by his more famous uncle, Canaletto.

## Botticelli

[Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris](#)

September 10 – January 24, 2022



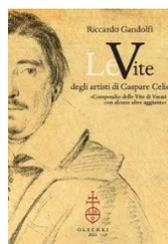
Featuring forty works by Botticelli and several more by his contemporaries, this exhibition highlights Botticelli's workshop as a laboratory of ideas and a place of artistic training.

## NEWS AND NOTES

**The EU has agreed to begin accepting tourists from non-EU countries beginning May 16**, including from the USA "for any reason." For more information, see the Italian [Ministero degli Affari Esteri](#), or the EU's [Re-open](#) website.



**The Getty Museum acquired a recently rediscovered work by Artemisia Gentileschi.** The [painting](#), which set a new record at auction, depicts the Roman heroine Lucretia.



[Olschki](#) Press has recently published *Le vite degli artisti di Gaspare Celio*, a manuscript thought lost but then discovered by Riccardo Gandolfi in England. Written by the Roman painter Gaspare Celio (1571–1649), this compendium of Vasari's *Vite* illuminates the polemical aesthetics of the Roman art world as artists like Celio grappled with their inheritance and critique of Vasari's Tuscan paradigm. A review in Italian of this publication is available [here](#).



**New frescoes discovered at the Galleria degli Uffizi.** During renovations of a space that originally functioned as a storeroom, the removal of plaster unearthed a small half-length [portrait](#) of Medici Grand Duke Ferdinando I (r. 1587–1609) and a much larger, full-

length portrait of Cosimo II (r. 1609–1621). Both remain *in situ* in fine states of preservation, and are attributed to the workshop of Bernardino Pocetti (1548–1612).

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Italian company [Cinello](#) has begun offering to collectors their own line of “new original digital” artworks (called DAWS), thereby “introducing a new category of



masterpieces by the Great Masters of all time, in an authenticated digital version.” This is to say that Cinello has begun partnering with museums in Italy in order to sell non-fungible token (NFT) simulacrum (in Jean Baudrillard’s sense) of artworks such as [Michelangelo’s \*Doni Tondi\*](#) which sold for \$170,000.

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**Donatello’s St. Mark for Orsanmichele has been restored.** Created between 1411 and 1413 for the guild of the linen manufacturers and cloth merchants (Arte dei Linaioli e Rigattieri), the statue was [restored](#) thanks to a collaboration between the Bargello and the Opificio delle Pietre Dure.

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## Italian Art Society Membership and Donations

Please [join or renew your IAS membership](#) today. Members are encouraged to pay on-line through our user-friendly website. If you wish to send a check, contact [Antje Gamble](#). While the IAS will continue to offer student membership at \$20.00 and regular membership at \$35.00, there are now several levels of membership for both individuals and institutions or businesses. Our Patron and Donor memberships, at \$100.00 and \$250.00 respectively, allow generous members to support programming, awards, scholarship, and additional endeavors. We have also added three further levels of individual membership for especially generous benefactors, and two kinds of institutional memberships. Institutional members include programs, organizations, or universities that want to promote the study of Italian art and architecture through support of the IAS. Thank you for your continued membership. Please encourage students, colleagues and organizations to join.

As a non-profit organization, the IAS seeks donations from individuals and organizations wishing to promote the study of the visual arts and architecture of Italy, from prehistory to the present. Funds will help support the IAS’s annual operations, including travel grants for graduate students and emerging scholars who are presenting their work at conferences in the USA and abroad, as well as research and publication grants. The IAS seeks general operating contributions, and is also happy to work with donors to direct contributions toward specific purposes, including travel grant support and the establishment of research or publication funds. If you have questions, please e-mail our treasurer [Antje Gamble](#).

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## Newsletter Contributions and Notices

IAS members are warmly encouraged to write for upcoming issues of the IAS Newsletter. For the Fall issue, we are looking for reviews of shows listed in the exhibition section, news of recent conservation campaigns in Italy, and articles on research topics or new methodologies. If you are interested in writing a feature (approximately 800-1200 words), please contact the [editor](#) at any time, or by September 7 for the next issue. Deadlines for IAS newsletters are: Fall Newsletter: news deadline September 7/publication date October 7; Winter Newsletter: news deadline January 7/publication date February 7; Spring Newsletter: news deadline May 7/publication date June 7.

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