

RSA Affiliated ATSAH (Association for Textual Scholarship in Art History)
Dublin, Ireland, April 2-4, 2021

Session I Sponsored by ATSAH

Session title: Emblematic Artistic Armorial: Beauty, Gender and Theory

Session Abstract: This session investigates the quest of French and Italian artists and poets (Clément Marot, Gilles Corrozet and Giorgio Vasari) to capture the visual beauty and signification of the human figure in emblematic artist armorial (blazon, devices, and coat of arms).

Organizer: Liana De Girolami Cheney, University of Bari, Italy
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Chair: Maureen Pelta, Moore College
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Bio: Maureen Pelta is a Professor of Art History and Curatorial Studies at Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she also serves as chair of the Liberal Arts department. She has written and lectured extensively on culture in Renaissance Italy, with topics ranging from Correggio, Donatello and Vasari to the lives of religious women in the 16th century and Italian garden history, both in the United States and abroad. She has presented work regularly at the annual meetings of professional associations such as the College Art Association and the Renaissance Society of America, and has contributed to a variety of publications, including *The Encyclopedia of Italian Renaissance and Mannerist Art*, *The Dictionary of Art*, and *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, in addition to numerous gallery and book reviews. Professor Pelta earned her B.A. and M.A. from Temple University and received a Ph.D. from Bryn Mawr College.

Speaker I: Erin Matusiewicz, Wayne State University
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Title: Stylistic Borrowings: The Human Figure and Gesture in French Emblem Books

Abstract: The printers, editors, writers and artists involved in the production of emblem books were working within a system—not only within the bookmaking world, but within the larger artistic world as well. In this analysis, I will draw connections between the visual trends found in three French emblem books and concurrent literary genres and artistic styles. First, I will illustrate the parallels between the human form in the blason anatomique and the contrapposto pose in Gilles Corrozet's *Hecatographie*. Next, I will compare Renaissance side-profile portraiture and commemorative medals to a series of figures in Guillaume de la Perrière's *Théâtre des bons engins*. Finally, I will explore the combination of classical content, classical gesture, and the mannerist human form in La Perrière's *Morosophie*. As we will discover, these stylistic borrowings establish a visual

sensibility, facilitate moral lessons, and provide artists with an economy of scale when producing large amounts of imagery.

Short Bio: Erin Matusiewicz is a PhD Candidate (ABD), Department of Modern Languages and Literatures and Culture at Wayne State University. Presented at national conferences several papers on French emblematic pictures and decorative borders. She received numerous awards in teaching and writing from Wayne State University, Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute, Newberry Library Chicago, and the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Speaker II: Michael Giordano, Wayne State University
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Title: The French Renaissance *blasons anatomiques*, the Body of the Woman, and the Heraldic Shield

Abstract: As invented by the French poet Clément Marot (1535), the anatomical blason is a poem describing and praising in vivid detail the physical beauties of a part of the woman's body that unfold as an obsessive litany of metaphors frequently in a Petrarchan mode. Collections of such *blasons* were eventually organized as individual poems ordered by anatomical succession head to foot. In the tradition of medieval heraldry the description and interpretation of the *écu* is termed a *blason*, and though this term took on many different meanings, it bears analogies with the structure of the anatomical blason. In more technical terms the shield itself is described as shaped in the form of the human body such as the head ("le chef"), the right side ("dextre"), the left side ("senestre"), and the heart ("le coeur"). Each place on the shield has a position that is partitioned by horizontal, vertical, and diagonal compartments decorated by "charges" and specific colors ("tinctures," "timbres") the combination of all these components designating an individual in a family line.

Short Bio: Michael Giordano, Ph.D. University of Minnesota, is Professor of French, specialization in French Renaissance Poetry and Emblematics, author of articles on Maurice Scève, Joachim du Bellay, Michel de Montaigne, Béroalde de Verville, the French emblem and *impresa*, recent papers and articles on the relations between the anatomical blasons and the Greek Anthology, the Latin Elegiacs, and Neo-Latin poetry, author of *The Art of Meditation and the French Renaissance Love Lyric* (Toronto, 2010), past member of International Advisory Board for the Society of Emblem Studies, Wayne State University awards for excellence in teaching, Board of Governor's award for book, and Ph. D. Director of Program in Modern Languages

Speaker III: Liana De Girolami Cheney, Università di Bari, Italy
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Title: Giorgio Vasari's Fiery Putto: Artistic Armorial

Abstract: Giorgio Vasari (1511-74) recounted in his *vita* or autobiography that his knowledge of emblems derives from his formal education in the classics with the humanists, Giovanni Pollastra and Pierio Valeriano in 1530; his contact with Andrea

Alciato in 1540, when he is painting the Refectory of San Michele in Bosco in Bologna; and his interactions with the humanists, Vincenzo Borghini, Annibale Caro and Paolo Giovio, when in 1546, Vasari was decorating the Sala dei Cento Giorni in the Palazzo della Cancelleria in Rome (Vasari, VII, 686).

As a consequence of his schooling and contacts, Vasari was aware of the literary and printed traditions associated with emblematic and mythographic sources and their assimilation and application to artistic imagery. In his coat of arms depicted in his homes, Arezzo and Florence, Vasari visualized this appropriation.

Short Bio: Liana De Girolami Cheney, Ph.D., is presently a Visiting Scholar in Art History at the Università di Aldo Moro in Bari, Italy, and Investigadora de Historia de Arte, SIELAE, Universidad de Coruña, Spain. She is an emeritus Professor of Art History, Chairperson of the Department of Cultural Studies at UMASS Lowell. Dr. Cheney received her BS/BA in Psychology and Philosophy from the University of Miami, Florida, her MA in History of Art and Aesthetics from the University of Miami, Florida and her Ph.D. in Italian Renaissance and Baroque from Boston University, MA.USA Dr. Cheney is a Renaissance and Mannerism scholar, author, and coauthor of numerous articles and books, including: *Botticelli's Neoplatonic Images; Neoplatonism and the Arts; The Homes of Giorgio Vasari; Giorgio Vasari's Teachers: Sacred and Profane Love; Giuseppe Arcimboldo; Giorgio Vasari's Prefaces: Art and Theory; Agnolo Bronzino: The Florentine Muse; and Giorgio Vasari's Artistic and Emblematic Manifestations.*