

Looking Like: Mimesis/Imitatio in the Art and Architecture of the Middle Ages

Monday, 1 March 2010
14.00 - 18.00, Research Forum South Room

The imitation (*imitatio* in Latin) of the natural world has long been considered an ideal quality of works of art. But what do we mean when we say an artwork resembles something, and what does it resemble?



Photo: L. Cleaver. Loches.

Mimesis as a fundamental characteristic of art was discussed by Plato and Aristotle. The debate was revived in association with classical art by writers of the Renaissance including Vasari, who himself imitated Pliny in praising the deceptive qualities of works of art. Recent scholarship by authors including Erich Auerbach, Svetlana Alpers and Ernst Gombrich has established a discourse about the nature and purpose of mimesis in art.

At the same time, such concepts as resemblance and reality have been reconsidered and undermined. This workshop will consider works of art and architecture in the light of both medieval and modern debates about mimesis.

To book a place: All welcome but numbers are limited. **Advance booking by 22 February** is essential. For further information and to book please contact Laura Cleaver laura.cleaver@courtauld.ac.uk

PROGRAMME

- 14.00 Welcome: Stuart Whatling (The Courtauld Institute of Art)
- Session 1** (Chair: Stuart Whatling)
- 14.05-14.30 Hanna Wimmer (University of Hamburg / Warburg Institute), *Introduction*
- 14.30-14.45 Géraldine Victoir (The Courtauld Institute of Art), *Fourteenth-Century Wall Painting in Northern France: an Art of Mimesis?*
- 14.45-15.00 Laura Veneskey (Northwestern University/ The Courtauld Institute of Art), *Truth and Mimesis in Byzantium: a Speaking Reliquary of Saint Demetrios of Thessaloniki*
- 15.00-15.20 Discussion
- 15.20-16.00 BREAK (tea/coffee not provided)
- Session 2** (Chair: Francesco Lucchini, The Courtauld Institute of Art)
- 16.00-16.15 Janet Robson (Birkbeck, University of London), *Mimesis or Symbolism? The Temple of Minerva in the St Francis Cycle in the Basilica of San Francesco in Assisi*
- 16.15-16.30 Jim Harris (The Courtauld Institute of Art), *Show and Tell: Mimesis and Diegesis in Donatello's Bardi Crucifix*
- 16.30-16.50 Discussion
- Session 3** (Chair: Laura Cleaver, The Courtauld Institute of Art)
- 17.00-17.15 Geoff Nuttall (The Courtauld Institute of Art), *Wood that Looks Like Fabric: Leonardo da Massa and the Sala of Princivalle de Vivaldi*
- 17.15-17.30 Jack Hartnell (The Courtauld Institute of Art), *The History of Mimetic Reliquaries as a Mimetic History*
- 17.30-18.00 Discussion
- 18.00 Closing remarks

The afternoon will conclude with a reception