

# Publics of the First Public Museums (XVIII-XIX century)

## II. Literary Discourses

### International Workshop

Durham, 23-24 May 2024

The workshop *Publics of the First Public Museums: II. Literary Discourses (18th-19th Centuries)* is an integral part of the research project *Visibility Reclaimed. Experiencing Rome's First Public Museums (1733-1870). An Analysis of Public Audiences in a Transnational Perspective*. Marking the second of three encounters, this workshop delves into the examination of literary discourses vital to understanding the experiences of early museum-goers. Travel literature has long represented a privileged source for investigating the origins of the first public museums and the practices of access to public and private collections in Europe. However, in the light of recent studies aimed at deepening the material history of the museum and the encounter of the public with the institutions, these sources deserve a closer scrutiny in both methodological and critical terms. Following the inaugural Rome session centred on institutional sources, the Durham workshop turns its gaze towards the rich tapestry of literary narratives with the aim of analysing them also in a comparative perspective with the primary sources. As museums sought to define and engage their public, literature often became both a mirror and a mould, reflecting and shaping societal perceptions. With a spotlight on interdisciplinary and transnational approaches, the Durham workshop calls for a deeper probe into the visual and material realms of museums, emphasizing the interplay between literary discourses and artworks, collections, display, space, audiences “narrated” in the museum and the evolving institutional norms of the 18th and 19th centuries.

## Programme

### Thursday 23 May 2024

Seminar Room, Institute of Advanced Study, Durham University

#### 9:00 Welcoming Remarks

#### 9:15 I. Methodological Reflections

*This session serves as an introduction to the workshop, providing a shared reflection on the current state of research and the future prospects. It will focus on the comparative, interdisciplinary, and intermedial analysis of literatures within the field of Museum Studies.*

Carla Mazzarelli (Università della Svizzera italiana)

*Letterature e pubblici del Museo. Fonti o modelli?*

Stefano Cracolici (Durham University)

*Musei d’Arcadia*

Marco Maggi (Università della Svizzera italiana)

*“Tutta l’arte del buon governo trastullando imparare in un passeggio”. A Literary Rearrangement of the Duke of Savoy’s Great Gallery*

Discussion

Coffee Break

### **11.15 II. Museums at Hand**

*This session will analyse literary genres for museum visitors, like guidebooks, and the role of periodicals in broadening museum audience engagement. Discussions will cover the evolution of these texts and new reading approaches introduced by Digital Humanities.*

Chair: Giovanna Capitelli (Università Roma Tre)

Damiano Delle Fave (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*Pubblici dei musei a Roma nelle guide dalla fine del XVIII al XIX secolo*

Gaetano Cascino (Università della Svizzera italiana)

*“I Romani non frequentano le gallerie di Roma”*: discussioni e stereotipi sui visitatori dei musei di Roma nella stampa di secondo Ottocento

Pietro Costantini (Università di Teramo)

*Viaggio in Abruzzo. Vincenzo Bindi e I Monumenti storici ed artistici degli Abruzzi*

Discussion

### **12.30 Keynote Address**

Chair: Carla Mazzarelli (Università della Svizzera italiana)

Carole Paul (University of California, Santa Barbara)

*The Museum Going Public in Eighteenth-Century Italy*

Discussion

### **14.15 III. Museums on the Beaten Track**

*This session focuses on museum experiences in travel literature, including correspondence, diaries, and travel accounts. Discussions will specifically examine the unique perspectives of visitor-narrators and how published literary accounts of museum visits compare or contrast with unpublished sources.*

Chair: Chiara Piva (Sapienza Università di Roma)

Rosa Maria Giusto (Napoli, CNR)

*La “città-museo” e i resoconti dei viaggiatori: le Notizie di Roma scritte dal Sig.re Aless.o Galilei*

Luca Piccoli (Università della Svizzera italiana)

*Il carteggio privato e i diari pubblici dell’architetto Simon-Louis Du Ry: resoconti sui musei di Roma a confronto (1744-1777)*

Ludovica Scalzo (Università Roma Tre)

*“The torch, like Promethean fire, makes every statue live”*: visite a lume di fiaccola nei musei romani dai resoconti di viaggio della prima metà dell'Ottocento

Discussion

Coffee Break

#### **15.45 IV. Varieties of Sightseeing**

*This session explores the variety of visiting spaces, perspectives, and geographies in the 18th and 19th centuries, including museums, monuments, private palaces, and studios. Discussions will focus on what these diverse viewpoints reveal about sociocultural dynamics.*

Chair: David García Cueto (Museo Nacional del Prado)

Daniel Crespo-Delgado (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

*Los monumentos y las colecciones de arte en la literatura de viajes española (y por España) de la Ilustración*

Victoria Arzhaeva (EPHE-PSL, laboratoire Histara)

*Les pensionnaires russes au Vatican: l'expérience muséale à travers la correspondance artistique et les journaux intimes du XIXe siècle*

Michele Amedei (Università di Pisa)

*"The Studio was a monument of his intelligent taste and æsthetic culture": l'atelier dell'artista nei resoconti e diari di viaggio di visitatori nordamericani nella Toscana dell'Ottocento*

Discussion

**17.00**

#### **Keynote Address**

Chair: Stefano Cracolici (Durham University)

Christoph Frank (Università della Svizzera italiana)

*In the Shadow of the Americas: The Humboldts and Schinkel in the Rome of the Early 1800s*

Discussion

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## **Friday 24 May 2024**

Seminar Room, Institute of Advanced Study, Durham University

#### **9.00 V. Literary Landscapes**

*This session aims to reflect on how literature provides a multifaceted view of the museum experience, extending the analysis to landscape traversal. It will consider the poetic charm of narrative evocations that capture the emotions of a setting and the ekphrastic descriptions that articulate artworks in written words.*

Chair: Mauro Vincenzo Fontana (Università Roma Tre)

Cecilia Paolini (Università di Teramo)

*Il Controcanto di Clio. George Sand e l'inascoltata interpretazione del paesaggio italiano tra spazio barocco e romanticismo progressista*

Elizaveta Antashyan (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*"A Walk through the Hermitage": Russia's First Public Museum and its Reflections in Literature during the reign of Alexander II (1855–1881)*

Discussion

### **10.30 VI. Museum Tales**

*This session is dedicated to literary texts that transform museum visits into narratives. It explores how notions of time and space during such visits compare with the temporal dynamics of literary narration and how the perception of the visited places differs from travel accounts.*

Chair: Sara Garau (Università della Svizzera italiana)

Lucia Rossi (Università della Svizzera italiana)

*Il 'Museo di Roma' tra esperienza, ricordo e costruzione narrativa: I Miei Ricordi e le Lettere di Massimo d'Azeglio*

Meghan Freeman (Cornell University)

*The Intimacies of Art Travel in Henry James*

Corinne Pontillo (Università di Catania)

*«S'arrestò davanti alla Gioconda». Visitare il Museo del Louvre attraverso la letteratura*

Discussion

Coffee Break

### **11.45 VII. Sensory Visits**

*This session explores how the concept of the museum as a space to "read" differs from its traditional perception as a space to "visit." It will examine, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the implications of this distinction in literary and museological discourses, with a special focus on the sensory dimension of navigating through texts and the museum.*

Chair: Marco Maggi (Università della Svizzera italiana)

Isabelle Pichet (UQTR, Trois Rivières) and Dorit Kluge (VICTORIA|International University, Berlin)

*Experiencing 18th century art exhibitions in Paris and Dresden—a sensory interplay between exhibition and text*

Sofia Bollini (Università Luigi Vanvitelli, Napoli / Università della Svizzera Italiana)

*Il preparato anatomico come oggetto museale e letterario nella cultura tardottocentesca*

Laura Stefanescu (Villa I Tatti, Harvard University)

*Vernon Lee's Gallery Diaries: An Aesthetic Bodily Experience of Italian Museums in the Early Twentieth Century*

Discussion and Conclusion

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### **II. Literary Discourses**

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Durham, 23-24 May 2024

**Curated by:**

Stefano Cracolici (Durham University)  
Carla Mazzarelli (Università della Svizzera italiana)

**Main supporter:**

Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)



**With the participation of:**

Istituto di storia e teoria dell'arte e dell'architettura, Accademia di architettura di Mendrisio,  
Università della Svizzera Italiana  
Institute of Medieval and Early Modern Studies, Durham University

**In collaboration with:**

Institute of Advanced Study, Durham University

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The Workshop is part of Research Project *Visibility Reclaimed. Experiencing Rome's First Public Museums (1733-1870). An Analysis of Public Audiences in a Transnational Perspective* (SNSF 100016\_212922) [https://www.isa.usi.ch/it/visibility-reclaimed-experiencing-romes-first-public-museums-1733-1870?\\_gl=1\\*rtxqal\\*\\_ga\\*MTA3NTMzNzAyMi4xNzEwMTcyMzM4\\*\\_ga\\_89Y0EEKVWP\\*MTcxMzE5MTA3NC4xNy4wLjE3MTMxOTEwNzQuNjAuMC4xMjE4MTU4MjQz](https://www.isa.usi.ch/it/visibility-reclaimed-experiencing-romes-first-public-museums-1733-1870?_gl=1*rtxqal*_ga*MTA3NTMzNzAyMi4xNzEwMTcyMzM4*_ga_89Y0EEKVWP*MTcxMzE5MTA3NC4xNy4wLjE3MTMxOTEwNzQuNjAuMC4xMjE4MTU4MjQz)

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Information and streaming on request:

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**Venue of the workshop:**

**Durham**

Institute of Advanced Study  
Durham University  
Seminar Room  
Cosin's Hall  
Palace Green  
Durham  
DH1 3RL