

Geographie of Art

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DAILY THEMES

1. Towards a History of the Geography of Art.

Origin, forms and transformations of the historical models connecting geographic space and art production. Patterns, instruments, purposes and achievements of the Geography of Art both as a concept and as a scholarly practice.

2. Centres and peripheries. Travelling artists, travelling works, circulating models.

For a long while the connection between 'metropolitan art' and 'minor centres' art has been considered exclusively as a one-way transmission proceeding from the centre to the periphery. The problem has only recently been focused on its complexity: the contrast between reception and resistance; the various forms of acculturation, the artistic possibilities opened by the lack of recognized rules, the transformations of the models facing different traditions and perceptive habits...

The travels of artists and arrivals of foreign works of art have been widely recalled to give historical ground to the problem of 'influences', which is frequently evoked in the history of art. Yet, the examples, the purposes and the consequences of an artist's travel (e.g. Villard de Honnecourt in Hungary, Jean Fouquet in Italy, Lluís Dalmau or Zanetto Bugatto in the Flanders, Dürer in Venice, Rubens in Italy, Bernini in Paris...) are extremely diverse depending on their circumstances and historical period. Different problems arise from the circulation and use of models (sketchbooks, repertories for goldsmiths and three-dimensional bozzettos for sculptors).

3. Inventories, "Kunsttopographie", investigations focusing on a specific land.

This section will focus on the greatest enterprises in the field of art topography (inventories, catalogues of monuments, 'reconnaissance exhibitions' and their preliminary works, explorations of specific lands).

4. Identity, national styles and 'schools'.

The concept of 'school' in art historiography (from city and regional schools to national ones) will be investigated with a special regard to the search for and definition of 'national' features in the works of art and in the styles (e.g. the different uses of the word "opus" in connection with a geographic adjective in Medieval inventories and chronicles: Opus francigenum, lemovicense, anglicanum, lucense...).

5. The problem of 'Kunstlandschaft'. Borders in the Geography of Art.

The concept of "Kunstlandschaft" was particularly used by German art historians between the two World Wars. By this word they pointed out a sort of continuity and uniformity through the ages in the art production of a specific land. Very often this definition of "Kunstlandschaft" lead to racist prejudices, as if native soil and blood determined the attitudes and hence the art production. Almost abandoned after the last World War because of these dangerous implications, the concept of "Kunstlandschaft", finally free from mythologies, has been revived to focus on local art features and their persistence.

Which problems are posed by border areas when considered as political and linguistic crossroads for different models and styles?

6. Geographical aspects of iconography.

Locally-developed iconographic themes will be investigated in their 'fortune' and reception. Possible topics for this section are the patron saints, the diffusion of a venerated image (e.g. Notre-Dame de Lausanne in the Western Alps), peculiar liturgical uses (e.g. the "Fastentücher", or Lent curtains, in Austria and in Southern Germany).