

DOCTORAL CONFERENCE

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30.5.2023

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MUNI Department
of Art History
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10:00 - 10:10 Introduction to the conference

OPENING LECTURE:

10:10 - 10:40

Dr. Susanne Kubersky-Piredda

Foreigners in Early Modern Rome: Reconsidering Concepts of Nationhood and Collective Identity

DOCTORAL CONTRIBUTIONS:

10:50 - 11:10

Mgr. Lenka Vrlíková

De-Constructing Cultural Identity and “National” Narrative: The Solomonic Royal Imagery in the Gännätä Maryam Church (13th Century)

11:30 Lunch break

12:30 - 12:50

Mgr. Martina Kudlíková

The Chapter House and the Cloister of the Medieval Mendicant Monastery as a Place of Identity

13:00 - 13:20

Mgr. Jitka Ciampi Matulová

The Way to Freedom is Simple But Bitter: Brno Theater on a String and Confirming Human Identity Through its Performances

13:30 - 13:50 Coffee break

13:50 - 14:10

Mgr. Pavol Múdry

Public Collections and Transformation of Social Identity: The Case of the Slovak National Gallery

14:20 - 14:30 Conclusion of the conference

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Dr. Susanne Kubersky-Piredda

Bibliotheca Hertziana - Max Plack Institute for Art History

Foreigners in Early Modern Rome: Reconsidering Concepts of Nationhood and Collective Identity

The meeting of different cultures in cities with a high proportion of immigrants poses many challenges in the globalized world of the twenty-first century. However, much thought was given to forms of coexistence between people of different origins in large urban centers as early as the Early Modern era. Since the early Middle Ages, foreigners with the same provenance who resided in Rome came together to form collectives with structured forms of organization, mostly lay confraternities that maintained pilgrimage hospices with adjacent churches. Shared cultural values, such as language, history, and traditions, helped to create a sense of belonging among their members. This paper addresses the manifold ways in which groups of foreigners used art and architecture to shape and assert their status in the Roman social and urban context. In particular, I will reconsider concepts of collective identity, as developed by anthropologists and sociologists since the 1980s, in the light of current transdisciplinary approaches to Early Modern society and visual culture.

IDENTITY (OF ART)

Mgr. Lenka Vrlíková

Department of Art History, Masaryk University

**De-Constructing Cultural Identity and “National” Narrative:
The Solomonic Royal Imagery in the Gännätä Maryam Church
(13th Century)**

This paper discusses wall paintings in the Ethiopian church of Gännätä Maryam, focusing on royal iconography and on visual elements traditionally attributed to the Islamic material culture. Previous art historians viewed these "Islamic" elements only as "external influences" mediated by Christians coming to Ethiopian Solomonic Kingdom from Egypt. In other words, they were understood exclusively as a result of cultural contacts between Christian communities, even though the Horn of Africa was culturally and geographically much closer to the early Islamic culture than other Christian empires, including Egypt. This historiographical narrative of the Ethiopian material culture and its religious identity marginalizing presence of the Muslims in the kingdom thus supported phenomenon of the “pure” Christian Ethiopian culture, rooted in pioneering research of the 1960s and 1970s. This is still impacting the present view on the Ethiopian cultural identity. Is that an illusion or a historical reality? How were forms of identity rendered visible through images and why was its diversity marginalized? I will focus on these questions in relation to the murals in the royal church of Gännätä Maryam, built and decorated for the emperor Yəkunno Amlak (1270–1285), founder of the Solomonic dynasty.

IDENTITY (ART OF)

Mgr. Jitka Ciampi Matulová

Department of Art History, Masaryk University

The Way to Freedom is Simple But Bitter:
Brno Theater on a String and Confirming Human Identity
Through its Performances

The paper will focus on the relationship between the concept of theater as an expression of national identity officially built since the end of World War II by the communist power, and its unofficial form in the field of alternative professional theater during the Normalization of the 1980s. The area of alternative professional theater was, during the Normalization period, a kind of semi-official cultural space suffered by the superior authorities of the communist theater culture, which became an “island of freedom” for the ordinary viewer, a place for confirming personal identity

The creation of some alternative theaters was essential in this movement. With its specific philosophy of theatrical creation and poetics, the Brno Theater on a String was one of these. The medium of theater was understood by the ensemble as a system or tool in which individual performances are directed not towards aesthetic but ethical goals.

Using the example of a specific theater project from the fall of 1985 called Project 1985 - staged reading from the contemporary literature of the nations of the Soviet Union, and especially its last part called The Destruction of the Capital (premiere 17/12/1985), this paper will show the search, definition, and confirmation of the identities of artists and ordinary spectators in a time of oppression.

IDENTITY (OF ART)

Mgr. Martina Kudlíková

Department of Art History, Masaryk University

The Chapter House and the Cloister of the Medieval Mendicant Monastery as a Place of Identity

As early as the 13th and 14th centuries, the Minorite and Dominican orders (or the Poor Clares and Dominican women) played an important role in town-building in terms of religion and social ties, as well as the architectural layout and urban development. The Franciscan Order became important in the urban environment from the late 15th and in the 16th century, contributing with other monasteries to shaping the changing urban religiosity.

This paper aims to suggest the perspectives of studying the relationship between Mendicant monasteries and the urban environment, for which the monasteries of the Mendicant orders (whether their male or female establishments) are typical. The area of interest, however, is not the monastic church but the chapter house and the cloister. Despite the assumed rules of the enclosure, we can register the presence of the lay public in these spaces too, and thus we can study a partial interconnection between the “outer” secular and the “inner” sacred monastic world. “Artistic” and memorial presentations in the monastic context are linked, on the one hand, to the identity of a monastic community, on the other hand, to the identity of people living outside the monastery walls. This “outside” influence can be traced thanks to activities that were organised in the cloister (e.g. funerals, religious processions), as well as in the chapter house, which was also used for other types of laity gatherings (e.g. a court or guild chapel), according to relevant material and written sources. The monasteries in the Czech Republic, especially the double monastery of Minorites, Poor Clares and Beguines in Český Krumlov, are given as examples.

IDENTITY (OF) ART

Mgr. Pavol Múdry

Department of Art History, Masaryk University

**Public Collections and Transformation of Social Identity:
The Case of the Slovak National Gallery**

The concept of identity appears in many forms in connection with the environment of collecting. And not only in the common discussion between collectors but many times also in the professional environment of researchers and professionals. The problem with the exact determination of this relationship often lies primarily in the unclear definition of the concept of identity, which during historical development was mostly clarified only very slowly and partially. The problem becomes even more complicated when we realise that the concept of identity includes a multi-meaning designation that refers not only to ourselves as individuals, but also to other objects and even groups. The goal of this paper is to clarify, at least in part, the relationship between an identity and collecting activities on the example of the Slovak National Gallery and its connection with Slovak society.

