An International Symposium

The Power of Luxury: Art and Culture at the Italian Courts in Machiavelli’s Lifetime

The Australian Institute of Art History
The University of Melbourne
19 and 20 February 2013

DAY ONE

19 February 2013

9.00 welcome
His Excellency Gianludovico de Martino di Montegiordano (Ambassador for Italy)
Jaynie Anderson (University of Melbourne)
Marxiano Melotti (SUM Foundation, Milan and Florence)

9.30 opening keynote
Annalisa Zanni (Director of the Poldi Pezzoli Museum, Milan), Objects of Luxury as Expressions of Power in the Renaissance Courts of Italy

Session one: Machiavelli’s Prince
2013 is the quincentenary of the birth of Machiavelli’s classic book, THE PRINCE, which has earned the reputation of being the text that launched modern political philosophy. In this opening session the critical impact of the book will be examined in Sixteen Century Italy.

Chaired by Robert Gaston

10.00
Andrea Rizzi (University of Melbourne), Machiavelli before Machiavelli: the Prince in Quattrocento Italian Courts

10.30
Francesco Borghesi (University of Sydney), Machiavelli’s Love

11.00
coffee-break

11.30
keynote Miguel Vatter (University of New South Wales, Sydney), Machiavelli and Divine Providence: Towards a New Reading of Chapter 26
The Decorative Arts at Court

In this session refined aspects of artistic production for the courts will be investigated in relation to their individual techniques and styles. Jewels, furniture, armours, textiles, tapestries, musical instruments together with the master craftsmen, who made them, will be analysed by specialists. The session will also take into account the social and cultural contexts of the production and consumption of Renaissance luxury goods and their economic and financial bases.

Chaired by Felicity Harley-McGowan

14.00 keynote Antonella Capitanio (University of Pisa), The Goldsmith’s Art for the Pope: the Tiara for Julius II and Other XVI Century Precious Objects

14.30 Chiara Buss (Lombard Institute for the History of Art), Silk Art and Technology in the Service of the Sforza Dukes

15.00 Lucia Meoni (Palazzo Pitti, Florence), Allegories, Symbols and Court Representations in the Early Production of the Medici Tapestry Works (1545-1553)

15.30 coffee-break

16.00 keynote June di Schino (Rome 3 University), The Power of Sweetness: Sugar Sculpture in Italian Court Banquets

16.30 Renato Meucci (Conservatory Guido Cantelli of Novara), Musical Instruments in the Italian Renaissance Courts

17.00 John Griffiths (University of Melbourne), Pietrobono and his Followers: Lutenist Improvisors and unwritten musical Practice in Italian Courts

17.30 Carl Villis (National Gallery of Victoria), Apart from the Courts: Correggio, Parma and the NGV’s Madonna and Child with the Infant St. John the Baptist
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Session three

About Principalities and Courts

This session will focus on the image of the Prince in Renaissance court culture, investigating the strategies used by rulers for the visualisation of power and for the display of their magnificence. Celebrations, triumphant processions, and wedding ceremonies, are all important aspects of court ceremonial, where the arts flourish in all their forms. Costumes, armours, goldsmiths’ works, furnishings, tapestries, and ephemeral paintings are created for cultural contexts, intrinsically related to the organisation and the politics of the court. The portrait of the Prince acquires significant documentary value, often as a gift for other rulers or for an intended bride. In turn paintings and sculptures reproduce clothing, weapons, jewellery and other luxurious objects, conveying specific meaning and highlighting the role of magnificence in the representation of the Prince.

Chaired by Gerard Vaughan

9.30 keynote
Alessandro Della Latta (SUM Foundation), “The Labour of Each Knight in His Device”: imprese as Disguised Portrait of the Prince

10.00
Robert Gaston (University of Melbourne), “Smitten thro’ the Helm”: the Ruler and the Helmet in Sixteenth-Century Europe

10.30
Christopher Marshall (University of Melbourne), Vintage Violence: Exhibiting Armour, from the Power of the Prince to the Dynamism of the Museum

11.00
coffee-break
Session four  
**Made in Italy, then and now**

The luxurious creations of Italian Renaissance courts continue to have an impact on the production of refined Italian goods of high quality today. These Renaissance ancestors still define the international image of Italy. The culture of *made in Italy* continues to find expression in some new forms of valorisation in tourism and in *slow-culture* as an identity value and a cultural and economic reaction to serialisation and globalisation. The international financial crisis, which profoundly affects many European countries and has resulted in a profound transformation of their economies and life style, has paradoxically reinforced the market for luxurious goods and has re-opened a debate of ethical character. The crisis offers an opportunity for reflecting on the meaning of luxury in contemporary society and on the role of the Italian tradition. Fashion and food are probably the more interesting and lively aspects of this peculiar Italian heritage.

*Chaired by Christopher Marshall*

14.00  
**Catherine Kovesi** (University of Melbourne), *Luxury in the Renaissance: Origins of a Paradigm*

14.30  
**Peter Howard** (Monash University), *Creating Magnificence in Renaissance Florence*

15.00  
**Peter McNeil** (University of Technology, Sydney), *Italy Design World Centre: from the Linea Italiana to the Made in Italy*

15.30  
coffee-break

16.00 keynote  
**Marxiano Melotti** (Niccolò Cusano University, Rome), *Luxury and Leisure: Past and Future*

**Scientific committee**  
Jaynie Anderson (University of Melbourne)  
Alessandro Della Latta (SUM Foundation)  
Marxiano Melotti (SUM Foundation; Niccolò Cusano University, Rome)  
Annalisa Zanni (Poldi Pezzoli Museum, Milan)

The conference in Melbourne is the first of a series of scientific and cultural events devoted to Italian Renaissance in the Quincentenary of Machiavelli’s Prince, organized by the Embassy of Italy in Canberra, the Australian Institute of Art History of the University of Melbourne (Melbourne), the Fondazione per l’Istituto Italiano di Scienze Umane (Milan and Florence), the Museo Poldi Pezzoli (Milan), the Istituto Italiano di Scienze Umane (Florence and Naples) and the UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (Los Angeles).