Religion, Art and Conflict:
disputes, destruction and creation

CONFERENCE

Friday 5 December 2014, 14.00 - 18.30 (with registration from 13.30)
Saturday 6 December 2014, 10.00 - 17.45 (with registration from 09.30)

Kenneth Clark Lecture Theatre, The Courtauld Institute of Art,
Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN

ABSTRACTS FOR PAPERS

María Aurora Molina Fajardo (University of Granada)

Building a "Catholic site": Spaces of Encounter, the Aggression and the Creation of the Village of Nigüelas (Granada) after the Castilian Conquest

The annexation of the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada to the Castilian Crown in 1492 meant a drastic and progressive transformation of this Islamic territory. In less than a century, it suffered several rebellions, wars, the expulsion of its own Morisco community and the repopulation of the region with people from other places of Spain. Within this tumultuous context, the rural spaces played a major role because of their strong native tradition (Islamic culture) relatively resistant to the urban influence and the new Castilian elite. In this setting of encounter and confrontation between two very different societies (the Catholic and the Islamic one) we can understand the artistic work, not only as a projection of this singular moment, but also as a driving force in the emergence of the conflict, its development and even its pacification.

The Conquest of Granada by the Catholic Monarchs has often been shown as a period of violence, exclusion, and oppression against the Moriscos. Nevertheless, it is remarkable how in this intercultural context – and particularly in some rural and rebellious places – both societies established some aesthetic links sharing creative strategies. In this respect, Molino Fajardo will present the singular case of the Islamic *alqueria* of Nigüelas, a small village in the Southern part of the old Kingdom of Granada. The transformation of this site after the Conquest is a good example of how the architecture was used not only for the social repression of its native population, but also as an object for collaborating and exchanging experiences. To support this assertion, three important local spaces and their development during the whole of the Sixteenth Century will be focused on: its former mosque, the building of its church and the dismantling and use of its *Andalusi* cemeteries. The understanding of these three spaces gives us the history of a change of era; of an agitated time where the destruction and violence – but also the creation and assumption of a former tradition – took place.

Ariana Maki (University of Colorado Boulder)

Lines and Lineages: Depicting History and Religion in 17th-century Bhutan

When Tenzin Rabgye (1638-1696) became the Druk Desi, or administrative head of Bhutan, in 1680, he had already established himself as a reliable 'right hand man' to the "unifier of Bhutan", Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. However, most of the country and its elites were unaware that Zhabdrung had died in 1651; his death was being kept a strict secret. As Bhutan's nation-building process had not always been smooth, the country was still in a nascent phase and any hint of instability was a threat to its survival.

Under pressure to identify a successor to the Zhabdrung and to maintain control over regions only recently brought under the purview of the central government, Tenzin Rabgye was installed as the country's highest authority. Whereas his predecessor had been a military powerhouse, Tenzin Rabgye had different strengths. Trained as a Buddhist monk in the Drukpa Kagyu tradition of Himalayan Buddhism, Tenzin Rabgye understood the roles that ritual and religion should continue to play at this crucial point in Bhutan's history. Further, he understood that in order to help solidify the Drukpa Kagyu hold on Bhutan, new policies and 'propaganda arts' would be key components in the process.

Of the many projects he implemented along these lines—inviting prestigious artists from Tibet to paint the regional dzongs, or fortresses, that Zhabdrung had built, of reforming monastic laws and curriculum, and establishing a system of large scale public religious festivals—this paper is dedicated to the works created by Tenzin Rabgye's own hand. Specifically, the wall murals he painted in his bedroom ca. 1688-1690. Iconographic and historical analysis will shed light on which individuals he thought were the most important in Drukpa Kagyu history, which ritual practices deserved the most attention and promulgation, and which Buddhist lineage masters provided their budding nation with the most authority and pedigree. In short, this paper uses Tenzin Rabgye's painted creations to better understand how he envisioned power, authority, and the role of art as contributing to the formation of the Bhutanese state.

David Low (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

The Ruins of Ani: The Rediscovery, Destruction and Reconstruction of an Armenian City

Ani, the medieval Bagratuni / Bagratid kingdom's last capital and the fabled site of a thousand and one churches, lay in ruins long before the modern era. In the nineteenth century, the lands upon which it stood were, like the Armenian people themselves, caught between the Ottoman and Russian Empires. The treatment of the ruined city at the hands of those powers tells us much about the changing image of the Armenians in the Near East and their eventual fate.

Having stood largely neglected on Ottoman lands for centuries, Ani became of interest again when the region fell into the hands of Russia after its victory over the Ottoman Empire in 1878. This coincided with the period of the 'Armenian renaissance' that saw a development of national awareness. Perceptions of Ani subsequently shifted, for the empty and ignored city of ruins once again accrued meaning and came to stand as a particular Armenian icon. When Ottoman forces re-invaded the region during the First World War, the site's recently acquired symbolic value made it a target and it was

subjected to destructive acts that paralleled those that had been meted out to the Armenians themselves.

The region remained in Turkish hands after the war and the ruins of Ani were for decades once again subject to neglect, an unwanted remnant of the people that had once inhabited the region. Recently, however, it has become the focus of attention once again and substantial reconstruction work has taken place. This is a project that has sought to remake the city as a Turkish tourist attraction, in the process removing any trace of the Armenian history that was once read in its stones.

Jayne Wackett (University of Kent)

Liturgical Images in the English Reformation: Lost, Found, and Altered

The Reformation is famed for the destruction of religious images and their removal from public and private worship. However, the findings of Jayne Wackett's research reveal that images were not universally stripped from the printed liturgy in Edward VI's brief reign, despite their eradication from other aspects of religious devotion. While Edwardian Books of Common Prayer avoided the pictorial cycles of Catholic primers and books of hours, they contain an unexpected abundance of religious imagery. This complicates and nuances our understanding of the Edwardian regime's iconophobia and qualifies the otherwise well-founded view that religious images of any kind were viewed as potential idols in any location. In fact, some of the illustrations used to adorn the devotional books sanctioned by the Edwardian regime include subject matter removed from public view by that very same authority.

Similarly, the images that we find in Mary I's primers do not correspond with prevailing views on the move to a more Christo-centric form of worship during the brief return to Catholicism in her reign. There are significant changes in the printed images used in the primers of her regime, but there is categorically no shift of focus from the Virgin Mary towards Christ. Whilst not negating the studies of others, my findings must necessarily revise our views of Marian devotion.

The role of ideological reform on liturgical art in these two reigns is necessarily affected by the brevity of the reigns, but this paper proposes a reappraisal of existing ideas regarding religious imagery under Edward VI and Mary I. The investigation into the previously overlooked area of pictures that accompany the revised liturgical texts opens up a whole area of devotional art from the Reformation, and examines the messages it conveys. The results of my research expose how printed text and image interact to create a new form of devotional art more suited to Protestant tastes in Edward's reign and also maps changes to Catholic tastes in liturgical imagery under Mary I.

Michael Carter (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Tuppence Worth: an Annotated Missal from a Cistercian Abbey

This paper reports the discovery of a previously unrecorded printed Missal with annotations showing that it must come from a Cistercian monastery in England. The volume is of intrinsic interest, adding to the meagre corpus of liturgical books from English Cistercian houses which survived the Dissolution and Reformation.

Printed in a Paris in 1516, the Missal is decorated with woodcut miniatures with Renaissance style borders. Several English Cistercian patrons commissioned works with similar ornament.

The volume is extensively annotated. Those to the calendar show that the Missal most likely originated from a Cistercian abbey in northern England, whereas an annotation in the text demonstrates that the Order was receptive to Renaissance humanism.

Other annotations provide valuable insights into the fate of the Missal at the Dissolution and its preservation in the longer term by Catholic recusants.

Scott Nethersole (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

'Art came to an end': Making and Destruction in Fra Filippo Lippi's Medici Altarpiece

Fra Filippo Lippi signed his name on an axe that is lodged into the foreground of the Medici Altarpiece (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin). With its potential for both creation and destruction, the axe provides the springboard to discuss ideas of making and its antithesis, destruction, in the fifteenth century. This paper will explore what implications Lippi's hatchet has for our understanding of a notion of 'art' in the period, especially whether the idea was (or has come to be) defined in relation to acts of iconoclasm.

Anna Marazuela Kim (University of Virginia)

Idols of Art and of the Mind: Sculptural and Spiritual Iconoclasm in Michaelangelo's Rondanini Pietà

Michelangelo's final sculpture, the seemingly half-destroyed *Rondanini Pietà* (ca. 1550s-1564), has been described as a ruin and a tragedy, a puzzling departure from the artist's heroic, monumental style. It has also been viewed as a spiritual testament of the artist in the last decades before his death: a revelation of religious convictions unsettled by the tumult of the Reformation. In this paper, Anna Kim aims to interpret this enigmatic work anew, placing it within a longer historical framework of tensions regarding sacred images, and articulating complex interrelations between sculptural process and spiritual reformation. Of all modes of art, sculpture, *per forza di levare*, foregrounds the slippage between making and breaking. That dynamic is doubled in the *Rondanini*, Kim will argue, visible in the severely attenuated figures, fractured arm and scarred surfaces of the sculptural group. Attending to the palimpsest of artistic choices inscribed in this uniquely damaged work, and a dynamic of sculpture as double of the self, Kim examines Michelangelo's sculptural process as an internalized iconoclasm, directed towards idols of art, self and *fantasia*. The paper is part of a book project that explores the staging of material and imaginative iconoclasm in artworks of the Italian Renaissance, as precursors to Reformation and Enlightenment imperatives regarding the destruction of idols of the mind.

Eva Papoulia (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

The Cappella Gregoriana in St. Peter's: a Catholic Response to Protestant Claims

This paper seeks to discuss how the Catholic Church, and particularly Pope Gregory XIII (1572-85), responded in terms of art and architecture to Protestant arguments questioning ideas of papal supremacy and authority. Eva Papoulia's discussion will

focus on the Cappella Gregoriana in St. Peter's, as it brings together more than one argument.

At first, the Gregorian Chapel (1572-83) will be seen in connection with the pope's intention to legitimize his role as the successor of Apostle Peter, who founded the Church of Rome; an issue continuously challenged by the Protestants. Furthermore, Papoulia will discuss Gregory's choice to dedicate the chapel to the Virgin Mary, through the translation of the fresco of the *Madonna del Soccorso*. This choice raised the issue of the Virgin's veneration status, which Protestants were questioning, especially regarding Her attribute as *Theotokos*.

Lloyd de Beer (The British Museum/ University of East Anglia)

Burial and Belief: Alabaster Sculpture in Context,

In the two centuries after the Reformation in England the vast majority of English alabaster sculptures were removed from the altars, image nieces, or tomb chests and were systematically destroyed or sold on to other parts of Europe. Those sculptures which survived in England were protected (in some cases as whole pieces of sculpture, in others as collections of destroyed fragments) through burial and seclusion in areas of the church, or through confiscation and private ownership. This paper will focus on examples from parish churches and will highlight patterns of protection and survival of alabaster as opposed to other devotional works of art. Comparisons will be drawn between methods of destruction, placement of burial and the relationship between sculpture and other media. Why for instance is the survival rate of alabaster sculpture so much higher than that of any other material?

Most of the time, what has been preserved in parish churches (or elsewhere) through burial, are either fragments or whole panels from a single altarpiece or figure. However this is not always the case. In some churches, such as Whittlesford (Cambs), or East Rudham (Norfolk), deposits of alabaster fragments amount to several different groupings of sculpture with a wide dating range. Analysis of these major groupings of alabaster allows us to understand the sculptural quality and organisation of the late medieval parish church, how it might have functioned and why in the end certain images (or parts of the image) might have been worth preserving.

Ágnes Kriza (University of Cambridge)

Representing Destruction: Medieval Russian Visualizations of Byzantine Iconoclasm

This paper investigates the place of Byzantine Iconoclasm in the historical memory of Medieval Rus' from a particular angle: through the visualizations of destroying images. The importance of icons in the Orthodox Church is demonstrated by the fact that the feast of the victory over Byzantine Iconoclasm is regarded not only as a simple celebration of sacred images, but rather, as its name, Triumph of Orthodoxy, suggests, as the feast of Orthodox dogmatic teaching as a whole. The theme of Byzantine Iconoclasm appears in Russian art from the sixteenth century onwards, representing destruction in two aspects.

Firstly, the monumental Illustrated Historical Chronicle devoted a long cycle to Byzantine Iconoclasm, not shying away from the depiction of annihilation of images itself. There is, however, another and more important aspect where destruction is missing: on the representations of the legend of a wonder-working icon of Mother of God, the icon is shown as indestructible. The sacred image escaped itself from

iconoclastic Byzantium by flying away to Rome, and after the restoration of images, in a similarly miraculous way, it flew back again to Constantinople. The investigation of the different visualizations of Byzantine Iconoclasm, either with the depiction of the destruction or that of the flying icon, will show how the appearance of these representations were intertwined with the emergence of the new Russian imperial ideology in which Russian Tsars were perceived as heirs to the Byzantine Orthodox and Iconophile Emperors.

Emily Pegues (The Courtauld/ National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.)

'To die for an ideal': Three Wars, One Retable, and the Foundations of a Belgian History of Art,

Belgian art history was born out of war. The French Revolution caused churches in the country to be razed and their contents dispersed, with works falling out of worship and into art collections. Successive invasions during World Wars I and II obliterated art on the front lines through deliberate atrocities or collateral damage. Archivists and historians, motivated by patriotic fervour to preserve treasured landmarks and documents recording centuries of culture, produced encyclopaedic monographs and mounted exhibitions, often with a strong nationalistic bent. These issues of survival and destruction, of nationalism and historiography, are essential to the study of Brussels-based sculptor Jan Borreman (active c. 1479-1520). Regarded by his contemporaries as 'die beste meester beeldsnyder'—'the best master sculptor'—for his monumental commissions for the dukes of Burgundy and other prestigious patrons, today Borreman is known only to specialists because of the loss that befell many of his works via iconoclasm and war, and the difficulty of attributing unsigned works to him where archival documents have been destroyed. Indeed Borreman might not be known at all but for the endeavours of two scholars whose lives spanned the major conflicts of Belgian history, Edward van Even (1821-1905) and Joseph de Borchgrave d'Altena (1895-1975).

Van Even and Borchgrave d'Altena each published studies of Borreman's masterwork, the *Saint George retable*, which both interpreted through a lens of contemporary nationalism. Their efforts preserved the eventful history of a major work of Northern Renaissance sculpture which, from the French Revolution to the 1946 bombing of the Brussels museum, stayed always a lucky step ahead of disaster as buildings housing it were destroyed. Through a case study of the *Saint George retable* and their scholarship, we can consider the foundations of Belgian art history and explore how Borreman himself is a story of loss and survival: how do we assess a major artist whose omission from art history derives from accidents of fortune rather than artistic merit?

Naomi Billingsley (University of Manchester)

Knock, Knock, William Blake's Here: Creative Conflict in Blake's Illustrations of Edward Young's Night Thoughts

Between *c.*1795-97 William Blake created a series of designs illustrating the (then) popular religious poem *Night Thoughts* (1742-46), by Edward Young for the publisher Richard Edwards. Edwards' ambition was to publish a four-volume edition of the poem with about two hundred engravings and Blake produced 537 designs in watercolour of which he engraved 43 for the first volume (the remaining volumes were never realised). The commission by far surpassed previous projects undertaken by Blake, and its influence is evident in his subsequent works. However, Blake found much in Young's

text to which he objected (particularly the poem's paternalistic emphasis on the Father), and there is an antagonistic dynamic between the poem and many of Blake's illustrations.

Faced with the problem of illustrating a text with which he frequently disagreed, Blake found innovative solutions which recast, modify or subvert Young's imagery. Although this tension is well recognised in general terms in discussion of these designs, many of the illustrations remain under-explored. This paper focuses on one such example: the antepenultimate design in the watercolour series, in which Blake takes his subject from Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." Naomi Billingsley will argue that this design, which occupies a key position in the sequence, can be read as an icon for Blake's illustration project, not only depicting Christ as an apocalyptic agent, but also representing Blake's own knocking on the door of Young's poem – an emblem of the apocalyptic, creative conflict which Blake's designs engender on Young's poem.

Anna Messner (University of Munich)

In Search of Jewish Art and Identity. The Munich Artist Rudolf Ernst (1896-1942)

In the context of Anna Messner's Master of Arts thesis at the University of Munich in 2011 she worked on the life and work of the forgotten Munich artist Rudolf Ernst. The starting point of her research was the inheritance of the philosopher Schalom Ben-Chorin in the city archive of Munich, where she discovered letters and artworks of Rudolf Ernst, bearing witness to a lifetime friendship between Jerusalem and Munich. She set out on the trail of this forgotten artist, which led her from Munich via Paris to Israel where Rudolf Ernst's inheritance is kept today, either in museum archives or private collections. The material of her research revealed the rich artwork and tragic biography of an artist whose promising career was ended abruptly and fell into oblivion due to the incidents of history.

In this paper she would like to concentrate on Rudolf Ernst's search for Jewish art and identity under the National Socialist regime.

Rudolf Ernst was born in 1896 in Munich as son of a Jewish family. At the age of 7 he was baptized and his Jewish identity did not play any role in his life until the year 1933. After his education at the School for Arts and Crafts in 1925 he was established successfully in the Munich art scene. His marriage to Lotte Schönberg, niece of the composer Arnold Schönberg, opened the doors to Munich intellectual circles. In those first years Rudolf Ernst dedicated his paintings to colourful still lifes, portraits and landscapes in the style of post-impressionism. In the medium of woodcut he created scenes showing the fascination of everyday life in the metropolis, reminiscent in form and content of the expressionist artist group "Die Brücke".

The takeover of power by the National Socialists in 1933 marks an abrupt rift in the life and work of Rudolf Ernst. The violent pressure from outside led to a change in his consciousness and he started to concern himself with his Jewish identity. Within the institutional frame of the "Jüdische Kulturbund" he and his artist friends founded a Jewish puppet theatre showing plays about the Jewish milieu. Had he vehemently denied his Jewish identity in former years he now pointed out the importance of a relationship between art and religion in his art theory texts. His awareness of his Jewish identity is also reflected in his artworks. Besides works that show scenes of Jewish everyday life, he created a woodcut picture bible reminiscent of contemporary Jewish artists like Jakob Steinhardt and Ephraim Moses Lilien. This picture bible reflects in an impressive and metaphoric manner his search for and his return to his Jewish roots.

In letters to his friend Schalom Ben-Chorin Rudolf Ernst tells of his flight with his family to Jugoslavya in 1938. Threatened again by the invasion of German troops Rudolf Ernst committed suicide in 1942. His life and work fell into oblivion.

The biography and artwork of Rudolf Ernst reflects in a practical manner the theoretical discourse about the term and definition of "Jewish Art" in the context of art history as well as the fate of a Jewish artist under the National Socialist Regime. Can we define Rudolf Ernst's work as "Jewish Art" before 1933? After all, he denies his Jewish identity and dedicates his artworks to profane subjects. Furthermore, which role does the violent rift of the year 1933 play regarding his self-definition, his identity and his creation of art? Is it possible to declare his art as "Jewish Art" after the year 1933? Is Rudolf Ernst now a "Jewish Artist" *per definitionem*, as he starts from now on to concern himself with his Jewish identity in his life and artwork? Which role do rifts, often caused by outer circumstances, play in the biography of artists regarding their creation of art and their search for identity?

Lieke Wijnia (Tilburg University*)*

Religion's Reclaim of Contemporary Art: The Vatican at the 2013 Venice Biennale

Theological and religious conflicts can be an impetus for new approaches to the arts. An interesting case in point is the Vatican pavilion at the 2013 Venice Biennale. It sheds light on the way the Vatican attempts to position itself in an ever transforming and not necessarily welcoming world. The Vatican phrases this as an attempt to fix a broken marriage between art and faith. Both the Vatican and the contemporary art world demonstrate a search for whether and how to fix this broken marriage. The art world shows a renewed attention for transcendence and aesthetics and the Vatican attempts to seize momentum to explore new visual languages to formulate contemporary takes on theology.

Looking at the Biennale pavilion results in at least three lines of inquiry: 1) how the Vatican builds on the tradition of the church as a successful commissioner and finds transformed ways of positioning itself; 2) how the Vatican reaches out to contemporary artists, despite – or because of – the reciprocal friction; and 3) how the artistic turn to aesthetics of the last decades, reiterating art's experiential character, gives the Vatican a visual language to work with.

Despite this latter point, the presentation to contemporary audiences and artists remains a challenge. By employing the notion of *creation* in the pavilion, the Vatican found a way to address both artistic and religious languages in their Biennale pavilion. Ultimately, this paper explores how the notion of religion is approached and framed through the artists and artworks selected for the Biennale pavilion, which is in turn related to the Vatican's aim of repositioning itself in the contemporary art world.