

Art of the Invisible

An interdisciplinary conference at The Courtauld Institute of Art exploring art's relationship with the invisible

Friday 19 October 2018

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

9.15am – 7.00pm (with registration from 8.45am)



Guercino, *Seated Figure of St. Jerome* (detail), pen and ink on paper, 1626, The Courtauld Gallery, London.

'He even painted things that cannot be represented ...', Pliny eulogized Apelles in his *Naturalis historia*. 'How can we with mortal eyes contemplate this image whose celestial splendour the host of heaven presumes not to behold?', asks a Byzantine hymn dedicated to the celebrated *Image of Edessa*. Cennino Cennini, in the first chapter of his *Libro dell'arte*, writes that painting '...calls for imagination, and skill of hand, in order to discover things not seen, hiding themselves under the shadow of natural objects, and to fix them with the hand, presenting to plain sight what does not actually exist.' In her 1949 essay *Some memories of Predada: Picabia and Duchamp*, Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia tried to summarise the art of her era: 'It would seem ... that in every field, the principal direction of the 20th century was the attempt to capture the "nonperceptible".'

Art has been preoccupied with the invisible before, between, and beyond these disparate yet kindred statements. One of artists' greatest challenges is and has been representing the invisible subject, in its many guises. Artists working in media based on perception, such as painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, and installation, must devise strategies to visualise the invisible: It is a foundational paradox of art. *Art of the Invisible* investigates artistic strategies for the invisible, across disciplinary, chronological, geographical, and medial boundaries. This interdisciplinary conference brings together a variety of speakers to examine the problems and strategies for visualising the invisible, providing answers across these boundaries.

Organised by Dr Joost Joustra (The National Gallery)

Art of the Invisible

Programme



8.45 - 9.15am

Registration (Front Hall)

9.15-9.30am

Opening remarks: Joost Joustra

9.30 – 10.30am

Session 1

Christopher Lakey (Johns Hopkins University):

At the Limits of Visibility: Ghiberti's Tomb of Leonardo Dati and Theories of Relief

Hannah Wiemer (Humboldt University/Max Planck Institute for the History of Science):

Teaching Invisibility: The Camouflage Classes at the *New Bauhaus* in Chicago during World War II

10.30 – 12.00am

Session 2

Eva Wilson (Freie Universität Berlin):

Virtual Images

Vendela Grundell (Stockholm University):

Seeing More or Less: Troubled Sight and Inner Vision in Photographs by the Visually Impaired

Matthew MacKisack (University of Exeter Medical School):

Internal Visibility: On Differential Imagery Experience and Artistic Production

12.00-1.00pm

LUNCH (provided for speakers & chairs only)

1.00-2.00pm

Session 3

Raphael Rosenberg (University of Vienna):

The Amimetic Strategy of Visualizing the Invisible

Edward A. Vazquez (Middlebury College):

Forming the Invisible: Materialities of Blankness in the Work of Wolfgang Tillmans and Thomas Demand



THE
COURTAULD
Institute of Art

The Sackler
Research
Forum

2.00-3.30pm

Session 4

Sarah M. Griffin (University of Oxford):

Visualising the Cosmos: Reconstructing a Diagram of Opicinus de Canistris (1296-c. 1352)

Chloë Reddaway (Centre for Arts and The Sacred, King's College London):
Strange Indications of the Invisible in Christian Painting

Sarah C. Schaefer (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee):

The Invisible Hand: Gustave Doré's *God Creating Light* and the Economics of Modern Religious Imagery

3.30-4.00pm

REFRESHMENT BREAK

4.00-5.30pm

Session 5

Itay Sapir (Université du Québec à Montréal/ Freie Universität Berlin):

Visualizing the Invisible Instant of Death around 1600

Sophie Morris (University College London):

The Hercules Experiment: Mobility and Muscular Motion in Late Seventeenth-Century London

Stephanie O'Rourke (University of St Andrews):

Philippe de Louthembourg's Magnetic Arts

5.30-6.30pm

Session 6

Grace Aneiza Ali (Tisch School of the Arts, New York University):

Envisioning Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Men*

Theodore Gordon (University of Sussex):

Overlooking the Invisible: Video on Women with AIDS

6.30-7.00pm

Closing remarks

Hugo Dalton (Artist)

7.00-8.00pm

Reception (Please join us for drinks in the Front Hall)