

THE FRICK COLLECTION

FULL CIRCLE

THE MEDAL IN ART HISTORY

A Symposium in Honor of Stephen K. Scher

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2017

Music Room | 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Attendance is free with [online registration](#).

Abstracts

Making Prints, Making Medals

Susan Dackerman, Visiting Scholar, Getty Research Institute

This paper explores resonances between printmaking and medal making in early sixteenth-century Germany. As multiples, they share methods of propagation from matrices (dies, molds, casts, woodblocks, copperplates, etc.) usually comprised of materials (stone, wood, copper) different from their final form (paper and metal). In almost all cases, their manufacture is the result of pressure. What does it mean to make meaning through impression?

'Inventing' Identity: Medals and Heroic Portraits in the Italian Renaissance

Ilaria Bernocchi, Doctoral Candidate, University of Cambridge

Presenting a range of examples, including works by Leone Leoni and Agnolo Bronzino, this paper explores how medals and heroic portraits, in which the sitter is in the guise of a god or a saint, reflected the Renaissance investigation of the layered nature of identity. Artists and patrons staged public ambitions, social status, and intellectual and ethical concerns through visual metaphors in various media.

THE FRICK COLLECTION

1 East 70th Street
New York, NY 10021

Michelangelo's Portrait Medal: The Penitent Artist in His Final Years

Emily Fenichel, Assistant Professor, Florida Atlantic University

The interpretation of Leone Leoni's portrait medal of Michelangelo has been the subject of great debate. This paper argues that Michelangelo exploited the singular qualities of portrait medals to help craft an object that spoke to his situation as an aged artist navigating the Counter-Reformation and, as such, offers one approach to understanding his late period.

Egentium Votis: Francesco Riccardi, Giovacchino Fortini, and the Art of Self-Promotion

Jeffrey Collins, Professor, Bard Graduate Center

Sculptor Giovacchino Fortini's 1715 medal commemorating Florence's Palazzo Medici-Riccardi is a masterpiece of baroque design and of strategic self-promotion. This paper investigates the medal's relation to previous architectural encomia, including Marchese Riccardi's choice to present his renovated palace less as a dynastic seat than as a form of civic charity.

Papal Medals and the Interplay of Prints, Paintings, and Numismatics

Martin Hirsch, Curator, Staatliche Münzsammlung, Munich

Papal architectural medals were commissioned continuously in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They are unparalleled in quality and number. This paper examines the visual language of those medals, developed through an interplay with prints and paintings to find elegant solutions for the presentation of great buildings on a small circular surface.

Portrayal and Commemoration: Medal Engravers at the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture

Hannah Williams, Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow, Queen Mary University of London

Thomas Bernard's medal of the sculptor Antoine Coysevox presents an intriguing object through which to explore the status of medal engravers in the institutional world of the French Academy. On the medal's reverse, a personification of sculpture carving a marble bust also invites consideration of the implicit paragone between medals and sculpture as arts of portrayal and commemoration.

Kneeling Man in Chains: Recasting Invisibility and Absence in the Wedgwood Anti-Slavery Medallion

Iris Moon, Visiting Professor, Pratt Institute

Invisibility and absence structured discourses on the black body in Enlightenment thought and are present in the Wedgwood anti-slavery medallion. Unlike gold medals featuring the stately image of sovereigns, this humble jasperware medallion portrays a kneeling slave in chains who asks us: “Am I not a man and a brother?”

“The Revival of the Medal” – Medals and Plaquettes at the Origin of Alfred Lichtwark’s Sculpture Collection at the Hamburger Kunsthalle

Anna Seidel, Independent Scholar, Hamburg

In building the sculpture collection of Hamburg’s Kunsthalle, its first director paid particular attention to medals, especially by French artists. In his practice and publication of “The Revival of the Medal” (1897) he probed questions of medals’ art historical context, processes of making, and display. This paper suggests a re-evaluation of Lichtwark’s achievements in an international context.

History in Relief

Emerson Bowyer, Searle Associate Curator of European Painting and Sculpture, Art Institute of Chicago

This paper explores the contentious career of a nineteenth-century copying device. Invented in France during the early 1830s, the “medal-engraving machine” produced startlingly detailed, trompe l’oeil prints after medals and coins. The machine and its products were a *succès de scandale*, one that climaxed in an 1836 British parliamentary inquiry focused on the nebulous issue of “visual distortion.”