



Late Nineteenth Century Foreign Art Collecting in Italy Creating visions, exporting tastes

Studientag
April 5, 2013

Organized by Eva-Maria Troelenberg and Irene Campolmi
Max-Planck Research Group "Objects in the Contact Zone: The Cross- Cultural Lives of Things"

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut
Palazzo Grifoni Budini Gattai, Via dei Servi 51, 50122 Florence

*"We make time tangible by arresting it"*¹
George Kubler, (1967), *Style and Representation of Historical Time*

By the end of the nineteenth century, Italian cities like Florence, Venice and Rome were considered perfect settings where foreign art 'amateurs' and collectors could have 'life-enhancing' experiences. Following Kubler's theories in 'The Shape of Time', this Studientag offers a different perspective on foreign collecting in Italy between late 19th and early 20th century. It aims to explore some of the implications that made the art collections gathered in these cities during this specific time so peculiar and unique. These 'ensembles' of heterogeneous objects showed that art collecting was no longer simply a divertissement or a means to create microcosms. Differently, the domestic contexts of villas, palaces or gardens, where these art collections were displayed, allowed foreign 'amateurs' and collectors to bind themselves and private lives to the historiography and mythology that had characterized Italy along the centuries. Art dealers, such as Giovanni Bastianini or Stefano Bardini in Florence, but also Anglo-American art collectors who travelled across the country, like the Layards, Isabella Stewart Gardner, the Rosses, Charles Loeser, Frederick Stibbert, the Berensons and the Actons, considered art collecting and its domestic displaying, not only as means to express their personalities and tastes, but also as a tool to forge new historical and artistic visions. Nineteenth century foreign art collections in Italy became symbols of a highly qualified collecting taste all over the world, and established visual models to display art collections of heterogeneous objects.

¹ George Kubler, (1967), *Style and Representation of Historical Time*, «Annals of the New York Academy of Science», 138, 2, 2, p.853.

Program

2.00 pm: Eva-Maria Troelenberg, Studentag's Opening and Introduction

The Past is a Foreign Country?

2.20 pm: Tina Öcal

Forgeries as cross-cultural objects of the contact zone. Giovanni Bastianini and the art market in Florence during the Risorgimento

2.50 pm: Irene Campolmi and Francesca Baldry

Notes on the Actons' Display. American and Italian art collections and the Actons' taste

3.20 pm : Coffee break

3.40 pm: Rossella Mamoli Zorzi

From Venice to Boston: objects in transit in the collection of Isabella Stewart Gardner

4.10 pm: Elisabetta Mezzani

Fictional and real life art collectors in Edith Wharton's world

4.40 pm: Lynn Catterson

American Collecting, Stefano Bardini & the Art of Supply in late 19th Century Florence

5.00 pm: Final Discussion and Concluding remarks

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