

CFP:

Holy children/Liminal bodies

The status and materiality of infancy in early modern visual culture

(International workshop supported by SACRIMA – The Normativity of Sacred Images in Early Modern Europe @ LMU Munich, 30 November-1 December)

Whether as chubby cherubs, playful toddlers or suffering infants, children have pervaded our visual cultures since antiquity. Instilled with intrinsic emotional connotations and a distinctive aesthetic ambiguity, images of children possess diachronic, transcultural and anthropological relevance. However, Christianity's attachment to a divine child has catalyzed the reception and visual dissemination of images of children in various forms (little angels, Infants Jesus and St John the Baptist, the Holy Innocents, child saints etc.).

How did Christian visual cultures appropriate and transmute images of children, and how did they transmit and/or impose them to other cultures? How have images of children, *putti* and holy infants migrated in time and in space? What are the aesthetic values, the emotional effects and the cultural significance of these ubiquitous images? While social historians have explored the changes in status and perception of childhood during the early modern period, an extensive exploration of the visual relevance of this theme in sacred imagery has yet to emerge from art historical studies. Taking the seminal studies by Leo Steinberg on the sexuality of Christ and by Charles Dempsey on the *putto* as fundamental points of departure, this workshop seeks to explore the visualization and materiality of infancy in early modern sacred art in different medias and from a cross-cultural perspective.

We particularly welcome proposals that look into:

- Polycentric devotions and global children;
- Children in agony and the opposition between tenderness and violence;
- The representation of the infantile body: tenderness, sensuousness and ambiguity;
- Holy children in contact zones;
- Artistic media and the materiality of children;
- Adornment, framing and the transmigration of the *putti*.

Please send a proposal of maximum 500 words and a brief CV to sacrima@kunstgeschichte.uni-muenchen.de by 20 July 2017. Abstracts in English, German, Italian, French and Spanish are accepted, but the main language of the workshop will be English. Speakers will be notified by 27 July 2017. Travel costs and accommodation in Munich will be covered.

Organization:

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