

- Call for Papers -

COLOUR & SPACE

Interfaces of Ancient Architecture and Sculpture



The "Pompeian House" of Prince Napoléon-Bonaparte during a theatrical performance, oil painting, Gustave Boulanger, 1861 (Paris, Musée d'Orsay)

10th International Round Table on Polychromy in Ancient Sculpture and Architecture
11-13 November 2020, Berlin, James-Simon-Gallery, Museumsinsel

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Antikensammlung & German Archaeological Institute Berlin

- Call for Papers -

The investigation of ancient polychromy has seen considerable progress since the first Polychromy Roundtable at the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen in 2009. Back then, the focus was mainly on the observation of colour traces (mostly on sculpture), the establishment of analytical and methodological protocols for their analysis, as well as the notorious problem of reconstructing colour schemes from highly fragmentary evidence. Over the last years, however, the venue, along with the field of polychromy, underwent a significant transformation. Data sets on colour finds, although far from being sufficient, have reached a quantity that allows for more qualified statements on colour schemes while increasingly revealing the variety of applied rendering techniques and their highly sophisticated nature. New scientific studies have opened the way for drawing comparisons and analogies across classes of monuments. In contrast to the traditional focus on the colour coating of marble, recent research also considers a larger variety of material and techniques for achieving colour, or rather, surface effects, including metals (bronze, gilding), terracotta, coloured marbles, precious stones, ivory, or incrustations with glass, shells etc. In all this, the interface between sculpture and architecture as well as synaesthetic interdependencies across artistic genres are becoming more apparent. Against this background, one may say that the field now has a chance to resume, with new empirical tools, some of the questions on colour and space, which scholars of the 19th century like Gottfried Semper or Carl Bötticher have already discussed.

For the 10th Polychromy Round Table our suggestion is to investigate the topic of “Colour & Space”. In looking at the use of colour in its spatial contexts, we hope to encourage cross-disciplinary analysis and interpretation of both new and already published data. With the term “colour” we mean not only colour coating (paint) but also the intrinsic colours of materials as well as all surface effects, which manipulate the perception of space and form (such as polishing, texturing, gilding etc.). “Space” may refer to closed interior architectural spaces or to exterior facades as well as urban space and its communication through colour use. It can, however, also be understood as the three-dimensional form of sculpture and the interaction of its colouring with the space around it and, for that matter, with the beholder. In short, we encourage data driven and multi-perspective investigations of the spatial dimension of polychromy on architecture and/or sculpture. Possible topics to be addressed include:

- The colour rendering of both statues and their spatial (architectural) settings
- Colours and materials as identifiers of spatial functions and/or symbolisms (colour coding)
- Manipulation of light (artificial and natural) and the impact of light conditions on both technical and visual strategies of surfacing
- Reflections, highlights (e.g. gilding) and their perception
- The manipulation of form through colour (e.g. shading, depth, illusionary painting, texturing)
- Ephemeral colour elements (textiles, furniture, plants) and their interaction with the surfaces of architecture and/or sculpture
- The notion of colour and space in the written evidence and as part of theory
- Methodological challenges in reconstructing the spatial setting of colours
- The history of research on ancient colour use in spatial contexts.

In the tradition of previous Round Tables, this meeting should also continue to be a platform for latest research and developments in the field. Therefore, a separate session will be dedicated to “News from current research”.

Papers should be no longer than 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of discussion. Abstracts (max. 400 words) indicating the title of your contribution, a brief summary, authors (and co-authors, if any) and affiliation(s) should be sent to 10thpolychromyroundtable@gmail.com by 15 March 2020. Please also indicate if your contribution refers to the section “Colour & Space” or “News from current research”. A scientific committee will review the submissions and inform you on the decision by Mid-April 2020. Please note that the organizers will not be able to cover speakers' costs of travel or accommodation to the meeting.