

Call for Papers
International Conference in Rome and Carrara
5-8 June 2012

**“Carrara Marble and the Low Countries,
Late Middle Ages-2012”**

Organised by

The Academia Belgica, Roma
The Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome
The Low Countries Sculpture Society, Brussels
and a series of Belgian and Dutch universities (tbc)

Call for Papers

Potential speakers are invited to submit a proposal of maximum 200 words with a brief CV (no more than a few lines) **by Friday 25 November, 10 am** to the conference organisers Emile van Binnebeke (e.vanbinnebeke@kmsg-mrah.be) and Léon Lock (leon.lock@asro.kuleuven.be).

Scientific Committee

Dr Emile van Binnebeke, Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels
Geneviève Bresc-Bautier, Musée du Louvre, Paris
Dr Helena Bussers, former director, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels
Dr Christina Ceulemans, director a.i., Royal Institute of Cultural Heritage, Brussels
Prof Dr Thomas Coomans, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Prof Dr Krista De Jonge, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Dr Maarten Delbeke, Universiteit Gent / Universiteit Leiden
Prof Dr Leo De Ren, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
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Prof Dr Eric Groessens, formerly Natural History Museum, Brussels
Dr Valérie Herremans, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen
Dr Eloy Koldewij, Rijksdienst voor Cultureel Erfgoed, Amersfoort
Prof Dr Ype Koopmans, Open University, Heerlen / Museum voor Moderne Kunst, Arnhem
Prof Dr Michael Kwakkelstein, director, Nederlands Interuniversitair Kunsthistorisch Instituut, Firenze
Dr Christophe Loir, Université Libre de Bruxelles
Dr Léon Lock, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Prof Dr Piet Lombaerde, Arthesis/Universiteit Antwerpen
Menno Meewis, Middelheim Museum, Antwerpen
Dr Jennifer Montagu, Honorary Fellow, Warburg Institute, University of London
Dr Sophie Mouquin, université de Lille III/Ecole du Louvre, Paris
Prof em Dr Werner Oechslin, formerly Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH), Zürich
Wim Oers, WENK Sint-Lucas, Brussels-Gent/University of Oxford
Prof Dr Bernard Stolte, director, Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome, Roma
Pier Terwen, independent conservator and historian of sculpture, Leiden
Dr Jan Teeuwisse, director, museum Beelden aan Zee / Sculptuur Instituut, Scheveningen
Dr Francis Tourneur, Pierres et Marbres de Wallonie asbl
and others to be confirmed

Theme

The present international conference wishes to discuss the extraction of Carrara marble, the trade of it to the Low Countries and its use in architecture and sculpture in the Low Countries, from the Late Middle Ages to today.

Status Quaestionis. The history of the use of Carrara marble in the Low Countries has principally been written in the form of piecemeal studies or on the occasion of specific uses in architecture and sculpture, rather than as a subject in itself. These writings generally remained superficial both on a technical and a historical level, and rarely grasped the importance of the field of material studies. A review of this situation is sorely needed in a field dominated by literature written nearly exclusively in Italy (e.g. the major exhibition in Rome *I marmi colorati della Roma imperiale*, 2002), without any connections to the Low Countries, despite the fact that the Low Countries formed a major trading partner since about 1600. Inversely, studies in Belgium have generally been focussed on local marbre extraction, commerce and use, e.g. the exhibitions *Pouvoir(s) de Marbres* (2004) and the conference at Versailles *Les Wallons à Versailles* (2007).

The conference attempts to offer a critical review of this situation and to foster cross-fertilisation within a wide range of domains, from the Renaissance to the present day, in order to establish Carrara marble as a subject worthy of study in its own right.

The conference will start with a historical part, encouraging new research on the trading connections between Carrara and the Low Countries, following the work of amongst others Frits Scholten (1993) and Marie-Christine Engels (1997). It will further link historical studies with both art historical and material studies, in the tradition of that engaged in by the Royal Museums of Art and History (*Bulletin* vol. 53/2, 1982), but also following studies such as: Ype Koopmans, *Muurvast en gebeiteld* (1994), Frits Scholten, *Sumptuous Memories* (2003), Valérie Herremans (ed.), *Heads on Shoulders. Portrait Busts in the Low Countries 1600-1800* (2008), Piet Lombaerde (ed.), *Innovation and Experience in Early Baroque in the Southern Netherlands. The Case of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp* (2008), Léon Lock, *South Netherlandish Sculpture. Art and Manufacture c.1600-1750* (diss., 2008), Sandra Beresford (ed.) *“Sognando il marmo”. Cultura e commercio del marmo tra Carrara, Gran Bretagna e Impero (1820-1920 circa)* (2009), *Michelangelo’s Madonna and Child in Bruges. Context and Reception* (conference Firenze 2010).

The material studies aspect of the conference will concern the mapping of technical and technological developments in the quarrying and treatment of marble, all placed within exchanges between Italy and Belgium. These two countries boast a tradition in marble quarrying that goes back to antique Roman times and that culminated in the nineteenth century with the invention of marble extraction techniques used throughout the world today. Examples include marvels of interior architecture such as the Carrara and other marble cladding in the dining room of the castle of Corroy-le-Château (c.1848).

The conference also hopes to encourage material studies of Carrara marble applications in the Low Countries following theoretical and practical models explored in Italy in the last few decades, particularly those concerning Michelangelo, Bernini and Canova; and inversely those of conservation/restoration techniques and philosophies explored in the Netherlands and Belgium (e.g. the projects of the tomb monuments of William the Silent and Admiral Tromp)

As such, the conference intends to obtain a greater understanding of the use of Carrara marble in the sculpture and architecture of the Low Countries, while studying the success factors of this marble, those that stimulated it and brought it to such a development. One might even tentatively speak of a Carrara marble “revolution” in the Low Countries (from about 1600 onwards), completely

changing the practice and perception of both sculptural and architectural endeavour in the Low Countries, a phenomenon that remains undervalued and understudied.

The conference will also have a natural follow-on with the one organised in September 2012 by the Musée provincial des Arts anciens at Namur on the extraction and use of Belgian marble, particularly that of Saint-Remy.

Possible issues to be addressed (non-limitative list):

International exchanges between Carrara and the Low Countries

- The trade in Carrara marble
- The Low Countries communities in Carrara, Livorno and Genova
- Technical innovation between Carrara and Belgium: the example of the large scale marble decoration at the castle of Corroy-le-Château
- Low Countries sculptors in Carrara

The introduction of Carrara marble in Belgium and the Netherlands and its flourishing in the 17th century

- The Master of Rimini
- The Michelangelo *Madonna & Child* in Bruges
- Conrat Meit/Jacques Du Broeucq/Pietro Torrigiani
- The “Marble Temple” in Antwerp, the Jesuit church
- Rubens and marble
- The town hall of Amsterdam (today royal palace)

The social prestige of Carrara marble

- The prestige of the association of Carrara white and Belgian black marble
- Carrara marble in Antwerp-style baroque altarpieces
- The imitation of Carrara marble in altarpieces
- The imitation of Carrara marble in historic interiors
- The imitation of Carrara marble in plaster sculpture
- Portraiture in Carrara marble

Carrara marble as a vehicle for classical ideals

- Carrara marble vs. alabaster in antique-style architecture of the Low Countries
- The collecting of antique and antique-style sculpture in the Low Countries
- Neoclassicism, Canova, Thorwaldsen and their epigones between Rome and the Low Countries,
- Troubadour neo-gothic and Carrara marble

Carrara marble in the third world power, Belgium (c.1880-1914)

- As reflected in the collections of the Royal Museums
- The Brussels Cemetery at Laken
- The Brussels courts of justice
- Victor Horta and Carrara marble
- The interiors of the Palais Stoclet and Carrara marble
- Carrara marble in Brussels architecture 1880-1914

Carrara marble in the Netherlands (c.1880-1914)

- The Peace Palace, Den Haag

Historic Carrara marble floors

- Renaissance to Baroque
- The techniques and tradition of single-slab marble hallways
- Carrara within mosaic floors
- Sol Lewitt (Brussels Royal Opera House)

Low Countries artists and architects at home and abroad

- Laurent-Benoît Dewez
- Henry van de Velde's Hohenhof
- Hilde van Sumeren
- Aart Schonk
- Tom Pucky
- ...

Background

The conference will be a collaborative effort between a large number of institutions in Italy and the Low Countries, supported by the highest authorities in each country. It also marks the tenth anniversary of the creation of the Low Countries Sculpture Society and it will constitute a follow-up from the study days it held in Belgium about the extraction and use of Belgian marble in 2003, 2006 and 2009.

Programme

Individual arrival in Rome

Monday 4 June 2012, 9.00-18.00 and Tuesday 5 June 2012, 8.45-17.00

Pre-conference excursions in Rome: *Galleries in Roman palaces and villas c.1500-1830*

Tuesday 5 June 2012, 18.00-

Roma, Keynote Lectures

Night in Rome

Wednesday 6 June 2012, 9.00-18.00

Roma, first day of conference

Night in Rome

Thursday 7 June 2012

Morning: transfer to Carrara

Afternoon: conference excursion: *The extraction and transport of Carrara marble from Classical Antiquity to today*

Evening: Keynote Lectures

Night in Carrara

Friday 8 June 2012, 9.00-16.30

Second day of conference

End of conference and individual return