



ESNA
european society for nineteenth-century art



City of Sin: Representing the Urban Underbelly in the 19th Century
19-20 May 2016, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

“The pageant of fashionable life and the thousands of floating existences – criminals and kept women – which drift about in the underworld of a great city [...] all prove to us that we have only to open our eyes to recognize our heroism [...]. The life of our city is rich in poetic and marvelous subjects.”
– Charles Baudelaire, Salon of 1846

In conjunction with the exhibitions *Easy Virtue: Prostitution in French Art, 1850-1910* (Van Gogh Museum) and *Breitner: Girl in Kimono* (Rijksmuseum), ESNA (European Society for Nineteenth-Century Art) organizes its annual two-day international conference around the topic of the 'urban underbelly' and its depiction in nineteenth-century art. Both exhibitions explore the depiction of women in the margins of urban life – the prostitute, the model, working (class) women, and the women of the entertainment industry. The conference seeks to broaden this perspective by exploring topics concerned with all kinds of practitioners and practices considered morally deviant. Ranging from prostitution and pornography to criminals and their pursuers, from gambling and substance abuse to dandies and bohemians, from the homeless and the urban poor to the insane and the ill: *City of Sin* will cover urban marginality in the widest sense.

The conference takes as its motto Baudelaire's 1846 call to artists to open their eyes to the darker side of nineteenth-century metropolitan life, not usually a topic of serious art historical study. In this sense, the conference aims to form a counter-canon that will provide a fuller picture of the 'painting of modern life'. Rather than the daylight scenes featuring the typical flâneur so well known to the broader public, the conference will focus on the depiction of things that occur in the shadows.

Registration

Prices: Normal registration: €80 | Student registration: €30

Online registration for the conference is now open.

You will find the registration form on the [Rijksmuseum website](#)

FULL PROGRAMME

Day 1 – Thursday 19 May

- 10.00-10.30 REGISTRATION / COFFEE & TEA
- 10.30-10.45 Welcome by Taco Dibbits, Director of Collections, Rijksmuseum
Introduction by Rachel Esner, University of Amsterdam | ESNA
- 10.45-11.15 **The Van Gogh Museum Lecture – Private pleasures: Prostitution in prints**
- Fleur Roos Rosa de Carvalho, Curator of prints & drawings, Van Gogh Museum
- 11.15-12.30 **Session 1. Revealing the invisible** (Chair: Marjan Sterckx, Ghent University)
Visualizing obscenity in Paris: Manet's *Déjeuner, Olympia* and *Nana* as markers of pornographic commerce and censorship
- Lauren S. Weingarden, Department of Art History, Florida State University
Evidence and identity in the Register Bb3
- David Ogawa, Department of Visual Arts, Union College, Schenectady
Not to be seen: Hidden aspects of prostitution through its representations
- Claire Dupin, independent scholar
- 12.30-14.30 LUNCH + VISIT TO THE BREITNER EXHIBITION (RIJKSMUSEUM)
- 14.30-15.45 **Session 2. Vice and illness** (Chair: Jan Dirk Baetens, Radboud University | ESNA)
Gambling hells and the urban den of iniquity: Gaming, immigration, and American identity
- Andrew Haslit, University of Texas at Tyler
Illuminating addiction: Morphinomania in fin-de-siècle visual culture
- Natalia Angeles Vieyra, Temple University, Philadelphia
Vincent van Gogh and the illnesses of his time: From venereal disease to epilepsy
- Laura Prins, Van Gogh Museum
- 15.45-16.15 COFFEE + TEA

16.15-17.30 **Session 3. The city's fringes** (Chair: Jenny Reynaerts, Rijkmuseum | ESNA)

The urban underbelly's washboard abs: Strongman Eugen Sandow as an artist's model in Brussels 1887-1889

- Thijs Dekeukeleire, Ghent University

Max Klinger and the shadow side of Berlin

- Marsha Morton, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn

Documents of an unseen city: Heinrich Zille's early photographs and drawings of proletarian Berlin

- Pay Matthis Karstens, Technische Universität Berlin

18.00 DRINKS + VISIT TO THE EASY VIRTUE EXHIBITION (VAN GOGH MUSEUM)

Day 2 – Friday 20 May

10.00-10.15 Welcome by Axel Rüger, Director Van Gogh Museum

10.15-10.45 **The Rijksmuseum Lecture – Breitner's girls in kimono: 'Suspicious looking women in shameless postures'**

- Suzanne Veldink, Junior curator 19th-century paintings, Rijksmuseum

10.45-12.00 **Session 4. The aesthetics of prostitution** (Chair: Maite van Dijk, Van Gogh Museum | ESNA)

'L'Olympia faisandée': Meat as metaphor for the prostitute

- Allison Deutsch, University College London

Beauty on sale: Women in the margins of urban life in 19th-century Hungarian painting

- Réka Krasznai, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest

The prostitute as a subject in 19th-century Italian sculpture: Unexpected seeds of modernity

- Sharon Hecker, independent scholar

12.00-13.45 LUNCH + VISIT TO THE BREITNER EXHIBITION (RIJKSMUSEUM)

13.45-15.30 **Session 5. City of Darkness** (Chair: Mayken Jonkman, RKD | ESNA)

Screening of *De Steeg* by Jan Koelinga (Rotterdam, 1932) (introduction by Lisa Smit, ESNA)

Touring the dark city: The Paris catacombs in 19th-century visual culture

- Isabelle Havet, University of Delaware

Dark arts: Art in the clandestine cabaret in the Parisian fin de siècle: *Cabaret de l'Enfer et du Ciel*

- Juliet Simpson, Coventry University and Wolfson College, Oxford

15.30-16.00 COFFEE+TEA

16.00-16.20 **Behind the scenes of *Easy Virtue***

- Nienke Bakker, Curator Van Gogh Museum and co-curator of *Easy Virtue*

16.20-17.00 **Concluding keynote by Tamar Garb, Professor of the Department History of Art, University College London**

17.00-17.30 **Discussion** (Chair: Rachel Esner, University of Amsterdam | ESNA)

Organizing committee: Rachel Esner (University of Amsterdam); Jenny Reynaerts (Rijksmuseum Amsterdam); Lisa Smit (Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam)

Scientific committee: Nienke Bakker (Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam); Richard Thomson (University of Edinburgh); Marjan Sterckx (Ghent University); Rachel Esner (University of Amsterdam); Jenny Reynaerts (Rijksmuseum Amsterdam); Jan Dirk Baetens (Rijksuniversiteit Nijmegen); Mayken Jonkman (RKD); Maite van Dijk (Van Gogh Museum)

