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DECAY, LOSS,  
AND CONSERVATION  
IN ART HISTORY



BIBLIOTHECA HERTZIANA  
MAX-PLANCK-INSTITUT  
FÜR KUNSTGESCHICHTE

Call for applications  
Deadline: March 20, 2024

TOUCHED/RETOUCHED:  
PAPER ACROSS TIME (1400–1800)

THE PAPER PROJECT INITIATIVE,  
GETTY FOUNDATION

Rome, November 11–16, 2024

The Lise Meitner Group at the Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History and the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica in Rome invite applications for an intensive one-week, hands-on workshop for early career specialists in the field of prints and drawings. This is made possible with support from Getty through The Paper Project initiative.

**Objectives and Program**

The goal of the workshop is to provide object-based training to the next generation of curators in the graphic arts, with a focus on premodern practices of retouching. We take an expansive approach to the term “retouching” to encompass any discernible alterations carried out on drawings, prints, or their support after completion. Once identified, such alterations carry important repercussions: they change the way an object is cataloged, interpreted, and presented to the public; they influence choices about acquisition or deaccessioning; they shape decisions about conservation, affecting storage and treatment needs. Among drawing specialists, detecting and dating traces of retouching is considered to be largely a matter of tacit knowledge. The reconstruction of the chronological sequence of interventions via close looking or the help of diagnostic technologies is carried out on a daily basis in collections worldwide, yet this practice is often virtually inaccessible to outsiders.

This workshop is designed to provide a source of technical and material knowledge that will prove essential for drawing and print curators entering the field. By focusing on retouching and its interpretation, we intend to advance a materially layered understanding of paper objects that builds on recent scholarly literature while exploring a fundamental point of intersection between academic, curatorial, and conservation practices. The Hertziana leads (Francesca Borgo, Camilla Colzani, Alice Ottazzi) and ICG co-leads (Giorgio Marini and Gabriella Pace) will be joined by keynote speakers Carmen Bambach and Antony Griffiths and senior discussants Jonathan Bober, Hugo Chapman, and Catherine Goguel, among others.

During the first, virtual phase of the program, participants will present their own preliminary research on a selected drawing from the BHMPi's collections. This will lay the groundwork for the second, central segment: a week-long, in-person workshop in Rome, with senior experts from prominent European and North American graphic arts collections joining the cohort of instructors. Hands-on examination of works on paper both pre- and post-treatment, viewing exercises, and practical paper-marking experiences will take place at the BHMPi's and ICG's study rooms, at the Diagnostic Lab and Paper Conservation Department, at local archives, and in Fabriano, the largest paper production center of premodern Europe. Dedicated presentations



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on the most common forms of manipulation will cover collector's marks, highlighting and overdrawing, pricking and pouncing, framing and binding, hand-coloring, conservation decisions, and archiving and filing. The week will be followed by a remote capstone session and presentation of individual projects.

During the week in Rome, accommodation and travel expenses will be covered for all participants. Shared meals and a per diem will also be provided.

### Eligibility

This project is aimed at early career curators and academics with demonstrable interest and experience in the field of graphic art. Eligible candidates for application should hold a doctoral degree (earned within the past 10 years), be enrolled in a doctoral program, or possess a solid curatorial experience in graphic arts collections. A background in conservation is not a prerequisite. An active museum affiliation is preferable but not required. The working language is English. Knowledge of Italian is advantageous but not essential.

### Application process

Applications to participate in the workshop must be submitted with the following materials via the [online application portal](#) before March 20, 2024, 11:59 pm CEST:

- a cover letter describing current affiliations, responsibilities and work, future plans and ambitions, and an explanation of how participation in the program will contribute to the candidate's professional development;
- a proposed case study drawn from the [BHMPI](#) or [ICG](#) collections and its connection to the applicant's ongoing research concerns (500 words);
- a curriculum vitae that includes name, title, affiliation, postal and email address, citizenship and current country of residence (if different), languages spoken, education, publications, as well as name and contact details of two references

Questions about the program can be directed to [paperproject@biblhertz.it](mailto:paperproject@biblhertz.it).

### Project Funder

The Getty Foundation, The Paper Project initiative

### Hosting Institutions

Lise Meitner Group at the Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History (BHMPI)  
Istituto Centrale per la Grafica (ICG)

### Project Leads

Francesca Borgo  
Camilla Colzani  
Alice Ottazzi

### ICG Co-Leads

Giorgio Marini  
Gabriella Pace