

# Holy children, liminal bodies



The status and  
materiality of infancy  
in early modern  
visual culture

Donatello, *Putto with Tambourine*, 1429, from the baptismal font in the Siena Baptistery, Berlin, Bode-Museum  
bpk/Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, SMB/Jörg P. Anders

Starting from an investigation of the reinvention, the functions and the adaptations of the 'normative image' of the ancient putto in the Renaissance, this conference questions the multiform transmigration, variation, adaptation and use of images of children in early modern Europe. Whether as chubby cherubs, playful toddlers or suffering infants, children have in fact 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, children in limbo, etc.

While social historians have explored the changes in status and the 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. This workshop explores the visualization and materiality of infancy in early modern sacred art in different medias and from a cross-cultural perspective by asking the following questions: 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?

Papers explore the significance of images of putti and children in baptismal contexts; the liminal and structural function of images of infants and cherubs on the façades of hospitals, churches and other sacred spaces; the creation of violent images of infant martyrdom and the aggressive use of infant cults in contact zones; the visualization of emotions in relation to infancy and the ambiguous suspension of images of children between the sacred and the profane spheres in different media.

## Thursday 30 November 2017

ZENTRALINSTITUT FÜR KUNSTGESCHICHTE  
Katharina-von-Bora-Straße 10 | 80333 Munich  
Room 242

12.00	● Welcome
12.30 → 13.00	<b>Chiara Franceschini</b> LMU MÜNCHEN <b>Cloe Caverio</b> LMU MÜNCHEN Holy children, liminal bodies: an introduction
13.00 → 15.00	LIMINAL CHILDREN <b>Jasenska Gudelj</b> UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB The baptismal fonts held by putti: transmigration of the infantile forms between the Adriatic and the Alps  <b>Rachel E. Boyd</b> COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY Reflections of Charity: Andrea della Robbia's <i>Innocenti</i> Infants  <b>Giuseppe Bonaccorso</b> UNIVERSITÀ DI CAMERINO The tectonic simulation in the use of putti, angels, cherubs and seraphs in Francesco Borromini's architecture
15.00 → 15.30	● Coffee break
15.30 → 17.30	CHILD SAINTS IN CONTACT ZONES <b>Cloe Caverio</b> LMU MÜNCHEN Agony and Softness: The Crucified Holy Child of La Guardia  <b>Vuk Dautovic</b> UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE The Cult of the Holy Child from the Old Sarajevo Church  <b>Thomas Lentes</b> UNIVERSITÄT MÜNSTER Circumcision and Child's Empowerment
18.00 → 20.00	Visit Bayerisches Nationalmuseum
20.00	● Dinner

## Friday 1 December 2017

INSTITUT FÜR KUNSTGESCHICHTE, LMU  
Zentnerstraße 31 | 80798 Munich  
Room 007

9.00 → 11.00	EMOTIONS <b>Andrea Pearson</b> AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON Moralized Eroticism and the Depicted Christ Child in the Early Modern Netherlands  <b>Daniela Wagner</b> UNIVERSITÄT TÜBINGEN Senses and Silence in Representations of the infant John the Baptist and the Christ Child  <b>Francesca Alberti</b> UNIVERSITÉ FRANÇOIS-RABELAIS, TOURS Ridente Redentore
11.00 → 11.30	● Coffee break
11.30 → 13.30	HOLY / UNHOLY <b>Fabien Lacouture</b> UNIVERSITÉ PARIS 1 PANTHÉON-SORBONNE From Statues to Paintings: A Study of the Christ Child Standing in Early Modern Italian Art  <b>Pascale Charron</b> UNIVERSITÉ DE TOURS/CESR Representing a child saint at the end of the 15 <sup>th</sup> century: the case of the Saint Cyricus statue of Jarzé (Maine-et-Loire, France)  <b>Jeanette Kohl</b> UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Simon of Trent: A Boy, a Body, and a Bust
13.30	● Lunch Discussion and planning of conference output