

## Visualising Learning in France, c.1500-1830

24 and 25 May 2017

New Seminar Room, School of History, South Street, St Andrews

A two-day symposium generously supported by the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, the Society for French Studies, The Centre for French History and Culture, School of Art History, and School of History, University of St Andrews

### Programme

#### Wednesday 24 May

9.30 - 10.00 tea/coffee and welcome

10.00 - 11.00 **Susanna Berger** (University of Southern California / Villa I Tatti), 'Siegfried Jacob Apin on Visual Learning in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe'

11.00 - 12.00 **David Pullins** (Massachusetts Institute of Technology / The Frick Collection), 'Visualizing Drawing: Cochin, the Encyclopédie and the livres à dessiner Tradition'

12.00 - 1.00 lunch (for speakers)

1.00 - 2.00 **Katie Scott** (The Courtauld Institute of Art) and **Hannah Williams** (Queen Mary University of London), 'Objects of Learning: Houdon's Écorché and Oppenord's Ripa'

2.00 - 3.00 **Stephanie O'Rourke** (University of St Andrews), 'Histories of the Self in the Trioson Portrait Series'

3.00 - 3.30 coffee

3.30 - 4.30 **Charles Kang** (Columbia University), 'Trees of Blood: Injection and Representation'

4.30 - 5.00 general discussion

5.00 drinks

6.00 dinner (for speakers)

#### Thursday 25 May

9.30 - 10.30 **Sarah Easterby-Smith** (University of St Andrews), 'Cultivating Utility: Amateur Botany, Taste and Floriculture in Late-Eighteenth-Century France'

10.30 - 11.30 **Richard Taws** (University College London), 'The Echo Chamber of the French Revolution'

11.30 - 11.45 coffee

11.45 - 12.45 **Mary Orr** (University of St Andrews), 'Colouring the Science of the Past: The Arts of Learning for the Present?'

12.45 - 1.15 lunch (for speakers)

### **Symposium overview**

In early modern France visualising and learning were parallel activities. In this era of artistic and scientific investigation, the image was less a supplement to knowledge than an operation of thought itself. This coincided with the emergence of pedagogical theories that have informed educational practices up to the present day. Although scholarly attention has been paid to the scientific conventions by which the natural world was represented, and, conversely, to changing theories about visual perception, little consideration has been given to the actual practices of learning, seeing, and showing whose intersection comprised early modern pedagogy. What were the techniques, materials, and forms by which images mediated knowledge? How might these elements have impacted how one learned as well as what one learned? In return, how did pedagogical imperatives define the form and content of a wide range of visual practices?

Speakers will consider the role that the image and information technologies played in education and in learning more broadly, including the spread of scientific knowledge, amateur culture, and fine arts training, from the role of engravings in the transmission of philosophical theories, to the cultivation of connoisseurship in botanical studies. This crucial period also led to the development of optical theories and technologies that engendered both assertions and doubts about the authority of vision. Speakers will explore the engagement of both mind and body in the processes of learning, in the nexus between the natural world, scholarly knowledge, and aesthetic representation. "Visualising learning" therefore encompasses the role of the image as mediator or producer of knowledge, as well as visual representations *of* learning, and the use of images and objects *in* learning. By investigating the historical role of images in the acquisition of knowledge, we hope to further our understanding of how they are used in educational contexts today.