This workshop addresses the production and circulation of optical knowledge in workshop and design practices of the visual and decorative arts and (garden) architecture between the fourteenth and seventeenth century.

Topics embraced include both the practical optical knowledge produced in the context of artists’ workshops and artists’ appropriation and use of the science of optics (perspectiva), which included questions of psychology, physiology, anatomy, physics, and mathematics, for the production of art and architecture, including gardens.

We discuss the material practices of artists [as diverse as gardeners and goldsmiths] in imitating and representing the effects of light, creating the illusion of space and the shaping of landscape [from the use of paper and other instruments, also on real sites, to experimentation with the optical qualities of pigments and binding media].

Other views throw light on artists’ reading of texts on optics and their possible use in the context of the workshop.

Organizers:

Sven Dupré, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science and Freie Universität, Berlin

Jeanne Peiffer, Centre Alexandre Koyré, Paris
Friday, 12 October 2012

09:00 – 09:20 Sven Dupré & Jeanne Peiffer
Introductory Remarks

Session I  Cultures of Optics and Circulation
(chair: Jeanne Peiffer)
09:20 – 09:40 Sven Dupré
Renaissance Cultures of Optics: An Introduction
09:40 – 10:30 Elaheh Kheirandish
Optics and Perspective, and their Transmission through
Arabic and Persian Sources

Coffee

Session II  Light
(chair: Andreas Thielemann)
10:50 – 11:40 Marjolijn Bol
Understanding Light Through Art. Gems, Glass, Glazing and
the Artisan’s Contribution to Optical Knowledge, 1300-1600
11:40 – 12:30 Paul Hills
The Venetian Optics of Light: Between Transparency and
Contré-jour

12:30 – 12:50 Klaus E. Werner
Presentation: [Perspectiva +]

Lunch

Session III  Trecento and Alberti
(chair: Wolfgang Lefevre)
13:40 – 14:30 Marvin Trachtenberg
From Vitruvian Prospectiva Aedificandi to the Euclidean
Piazza in Trecento Architectural Theory and Practice
14:30 – 15:20 Peter Scholz
Perspective in Late Trecento Paduan Art
15:20 – 16:10 Pietro Roccasecca
“Divido in Simile Parte”: Representation of Distance and
Quantity in Leon Battista Alberti’s De pictura

Coffee

Session IV  Mathematics and Art
(chair: Vincenzo De Risi)
16:30 – 17:20 J.V. Field
Perspective and Practice: The Case of Piero della Francesca
17:20 – 18:10 J.B. Shank
Fabricating Space in Renaissance Art/Geometry: The Case
of Albrecht Dürer

18:30 KEYNOTE LECTURE: HANS BELTING
Theory of Perception or Picture Theory? Two Visual
Cultures in the History of Perspective

Saturday, 13 October 2012

Session V  Leonardo
(chair: Sven Dupré)
09:00 – 09:50 Francesca Fiorani
Practical and Theoretical Optics of the Young Leonardo da
Vinci
09:50 – 10:40 Dominique Raynaud
A Hitherto Unknown Medieval Disputation on Shadows

Coffee

11:10 – 12:00 David Summers
Perspective and Chiaroscuro: Alberti, Leonardo and the
Craft of Painting
12:00 – 12:50 Mark Smith
Renaissance Art, Optics, and Theory - Tweaking: The Case of
Leonardo

Lunch

Session VI  The Practice of Perspective
(chair: Robert Felfe)
14:00 – 14:50 Alexa Greist
Demonstrations of Perspective in Italian Printed Drawings
Books, 1600-1625
14:50 – 15:40 Ruth Ezra
Moxon’s Muscovy Glass: The Practical Perspective (1670)
and the Material of Embodied Knowledge in the Milieu of
the Royal Society

Coffee

Session VII  Gardens and Architecture
(chair: Thijs Weststeijn)
16:10 – 17:00 José Calvo-Lopez
Printed Literature and Workshop Practice in Sixteenth
Century Spain: Perspective Rules and Architectural
Interiors in the Libro de Arquitectura by Hernán Ruiz II.
17:00 – 17:50 Georges Farhat
Some Topographic Innovations and Developments of
Perspectival Optics in the Realm of French 17th-century
Landscape Architecture

17:50 – 18:00 Closing remarks

Dinner