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New Research in Renaissance and Baroque Art

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11:30 AM – 12:30 PM (Room 1306)
New Research in Renaissance and Baroque Art
Chair: Dr. Anne Muraoka, Department of Art History

Raphael's Transfiguration and the Meaning of Faith

By **Benjamin Larned** (Mentor: Dr. Anne H. Muraoka)

Raphael's *Transfiguration* altarpiece includes two scenes: Christ's Transfiguration and the healing of the demonic boy. Many have interpreted the merging of these two scenes as a symbolic reference of Christ's purity or the ultimate healing of man through the forgiveness of sins. I argue that Raphael's organization of the painting separates the demonic boy from the Transfiguration, in order to represent the earthly struggle of man to achieve peace and ultimately reach heaven. However, man's absence of faith has defined his mortality and made man unable to attain peace without it.

All Roads Lead to Rome: the City's Influence on the Art of Parmigianino

By **Justice Kaufman** (Mentor: Dr. Anne H. Muraoka)

Parmigianino is an artist celebrated for his definitive and signature Mannerist style. The *Madonna with the Long Neck*, an unfinished masterpiece created at the end of his life, is one of Parmigianino's crowning achievements, and one that would not be with us if not for his journey to Rome. Though Parmigianino spent his early career making a name for himself in Parma, it was not until he ventured to Rome that his art became truly inspired. His presence in the city was paramount to his development as a Mannerist artist.

The Violation and Execution of Medusa in Benvenuto Cellini's Perseus

By **Emily Guthner** (Mentor: Dr. Anne H. Muraoka)

Benvenuto Cellini's sculpture of *Perseus* features the titled hero standing upon the decapitated gorgon Medusa in a moment of triumph. However, the statue, commissioned by Cosimo I de' Medici does not depict Perseus' nemesis as a monstrous opponent. Instead, Medusa is beautiful, exposed, and defeated. My research uses stylistic, historical and gender studies analyses to argue that Cellini's sculpture *Perseus* is not a depiction of a mythological tale but rather an artistic representation of the patriarchal ideals and desire for female subjugation in the sixteenth century.

Death Never Looked So Pretty: Juxtaposition within Caravaggio's Homoerotic Works

By **Sabrina Brooks** (Mentor: Dr. Anne H. Muraoka)

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio's works have been widely read through a homoerotic lens. By examining Caravaggio's works through socio-historical, formal and iconographical analysis, however, I argue that the artist presents something beyond mere homoerotic invitation. From his early work, *Boy with a Basket of Fruit* (1592-3), to one of his final canvases, *Saint John the Baptist* (1610), the juxtaposition of life and death, sacred and profane, youth and old age, are used by Caravaggio to first entice the viewers, then repulse them. The contradictory response elicited from the viewer thereby ensnares their attention in a profound way.

Caravaggio: Arbiter of Destruction?

By **Laura Rebecca Phillips** (Mentor: Dr. Anne H. Muraoka)

Caravaggio's contemporaries have accused him of "destroying" painting by discarding the traditions of the masters of the Renaissance. I assert that by painting directly from nature, Caravaggio sought to prove that the idealization of figures was an unnecessary attempt to perfect that which was already flawless, by nature of its creation by the hands of God. The gritty realism of Caravaggio's *Medusa* supports the idea that he saw that only by depicting subjects with realism, could a painter truly be a master of his craft. When viewed under this lens, he did not destroy painting, but rather, he reinvented it.