

Lecture Series

# Materiality and Identity in Baroque Naples



Dioniso Lazzari: Altar frontal, 1674, Precious stones and gilded copper, Cappella Reale, Palazzo Reale, Naples

Instructor: Joris van Gastel

Time: Tuesdays, 14:00h

Room: KOL-F-117

Start: 21 September 2021

Course nr.: 2615

## Description

“In Naples, they like nothing but trifles and gilding...” Gain Lorenzo Bernini’s negative judgment of his native city are symptomatic of its critical reception. Although in the seventeenth century Naples was not only the largest city in the Spanish realm, but also the largest city in Europe after Paris, the amount of attention it has had from art historians is in no way in perspective to both the quality and quantity of its artistic production in the period. Even if often deemed the baroque city *pur sang*, textbooks consider the Neapolitan art of the period as not more than a footnote, a mere derivative of what happened in Rome. This lecture series seeks to paint a rather different picture. Departing from what, arguably, has been the city’s largest historiographical stumbling-block – namely, the overt materiality of its baroque manifestation – it will show how a specifically local baroque may be described, thoroughly anchored in the city’s natural, historical, political, scientific, and religious context. Homing in on a number of specific materials, ranging from textile to marble, from stucco to silver, we will explore what we may call the “material imaginary” of Naples: the various associations materials may have carried and that were constitutive for the way in which the baroque city of Naples was perceived and perceived itself.

### **Credits and Exam**

BA and MA students get 3 ECTS points. There will be a remote multiple-choice exam during the last meeting (passed/not passed); MA students need a slightly higher score to pass the exam.

**Required time:** Lectures 30h / Preparation for the exam and reading 60h.

### **Introductory literature**

Giuseppe Galasso, 'Society in Naples in the Seicento', in: Clovis Whitfield and Jane Martineau, eds., *Painting in Naples, 1606–1705: From Caravaggio to Giordano*, exh. cat. Royal Academy of Arts, London (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson), pp. 24–30.

Joris van Gastel, 'Celano's Naples: Itineraries Through a Material City', *Incontri: Rivista europea di studi italiani* 29/1 (2014), pp. 66–77.

Tommaso Astarita, ed., *A Companion to Early Modern Naples* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).