

DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY & ART CONSERVATION



ARTH494: TAKING ROCOCO SERIOUSLY: FRENCH ROCOCO PAINTING AND DECOR AND ITS INTERNATIONAL DIFFUSION

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

The first style in the Western canon to originate in décor, Rococo is often written off as frivolous. However this attitude is changing as scholars investigate Rococo artists' preoccupations with conversation, friendship, decorum and spirituality, as well as emotional love and sexuality. Initially limited to the private aristocratic Parisian home, Rococo quickly transformed into one of the world's most important styles to adorn church interiors, from Germany to Brazil. This course will explore Rococo's links with society and the salon, its counter-culture rebelliousness and its femininity.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Now is an exciting time in the scholarship on Rococo world-wide. The first style in the Western canon to originate in décor, Rococo has suffered from a persistent reputation for frivolity through its association with the aristocracy in pre-Revolutionary France, and it has been discarded as a merely ornamental derivation of the Baroque, and the antithesis of the Enlightenment. However this attitude is changing quickly as scholars are revealing Rococo artists' preoccupations with consequential themes relating to polite society such as conversation, decorum, absorption, and spirituality, as well as Enlightenment values such as emotional love as defined by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Denis Diderot. Indeed, although born in the private aristocratic Parisian home, Rococo quickly transformed

into one of the world's most important styles for adorning large, sacred, public spaces, from Germany to Brazil. This course will explore in particular Rococo's links with sociability and the institution of the salon, with the role of women in society, with ideas of health and euphoria, and with spirituality.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

A detailed list of readings and requirements will be available during the first class. This course will be a seminar, with discussions. The assignments will include oral presentations, class participation, and a term paper.