

TECHNICAL ART HISTORY COLLOQUIUM

Calligraphy



Date & Time: Thursday 28 February 2019 – 16:30-17:30
Location: Sweelinckzaal 0.05, Drift 21, Utrecht
Presentation: Dr. Hannah Saunders Murphy, King's College London
Comments: Dr. José Ramón Marcaida, University of St Andrews
Chair: Dr. Marieke Hendriksen, Utrecht University
Registration: not required

Image: Jost Amman, after Nicholas Neufchatel. Johann Neudoerffer the elder. Etching. British Museum. Museum number 1895, 0617.6

The Technical Art History Colloquia are organised by Sven Dupré (Utrecht University and University of Amsterdam, PI ERC ARTECHNE), Arjan de Koomen (University of Amsterdam, Coordinator MA Technical Art History), Abbie Vandivere (University of Amsterdam, Coordinator MA Technical Art History & Paintings Conservator, Mauritshuis, The Hague), Erma Hermens (University of Amsterdam and Rijksmuseum) and Ann-Sophie Lehmann (University of Groningen). The Technical Art History Colloquia are a cooperation of the ARTECHNE Project (Utrecht University and University of Amsterdam), the Netherlands Institute for Conservation, Art and Science (NICAS), the University of Amsterdam and the Mauritshuis. The ARTECHNE project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 648718).

Neudörffer's Notebook: Recipes and the Rendering of Calligraphic Technique between Manuscript and Print in Sixteenth-Century Germany

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The creation of a printed genre of calligraphy manuals in the early sixteenth century saw the codification and dissemination of a variety of techniques which would persevere across writing and draftsmanship for the next two hundred years. But how did print effect the creation and codification of such techniques? What was the difference between techniques expressed in how-to books or manuals and the practices of artisans in workshops or in private? And where did writing fall in the increasingly differentiated world of craft practices, arts and learned disciplines?

This presentation approaches these questions by focusing on the manuscript notebook of one important calligrapher, Johann Neudörffer (1497-1563), who lived and worked in the Imperial city of Nuremberg. Neudörffer was the author of the first printed calligraphy manual north of the Alps (*The Fundamentals of his Teaching*, 1519), and because of this he was an important contributor to early modern definitions of *Kunst*, the vernacular German term which encompassed aspects of both art and craft. As well as his printed works, however, Neudörffer's legacy includes a manuscript notebook, now in the Nuremberg city library, which he kept over the course of his later life, and which was continued by his sons in the years after his death. A parchment notebook in octavo format (roughly 3 inches by 3 inches) StadtB N, Cent VIII.13 contains 75 leaves of recipes, meticulously rendered in a Gothic current-cursive hand.

Neudörffer collected recipes for a wide range of calligraphic techniques and materials, such as inks (including a variety of golds and silvers), pens, writing on metal (engraving) and writing on glass. In addition to recipes, his notebook contained short commentaries, in which Neudörffer mused on various aspects of calligraphy as a craft, including the complex relationship between writing and surface. As an artifact, the notebook glosses its contents by itself providing a visual demonstration of the craft of calligraphy. Its even lines, elaborate flourishing and miniature script all reference qualities of calligraphy which later be drawn out and articulated by writers of sixteenth and seventeenth-century manuals.

The range of colours, inks, equipment and practices in Neudörffer's text widens our understanding of the multi-medial, multi-textual world of sixteenth century writing. At the same time, by providing a point of contrast to the printed articulation of calligraphy in writing manuals, Neudörffer's notebook grants access to a repository of practices ultimately excluded from the printed discourse on calligraphy. In the context of the gradual emergence of ideas of 'technique' Neudörffer's work brings into sharper relief the rhetorical creation of practice and craft in print.

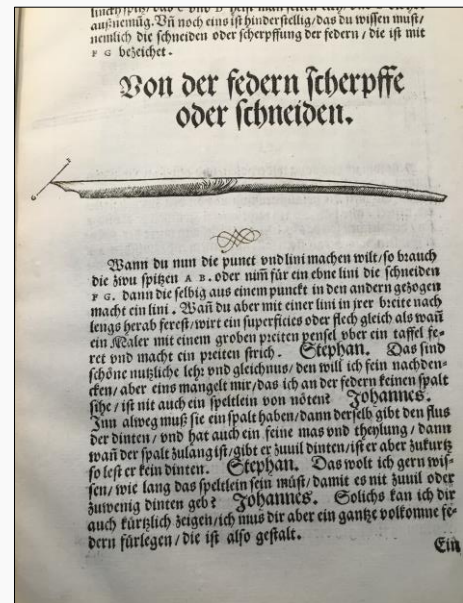


Image: 'Feather' with doodle, Detail from Johann Neudörffer, *Gesprächbuchlein*, 1549.