RIENZI’S BIENNIAL SYMPOSIUM
HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT: MEANINGS AND MESSAGES IN CERAMICS, 1650–1950
Friday, September 21–Saturday, September 22, 2018

Call for papers deadline: Sunday, July 15, 2018

Rienzi, the house museum for European decorative arts of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, begins the celebrations for its 20th anniversary as a public collection with a symposium featuring international emerging scholars, “Hidden in Plain Sight: Meanings and Messages in Ceramics, 1650–1950.” Scholars are asked to discuss objects made for rare or unlikely uses, display, or celebration. We ask participants to examine the use of ceramics as vehicles for concealed language regarding humor, courtship, diplomacy, learning, class, and contemporary culture.

Rienzi houses a significant collection of European paintings, sculpture, furniture, porcelain, and silver from the mid-17th through mid-19th centuries. Built in 1953 as a residence and opened to the public as a house museum in 1999, Rienzi evokes fine European houses of the 18th century with architecture reminiscent of the Italian Palladian style, surrounded by period European decorative arts and paintings. Rienzi is particularly rich in 18th-century European porcelains, thanks to the collecting interests of Harris and Carroll Masterson, its founding collectors. This scholarly exploration of ceramics honors their legacy and philanthropic spirit.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Master’s and doctoral students as well as entry-level and mid-career professionals are invited to submit a 400-word abstract outlining a 20-minute presentation, along with a CV, by Sunday, July 15, 2018. Selected participants will be notified by August 1, 2018, and will be offered a $600 stipend for travel and lodging. All presentations are given Saturday, September 22, 2018, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The keynote lecture is held Friday evening, followed by a reception at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Possible themes of investigation may include, but are not limited to:

- Display
- Dining
- Privacy
- Social pastimes
- Etiquette
- Gender
- Travel
- Economics
- Politics
- Beauty
- Print culture
- Secret societies

For more information, go to mfah.org/rienzisymposium.

Education programs at Rienzi receive generous funding from the Sterling-Turner Foundation; The Brown Foundation, Inc.; the Carroll Sterling and Harris Masterson III Endowment; and the Caroline Wiess Law Endowment for Rienzi.