Art Appreciation Lecture Series 2018
The hidden language of art: symbol and allusion

A window on to heaven: Optical illusions and allusions in Baroque Rome
Steven Miller
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This lecture focusses on three major ceiling paintings of Baroque Rome. Each is an illusionistic ‘triumph’: Andrea Pozzo’s ‘Triumph of Saint Ignatius’ for the church of the same name is one of the finest examples of quadratura, a type of painting that incorporates architectural elements to create an illusion of the expansion of actual into imagined space, including, in the centre of the church, an enormous fake dome. Pietro da Cortona’s ‘Triumph of Divine Providence’ for the Palazzo Barberini and Il Baciccio’s ‘Triumph of the Holy Name of Jesus’, on the ceiling of the Gesù church, are technical and theatrical masterpieces, blurring the boundaries between heaven and earth.

Slide list:
1 Title slide
4 Andrea Pozzo (Trent 1642–Vienna 1709), Il trionfo di Sant'Ignazio, 1691–94. Frescoed ceiling of the church of Sant'Ignazio, Rome.
5 Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), St Ignatius of Loyola c.1620–1922, oil on canvas, 223.0 x 138.5 cm. Collection of the Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena CA.
7, 8 & 9 Paolo Veronese (1528–88), Feast in the house of Levi 1573, oil on canvas, 555.0 x 1280.0 cm. Collection of Le Gallerie dell’Accademia, Venice.
10 List of terms
11 Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506), Camera degli Sposi, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, c.1472-3.
12 Masaccio (1401-1428) Trinità, Santa Maria Novella, Florence, c.1426.
13 & 14 Sala Clementina, Vatican City 1596-1598. Executed by the brothers Cherubino Alberti (the figure painter) and Giovanni Alberti (perspective expert)
15. Baldassare Peruzzi (1481-1536), Sala delle prospettive or Sala delle colonne, Villa Farnesina, Rome, c.1520.
17 Pietro da Cortona (Cortona 1596–Rome 1669), Divina Providenza, Palazzo Barberini seen directly from below.
18 Raphael (1483–1520), The Sibyls, c. 1514 fresco, width at base 615.0 cm Santa Maria della Pace, Rome.
19-20, 24 Details from Pietro da Cortona, Divina Providenza, Palazzo Barberini, Rome.
21 Engraving of Pope Urban VIII and his nephew Cardinal Francesco Barberini 1624, Royal Collection, Windsor, from a portfolio of prints assembled by Cassiano dal Pozzo in Rome
22 Left: Clipeus of the Justice of Consul Manlius with the hippogriff below, a symbol of shrewdness
Right: Clipeus of the Temperance of Scipio with the unicorn, a symbol of purity from a 1677 engraving made of the ceiling.
23 Pietro da Cortona overall design for the salone of Palazzo Barberini, pen with brown wash and white highlights, 42.7 x 56.2 cm. Collection of the Albertina, Vienna.
26 Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680), Beata Ludovica Albertoni 1671–75, marble, church of San Francesco a Ripa, Rome, with Gaulli’s painting of the saint above.


32 Giovan Battista Gaulli, Christ in Glory receiving the Franciscan saints, fresco on the vault of Santi Apostoli, Rome, 1707.

33 Andrea Pozzo, Self Portrait c.1675, oil on canvas, 160.0 x 117.0 cm. Collection of the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

34 Nave and sanctuary of the church of San Francesco Saverio, Mondovi, Piemonte, showing the ceiling frescoes, the altar machina and the fake scagliola columns by Andrea Pozzo, 1676-7.

35 Andrea Pozzo, Apse fresco of Il trionfo di San Francesco Saverio in the church of San Francesco Saverio, Mondovi, Piemonte, 1676-7.

36 Andrea Pozzo, Altar tabernacle in the church of San Francesco Saverio, Mondovi, Piemonte, and rear view of the machina, 1676-7.

37 Andrea Pozzo, Ceiling frescoes for the church of Sant'Ignazio, Rome, 1691-94 and detail of trompe l’oeil cupola over the crossing of the church, c.1685.

38 Andrea Pozzo, schema for the ceiling frescoes of Sant'Ignazio, Rome.

39, 40 & 44 Details from the ceiling of Sant'Ignazio, Rome.

41 Andrea Pozzo, personification of Asia from the ceiling fresco of Sant'Ignazio, Rome, 1691-94.

42 Andrea Pozzo, personification of America from the ceiling fresco of Sant'Ignazio, Rome, 1691-94.

43 Andrea Pozzo, personification of Europe from the ceiling fresco of Sant'Ignazio, Rome, 1691-94.

45 Pages from Athanasius Kirchner’s Ars magna lucis et umbrae, Amsterdam: Ludovico Grignani for Herman Scheus, 1646, 2nd edition. Aberdeen University Library.

46 Hans Holbein the Younger (1497-1543), The Ambassadors 1533, oil on oak, 207.0 x 201.0 cm. Collection of the National Gallery, London.

47 Emmanuel Maignan (1601-1676), Anamorphic fresco of St. Francis of Paola in the corridor of Santissima Trinità dei Monti, Rome, 1642.

48 Andrea Pozzo, anamorphically distorted angels on the ceiling of Sant’Ignazio, Rome, 1691-94.

49 Andrea Pozzo (Trent 1642–Vienna 1709), Il trionfo di Sant’Ignazio, 1691–94. Frescoed ceiling of the church of Sant’Ignazio, Rome.

Reference:


For access to all past lecture notes visit: