

# **Robin L. Thomas**

## Curriculum Vitae

Professor  
Department of Art History  
The Pennsylvania State University  
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### **Professional Positions**

Head, Department of Art History, The Pennsylvania State University, 2023-present

Professor, The Pennsylvania State University, 2023-present  
Affiliate Professor of Architecture, 2023-present

Associate Professor, The Pennsylvania State University, 2014-2023  
Affiliate Associate Professor of Architecture, 2018-2023

Assistant Professor, The Pennsylvania State University, 2008-2014

Post-Doctoral Fellow, Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry, Emory University, 2007-2008

Adjunct Instructor, Emory University, 2006-2007

### **Education**

PhD Columbia University, 2007  
Dissertation Title: “Charles of Bourbon’s Naples: Architecture and Urbanism”

MPhil Columbia University, 2002  
Major Concentration: Baroque Architecture  
Minor Concentration: Byzantine Architecture

MA Columbia University, 2000

BA, summa cum laude, Emory University, 1999  
Honor’s Thesis Title: “The Counter-reformation Art of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, 1599-1602.”

### **Books**

*Palaces of Reason: the Royal Architecture of Bourbon Naples*. Penn State Press, 2023.

*Architecture and Statecraft: Charles of Bourbon's Naples 1734-59*. Penn State Press, 2013.

Reviews: Michael J. Levin, *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies*, vol. 38, pp. 260–261

Daniel McReynolds, *caa.reviews*, April, 2014 (online)

Jörg Garms, *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 147, pp. 35–36

### **Journal Articles**

“Race and Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Italy.” In “Roundtable: Constructing Race and Architecture 1400–1800, Part 1.” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 80 (2021): 277–279.

“Slavery and Construction in Eighteenth-Century Naples.” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 78 (2019): 167–186.

“Convent and Crown: Redecorating Santa Chiara in Naples 1741–59.” *1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era* 24 (2019): 328–354.

“The *pacte de famille* and a *famille des palais*: Architecture and the Bourbons in the Eighteenth Century.” *Cheiron* 2 (2017): 137–163.

“The Royal Palace of Capodimonte: the Early Years.” *Napoli Nobilissima*. 7<sup>th</sup> series, vol. 2, issue 3 (2016): 23–32.

“Building the Monarchy: The Teatro di San Carlo in Naples, 1737.” *The Court Historian* 17 (2012): 35-60.

“Luigi Vanvitelli as Reader and Author.” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 69, no. 4 (2010): 508-533.

### **Articles/Entries in Edited Volumes/Conference Proceedings**

“Luigi Vanvitelli fra tradizione e originalità.” In *Luigi Vanvitelli il maestro e la sua eredità 1773-2023*. (forthcoming, 2024)

“Displaying the Ancient World in the Royal Palaces of Naples,” in *The Legacy of Vesuvius: Bourbon Discoveries on the Bay of Naples*, ed. Michael Thomas (exhibition at the Meadows Museum (Dallas) September 15, 2024-January 5, 2025) (forthcoming 2024)

“The *Guglie* of Naples and the Visual Rhetoric of Height.” In *Visualizing the Past in Italian Renaissance Art: Essays in Honor of Brian A. Curran*, eds. Douglas Dow and Jennifer Cochran Anderson (Leiden and Boston, 2020), 268–292.

“Symbols of Royal Power: the Bourbon Royal Palaces of Naples.” In *The Modern State in Naples and Bourbon Europe, Historiography and Sources*, eds. Giuseppe Cirillo and Maria Anna Noto (Naples, 2019), 219–246.

“Architects’ Libraries.” In *The Companions to the History of Architecture, Volume II, Eighteenth-Century Architecture*. Eds. Caroline van Eck and Sigrid de Jong (Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 33–53.

“Albergo dei Poveri.” In *The Companions to the History of Architecture, Volume II, Eighteenth-Century Architecture*. Eds. Caroline van Eck and Sigrid de Jong (Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 603–606.

“Royal Palace at Caserta.” In *The Companions to the History of Architecture, Volume II, Eighteenth-Century Architecture*. Eds. Caroline van Eck and Sigrid de Jong (Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 607–611.

“Propagandizing Nolli in Naples.” In *Giambattista Nolli, Rome and Mapping: Before and After the Pianta Grande*. Eds. Allan Ceen and Ian Verstegen (Rome: Studium Urbis, 2013), 149–159.

### **Book/Scholarly Reviews**

Heather Hyde Minor. The Culture of Architecture in Enlightenment Rome. *European Architectural History Network Newsletter* 4 (2010): 38-41.

Costanza Caraffa. Gaetano Chiaveri (1689–1770). Architetto romano della Hofkirche di Dresda. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 67, no. 4 (2008): 606-608.

Review essay: “New Studies of Vico and Tiepolo.” *New Vico Studies* 26 (2008) 170-172.

### **Translations**

Vico, Giovanni Battista. “In Memory of Lady Angela Cimmino.” *New Vico Studies* 25 (2007): 11-33.

### **Articles in Non-Scholarly Journals**

“Architectural History After the Pandemic.” *The Brooklyn Rail*, March 2024

### **Research Projects in Progress**

*The City in the Age of the Enlightenment* (book project, in progress)

### **Lectures and Conference Presentations**

“Vanvitelli fra tradizione e originalità” *Luigi Vanvitelli, il Maestro e la sua eredità 1773-2023*, Ancona, Italy, September 2023.

“Space Evaders: The Complex Case of Enclosing Architecture in Early Modern Italy” *Transmission, Containment, Transformation: A Comparative Approach to Architecture and Contagion in Early Modern Cities*, Sawyer Seminar, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The Pennsylvania State University, March 2022.

“Taming Vesuvius: Building the Royal Palace at Portici,” *Natural Disaster and the Bay of Naples: Artistic Encounters and Transformations*, co-organized by Franklin University, Switzerland and the Center for the Art History of Port Cities, Naples, June 2021.

“The Royal Palace at Caserta and the Anxiety of Equals,” Invited by the Department of Architecture, The Pennsylvania State University, March 2021.

“Palace as Palimpsest: the Royal Palace at Portici,” Invited by the Committee for Early Modern Studies, The Pennsylvania State University, October 2018.

“Spain, Rome, and the Planning of Capodimonte,” *Napoli, Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte in un contesto mondiale*, Naples, Italy, October 2017.

“Luigi Vanvitelli as Active Reader” 30<sup>th</sup> International Seminar in the History of Architecture: the Architect as Reader, Palladio Museum, Vicenza, Italy, June 2017.

“Francesco de Mura and Bourbon Naples” Invited by The University of Wisconsin, Madison, February 2017.

“The Healing Power of Art” Invited by the Princess Theatre, Decatur, AL, December 2016.

“Il Segno del potere monarchico. Le reggie dei Borbone di Napoli,” Invited by conference *Lo Stato modern napoletano e l'Europa Borbonica: storiografia e fonti*, Seconda Università di Napoli, Caserta, December 2016.

“Palaces and Political Economy in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Naples” Invited by Cambridge University, January 2016.

“Planning Portici: Architecture and Diplomacy between Naples and Spain 1734–49” *Neapolitan Network*, Universitat de Barcelona, October 2014.

“Staging Gothic: Luigi Vanvitelli’s Designs for Milan Cathedral” Society of Architectural Historians Annual Meeting, April 2014.

“The Bourbon Theater of State and Architecture of Eighteenth-Century Naples” Invited by Princeton University, December 2013.

“The Bourbon Redecoration of Santa Chiara in Naples” American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies Annual Meeting, Cleveland, April 2013.

“Reading Spanish Architectural Influence in Bourbon Naples: Portici and La Granja de SanIldefonso” Invited by *The Geography of Southern Baroque Architecture Conference*, Northwestern University, May 2012.

“The Bourbon Theater of State: Decorating the Royal Palace at Portici (1744-1745),” College Art Association Annual Conference, Los Angeles 2012.

“Space and Spectacle at the Court of Charles Bourbon,” Invited by *Delirious Naples: For a Cultural, Intellectual, and Urban History of the City of the Sun Conference*, Hofstra University/New York University, November 2011.

“Charles Bourbon’s Theater of State from Naples to Madrid,” Metropolitan Museum of Art, March 2011.

“Luigi Vanvitelli: Reader and Author,” Renaissance Society of America Annual Conference, Venice, April 2010.

“To Protect and to Serve: Giovanni Battista Piranesi’s Rome,” Invited by Lebanon Valley College, Arnold Art Gallery Exhibition Keynote Speaker, April 2010.

“From Naples to Madrid: Charles III and Civic Architecture of Reform,” American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies Annual Conference, Albuquerque, March 2010.

“Cosmopolitanism at the Coffehouse on the Quirinal Hill in Rome,” Pennsylvania State University, IAH Moments of Change Salon, March 2010.

"Southern Italian and Spanish Colonial Urban Planning: Grids and Civic Identity," Invited by Muhlenberg College, April 2009.

“Structure and Statecraft: The Reale Albergo dei Poveri in Bourbon Naples,” Invited by Emory University, February 2008.

“For Music and Monarchy: The Teatro di San Carlo in Naples,” Invited by The Ohio State University, Columbus, October 2007.

“Changing Music and Propagating Form: The Teatro di San Carlo of Naples,” Society of Architectural Historians Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, April 2007.

“Rome and the Bourbons: the Reale Albergo dei Poveri and the Roles of the Church and King in Enlightenment Naples,” American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies Annual Conference, Atlanta, March 2007.

“For Music and Monarchy: The Teatro di San Carlo in Naples,” Invited by The University of Washington, April 2006.

“Politicizing Nolli in Naples: The Duca di Noja Map,” Giambattista Nolli, Imago Urbis and Rome Conference, Rome, May 2003.

### **Panels and Roundtables**

Roundtable Participant, “Return to the Archives: Views Past, Present, and Future,” Committee for Early Modern Studies, Penn State, September 2021

Roundtable Participant, “What is Self-Fashioning,” Committee for Early Modern Studies, Penn State, September 2019

Panel Co-Organizer, “Space, Time, and the Architectural Treatise,” Society of Architectural Historians Annual Conference, Providence, April 2019

Roundtable Participant, “Teaching Southern Italy,” Renaissance Society of America Annual Conference, New Orleans, March 2018.

Respondent, “Naples Reconsidered,” American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies Annual Conference, Vancouver, March 2011.

### **Fellowships, Awards, and Honors**

Award for Outstanding Teaching, College of Arts and Architecture, The Pennsylvania State University, 2014

Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010-2011

Post-Doctoral Fellowship, The Bill and Carol Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry, Emory University, 2007-2008

Mrs. Giles Whiting Foundation Fellowship in the Humanities, 2005-2006

J. William Fulbright Grant, Italy, 2004-2005

Columbia University Traveling Fellowship, 2004-2005 (declined)

Rudolf Wittkower Dissertation Fellowship, Columbia University, 2003-2004

Teaching Fellow, Columbia University, 2002-2003

Presidential Fellow, Columbia University, 2000-01, 2001-2002

Marion Luther Brittain Service Award Honoree, Emory University, 1999

Phi Beta Kappa, 1997

### **Collaborative Grants**

Co-Principal Investigator, Sawyer Seminar “Transformation, Containment, Transformation: A Comparative Approach to Architecture and Contagion in Early Modern Cities,” Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, 2021-2022

### **Public Outreach**

Interview with Australia Broadcasting Corporation Radio, “Last Half Hour: Naples,” October 2018

### **MA Students**

#### *Adviser:*

Amy Orner, Department of Art History, degree completed 2022

Master’s Paper: “The Palette, the Patron, and the Hand of the Artist: Artemisia Gentileschi in London”

Nathan Burch, Department of Art History, degree completed 2019

Master’s Paper: “Render Unto Caesar: the Role of Numismatic Imagery in the Lombardian Architectural Renaissance.”

Emily Hagen, Department of Art History, degree completed 2018

Master’s Paper: “*Horrendo spettacolo*: Urban *teatro*, Spectacle, and Public Execution in Early-Modern Rome”

#### *Second reader:*

Sophia Yaniger, Department of Art History, degree completed 2022

Jennifer Glissman, Department of Art History, degree completed 2019.

Abbey Surrena, Department of Art History, degree completed 2014

Tim Betz, Department of Art History, degree completed 2013

Allison Kim, Department of Art History, degree completed 2013

Marlise Brown, Department of Art History, degree completed 2011

Denise Kowalski, Department of Art History, degree completed 2010

## **Ph.D Students**

### *Adviser:*

Amy Orner, Department of Art History, in progress

Emily Hagen, Department of Art History, in progress

Kenta Tokushige, Department of Art History, in progress

### *Co-Adviser:*

Elizabeth Petersen, Department of Art History, Ph.D. degree completed 2019  
Dissertation Title: “Architecture and Audience in Donatello’s Florentine Reliefs”

Theresa Kutasz Christensen, Department of Art History, degree completed 2018  
Dissertation Title: “Regina Christina, Antiquario: Queen Christina of Sweden’s Development of a Classical Persona through Allegory and Antiquarian Collecting.”

### *Committee Member:*

Arunima Addy, Department of Art History, in progress

Arielle Fields, Department of Art History, in progress

Frank Lacopo, Department of History, degree in progress

Laurin Goad Davis, Department of Art History, degree completed 2019

Robert Millard, Department of Art History, degree completed 2017

Katie Zins, Department of Art History, degree completed 2016

Pierette Kulpa, Department of Art History, degree completed 2015

Jennifer Olson-Rudenko, Department of Art History, degree completed 2011

Denise Costanzo, Department of Art History, degree completed 2009

## **Service to the Profession**

Executive Committee, New Foundation for Art History, 2023-present

Editorial Advisory Committee, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 2020-2023



Subcommittee for Reevaluating Taxonomic Categories, 2021

Book Review Editor, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 2023-present

Editorial Advisory Committee, Penn State University Press, 2018-2022, 2023-present

Scientific Committee, *Studia Borbonica – Rivista internazionale di studi sui Borbone*, 2019-present

Reviewer of manuscripts:

*Art Bulletin*

Penn State University Press

University of Pennsylvania Press

*Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*

*Boletín de arte*

*Arris: the Journal of the Southeast Society of Architectural Historians*

*Journal 18*

*Eighteenth-Century Life*

Reviewer of grant applications:

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

European Research Council

Consultant, Curatorial Research, Honolulu Museum of Art, 2012

### **Service to Penn State University**

Committee for Early Modern Studies, The Pennsylvania State University

Steering Committee Member. 2012-2013, 2018-2022

Director, 2013-2015

Co-Director, 2016-2018

Faculty Adviser, Penn State Quiz Bowl Team, 2014-present

Faculty Adviser, Penn State Entertainment Club, 2019-2022

Institute for the Arts and Humanities Director Search Committee, The Pennsylvania State University, 2009-2010

Consultant, Special Collections Library Purchases, The Pennsylvania State University, 2023, 2022, 2021, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013

### **Service to the College of Arts and Architecture**

Chair, Search Advisory Committee, Interim Director, School of Theatre, 2024

Promotion and Tenure Committee, College of Arts and Architecture, The Pennsylvania State University, 2017-2019, 2021-2022

Faculty Teaching Award Selection Committee, College of Arts and Architecture, The Pennsylvania State University 2017-2021

Faculty Mentoring Award Selection Committee, College of Arts and Architecture, The Pennsylvania State University 2022

General Education Committee, College of Arts and Architecture, The Pennsylvania State University, 2017-2019

Chair, 2018–2019

College of Arts and Architecture Faculty Advisory Council, The Pennsylvania State University 2011-2013

Staff Award of Distinction Selection Committee, College of Arts and Architecture, The Pennsylvania State University, 2009

Committee on Scholarships and Awards for Undergraduates, College of Arts and Architecture, The Pennsylvania State University, 2013-2015

Alumni Scholarship Selection Committee, College of Arts and Architecture, The Pennsylvania State University, 2008-2010

Golumbic Award Selection Committee, College of Arts and Architecture, The Pennsylvania State University, 2008-2010

### **Service to the Department of Art History**

Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of Art History, The Pennsylvania State University, 2017-2020

Promotion and Tenure Committee, Department of Art History, The Pennsylvania State University, 2014-2015, 2019-2021

Chair, Search Advisory Committee, Open Rank Tenure Track Professor of African and/or African Diasporic Art, Architecture, and/or Visual Culture, Department of Art History and African Studies Program, The Pennsylvania State University, 2022

Chair, Search Advisory Committee, Open Rank Tenure Track Professor of African Diasporic or African American Art, Architecture, or Visual Culture, Department of Art History and Department of African American Studies, The Pennsylvania State University 2020

Search Advisory Committee, Assistant Teaching Professor of Ancient to Medieval Architecture, Department of Art History, The Pennsylvania State University, 2019

Search Advisory Committee, Department Head of Art History, 2018

Chair, Search Advisory Committee, Tenure Track Assistant Professor of Early Modern Art History, Department of Art History, The Pennsylvania State University, 2016

Search Advisory Committee, Renaissance and Baroque Architecture One-year Replacement, Department of Art History, The Pennsylvania State University 2009

Graduate Initiatives Committee, Department of Art History, The Pennsylvania State University, 2009-2010, 2011-2012, 2014-2015

Undergraduate Initiatives Committee, Department of Art History, The Pennsylvania State University, 2008-2009

Undergraduate Advisor, Department of Art History, The Pennsylvania State University, 2008-present

### **Volunteer Service**

Emory University Alumni Board, 2003-2009

Co-Chair, Annual Fund, Emory University Libraries, 2005-2007

### **Professional Organizations**

American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies

College Art Association

European Architectural History Network

Historians of Eighteenth-Century Art and Architecture

Italian Art Society

Renaissance Society of America

Society of Architectural Historians