

ROYAL GLORY – seminar program

Venue: Blindern, Niels Treschow's building, 12th floor, 1224 (end of corridor)

Monday 12 March: 17th century

12:00-12:15: Welcome (and coffee)

12:15-13:00: **Anne Eriksen**: *A king and his Horse. Glory, Memory, and Eternity*

13:00-14:00: **Raz Chen Morris**: *The king's two minds: The fragmented image of the melancholic king, and 17th century New Science.*

Break

14:15-15:15: **Stephanie Koscak**: *Anamorphic Representation and the Stuart Royal Body: "Optical Magic" in Seventeenth-Century England.*

15:15-16:15: **Hall Bjørnstad**: *The Absolutist King between Glory and Propaganda: The Case of the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles.*

Break

16:30-17:30: **Daniela Büchten**: *Art in the service of the king. The painted ceilings in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles.*

Tuesday 13 March: 18th century

Coffee from 09:00

09:15-10:15: **Dror Wahrman**: *Monarchy in the (First) Age of Mechanical Reproduction.*

10:15-11:15: **Ellen Krefting**: *Royal glory in a new medium. The case of Danish periodicals of the 1740'ies.*

Break

11:30-12:30: **Brita Brenna**: *King of the road. Unfolding Norwegian landscapes in the 18th century.*

12:30-13:30: Lunch

13:30-14:30: **Erling Sandmo**: *The politics of song: operatic government in Gustavian Sweden.*

14:30-15:30: **Helge Jordheim**: *The Peristalsis of Power - on the Royal Stomach and Digestion.*

15:30 – End of seminar

Summaries

Day 1: 17th century

Anne Eriksen: A king and his Horse. Glory, Memory, and Eternity

The Royal Armoury in Stockholm claims to be Sweden's oldest museum. The claim is based on a donation from the king Gustavus II Adolphus. In 1628, the victorious king presented two garments worn during his campaign in Poland, and declared his wish for the torn and blood-stained clothes to be preserved "in eternal memory of me". Four years later the collection was dramatically enlarged. After the king's death in the battle at Lutzen in 1632, his linen shirts, soaked in blood, were incorporated together with the shroud used to carry the royal heart back to Sweden. Finally, the collection also included the king's horse, Streiff, whose hide was prepared and mounted after its death in 1633.

My paper will discuss this collection of objects still at display in Stockholm and today the core of the museum. What did the king mean with his words "eternal memory"? In what ways did the objects - which today appear somewhat macabre - work to create the king's glory? And how is memory to be understood in this context? How does eternal memory contribute to make the king a king?

Raz Chen Morris: The king's two minds: The fragmented image of the melancholic king, and 17th century New Science

In his magisterial analysis of the *King's Two Bodies*, Ernst Kantorowicz shows how theological precepts have been transported and translated into the political realm, forming a political theology of sovereignty. Kantorowicz introduces his argument through a brilliant analysis of Shakespeare's *Richard II*. Favoring the ideological and political significance of this play, however, Kantorowicz overlooks its epistemological and theatrical dimensions. Re-reading the shattered mirror scene from *Richard II*, this paper suggests that a crucial transformation has taken place in modes of knowing associated with the image of royalty at the turn of the 17th century. Moving from Arcimboldo's image of Rudolph II as Vertumnus, through Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and the frontispiece of Kepler's *Tabulae Rudolphinae*, to Descartes' analysis of the rainbow, this paper will outline the emergence of the royal persona as an embodiment not of melancholy but as the upholder of the radical ideals of the New Science. Abandoning the dichotomy between speculative true knowledge and the world of political prudence, a new image of royal power is fashioned finding its legitimacy in the ability of natural philosophers to explain and operate new modes of knowledge.

Stephanie Koscak: Anamorphic Representation and the Stuart Royal Body: "Optical Magic" in Seventeenth-Century England

My presentation focuses on the production and reception of anamorphic images of Stuart monarchy, which distorted and fragmented the royal body according to rules of perspective. I question why such images were created and disseminated in painting and print in England in the second half of the seventeenth century beyond simply claiming them as loyalist devotional icons reminding viewers that, just as it had for their martyred king, death could soon come for them. Placing these productions within wider anxieties over representational illegibility, I explore the relationship between the rules of anamorphic visual representation and discernment and ideologies of absolute monarchy. Reading seventeenth-century anamorphic renderings of Charles I and II against perspective manuals that imagined using the technique to embed manipulated depictions of the monarchs on court walls and ceilings, I suggest that

these images were particularly suited to representing absolutism. They perhaps manifest a form of absolute optics-growing out of monarchical courts, such images seem to demonstrate the imagined possibility of an omnipresent king engraved on the landscape and architecture of his domain and the sovereignty of the royal center around which all representation is constructed. They both appropriated the power of aesthetic representation for absolutism and cultivated viewer discernment.

Hall Bjørnstad: The Absolutist King between Glory and Propaganda: The Case of the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles

This paper addresses methodological questions related to a wider project on the construction of the symbolic authority of Louis XIV which responds to my increasing dissatisfaction with an uncritical and unquestioned notion of propaganda that seems to sustain much of the scholarship on the cultural production under Louis XIV's personal rule. Is royal glory itself nothing but propaganda? To what extent can early modern art that was produced in order to enhance the glory of an absolutist king be considered propaganda? What does it mean to approach the cultural production of the period in terms of propaganda? What else could it be? What are the alternatives? I propose that some clues towards answering these questions may be found in the analysis of a central cultural artifact from the period, Charles Le Brun's painting of the founding moment of French absolutism, "Le Roi gouverne par lui-même, 1661" in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles.

Daniela Büchten: Art in the service of the king. The painted ceilings in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles

In 1678, Louis XIV has reached the top of his power. Charles LeBrun, court painter is commissioned to create a series of paintings for the ceilings of the planned gallery of mirrors. Which strategy does LeBrun choose to glorify the Sun King? The painted ceilings present the current concept of the ideal sovereign. They reflect the ongoing discussions in art theory and also a new understanding of history.

Today, the paintings are difficult to understand. But did people in the 17th century find it easier to interpret them? In which way do the paintings enhance the power of the king? And how do they contribute to confirm an absolute monarchy? The Hall of Mirrors and the painted ceilings played an important part in court ceremonial functions. An analysis of the idea behind the paintings will show how they confirm the superiority of the king.

Day 2: 18th century

Dror Wahrman: Monarchy in the (First) Age of Mechanical Reproduction

The subject of this paper is an artist working c. 1700 who never painted a royal portrait and who may well have never been to court, yet whose art was obsessed with representations of royalty. The artist, Edward Collier (1642 - c. 1708), who moved from Holland to England in the 1690s, was constantly preoccupied with kings and queens, dead and alive. A main theme in his art was the highly perceptive exploration of the consequences for royal glory of the advent of cheap ephemeral print, both visual prints (especially the freshly invented mezzotints) and verbal print, which exploded in cheap form at this very moment. His rather extraordinary experiments in oil on canvas amount to a unique set of reflections on the status

and fate of monarchs in the age of mechanical reproduction, a particular aspect of the his intense interest in the emergence of mass media in the first modern information age.

Ellen Krefting: Royal glory in a new medium. The case of Danish periodicals of the 1740'ies.

The paper will focus on how the media revolution of the period, with the appearance of new written forms and genres (such as the Spectator-journal), produced new ways of representing the king's persona and power in Denmark-Norway.

Brita Brenna: King of the road. Unfolding Norwegian landscapes in the 18th century

In his article 'Knowledge of the Territory' historian Jacques Revel investigates the map and proto-statistics as ways of knowing the territory in Early Modern France. Spanning a long period from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century the article surveys efforts by public authorities to describe and homogenize a national territory, only to find that these were heterogeneous and contradictory for a long period of time. Revel focuses on maps and statistical descriptions, here my interest is partly in the same kind of material, but I will focus on the prospects and later landscapes, and in a much shorter periode - the eighteenth century . The argument is that landscapes comes into being through the attempts of knowing the country. The events I will focus on are the king's progresses through the Norwegian territory from the late seventeenth to the late eighteenth century, as ways of knowing, commanding and appropriating the territory. Visual depictions of the landscape made in the wake of the king's travels will be the empirical material, and the question I will interrogate is how conceptions of territory and visualisations of landscape changed through the period. Not as a smooth transition, but in heterogenous and often contradictory ways.

Erling Sandmo: The politics of song: operatic government in Gustavian Sweden

The reign of Gustavus III (ruled 1771 – 1792) marked the end of the Swedish age of liberty. He reintroduced absolutism by two coups d'état and was assassinated by members of a military/aristocratic opposition following heavy losses in a hopeless attempt to reinstate Sweden as the major Northern European power. The Gustavian era also witnessed a surge in cultural life, centered around the King himself and the institutions he established. His intense interest in the stage, however, in acting, and particularly in opera, has been seen as a paradox in the light of his power politics. This paper is an attempt to make sense of his passion for opera by framing it in current discourses on the effects of music and the idea of the political subject.

Helge Jordheim: The Peristalsis of Power - on the Royal Stomach and Digestion

What if the king isn't really the head of the state, but it's stomach? What if the most representative function of the royal body isn't talking, thinking or fighting, but digesting? At the beginning of a novel published in 1793 by the German author Jean Paul, the hero witnesses a funeral procession for a recently deceased prince. The procession, however, does not carry with it the entire prince. Head, arms and legs have already been buried in the royal family grave in the capital. The coffin is especially designed for intestines and contains “the stomach, the bowels, the liver, in which the royal bile is boiling, the lungs whose small

bubbles of air is the royal gall bladder as the air pipes is the bile duct, and the heart." The funeral ceremony, which Jean Paul is familiar with from the Austrian archdukes, gives rise to an at once satirical and encyclopedic inventory of royal governing practices and burial rituals. "In France," Jean Paul writes, "they cook for the king after he is dead – because there the king never dies, according to the fiction." Indeed, the choice of the word "fiction" for the doctrine the king's two bodies anticipates the much later analysis by the historian Ernst Kantorowicz. It is a fiction of theological, legal and philosophical language, put into practice in rituals and ceremonies to ensure the continuity of sovereign power. In Jean Paul' satire, however, this fiction is brought to the brink of collapse.