

FONDAZIONE CULTURALE  
MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE  
BAGNI DI LUCCA

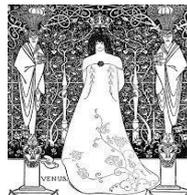
## XVI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



# “The artist is the creator of beautiful things”: Aesthetic Revolutions in fin-de-siècle England

FRIDAY 9 - SATURDAY 10 - SUNDAY 11  
SEPTEMBER 2022

Biblioteca Comunale “A. Betti” (ex Chiesa Inglese)  
Viale E. Whipple  
55022 BAGNI DI LUCCA – VILLA (LU)



In September 2022 the “Michel de Montaigne” Cultural Foundation will organise its 16<sup>th</sup> international conference in association with the town of Bagni di Lucca, the Istituto Storico Lucchese, and the University of Pisa. Supported and coordinated by a scientific committee of academics, the conference will be held under the aegis of the Italian Oscar Wilde Society.

The year 2022 coincides with an important event in the British cultural context, since it marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898), whose illustrations and drawings for *The Yellow Book*, *The Savoy* and Wilde’s *Salomé* bear memorable witness to his outstanding artistic production. Along these lines, our conference aims to explore the richness and multifaceted phenomenology of the fin de siècle in England as well as across Europe. Long investigated through the critical lens of its iconoclastic attitudes and deviance from the prescriptive codes of the Victorian age, this period is now the object of wide-ranging and philologically accurate studies that have outlined a definitely more complex scenario than, say, the one pivoting on the Naughty Nineties or Max Nordau’s notion of ‘degeneration’. Taking a cue from Arthur Symons’s well-known statements in *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, “the

interlude, half a mock-interlude, of Decadence, diverted the attention of the critics while something more serious was in preparation". And that 'something' is said to have temporarily crystallised "under the form of Symbolism, in which art returns to the one pathway, leading through beautiful things to the eternal beauty".

As suggested by the conference's title, taken from the opening aphorism of the Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* – "The artist is the creator of beautiful things" – our aim is to provide a larger spectrum and give due credit to the relevance and achievements of late-nineteenth-century artists and writers, from the deeper meanings of the 'art for art's sake' concept to the notion of the 'beautiful untrue thing', from experimental trends to the establishment of an intense transnational dialogue. As testified to by authors and personalities such as Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde and Algernon Charles Swinburne, George Moore and Ernest Dowson, Edward Burne-Jones and Aubrey Beardsley, Vernon Lee, Michael Field and George Egerton, the fin de siècle does not seem to merely celebrate the end of an era. Indeed, it can be seen as poignantly interpreting the transition to a new beginning.

This conference invites papers that explore fields, phenomenologies and topics which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Forms of poetic expression in the British fin de siècle: experimental contaminations between different arts and languages; the 'condition of music' as a source and cornerstone for artistic inspiration; European and international horizons; historical approaches and (trans)historical intersections (e.g. with the Renaissance, ancient myths, the decline of great empires); Pre-Raphaelitism, Impressionism, *Japonisme*, *Art Nouveau*, new figural concepts; ekphrasis and alchemies of perception; antimimeticism, antimaterialism, symbolism, mysticism, magic and occultism; eros and seduction; the aesthetics of refinement, the exotic and the grotesque
- Socio-cultural phenomenologies: the 'Romantic Agony', i.e. the episteme of Decadence; prophets and apostles of the 'religion of art'; the *voyeur*, *flâneur*, *dandy*, *homme fatal*, and *femme fatale*; the political as well as seductive power of words; the aesthetic-decadent fashion and its echoes in magazines of humour and satire; the philosophy of *otium* and anti-philistinism; from the *succès de scandale* of literary and art works to scandals in the socio-political contexts; solipsism, obsession, disease and 'perversion'
- Symbols and icons; mirrors and artifice; textiles, clothing and costumes; masks, dressing up, cross-dressing; the body and the performing arts (dancing, theatre choreography, the opera, filmography)
- Voices, protagonists, experimenters: commentaries on authors, cultural mediators, theatre managers, gallerists and art dealers, editorial initiatives and projects
- The idea of 'aesthetic uselessness' and the cult of beauty: artifacts and precious materials, the perfect care for details, the search for revealing correspondences, 'ornamental grammar' and aesthetic architectures
- *Fin de siècle, fin du globe*: the end of the nineteenth century then and now; relationships between Decadence and Modernism, Queer Studies, Gender Studies, pop culture, transgenderism; late-nineteenth-century cosmopolitanism and today's globalisation.

- ◇ **PROMOTING COMMITTEE:** Marcello Cherubini, Roberta Ferrari, Laura Giovannelli
- ◇ **SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE:** Marcello Cherubini, Elisa Bizzotto, Roberta Ferrari, Laura Giovannelli, Pierpaolo Martino, Gino Scatata
- ◇ **ORGANISING COMMITTEE:** Marcello Cherubini, Giuseppe Virelli, Angela Amadei and other staff members of the Montaigne Foundation
- ◇ **IN COLLABORATION WITH:**
- Comune di Bagni di Lucca
  - Istituto Storico Lucchese (Sede Centrale)
  - Italian Oscar Wilde Society  IOWS
- ◇ **SPONSORED BY:** Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Lucca

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Paper proposals are **due by April 9, 2022** and should be accompanied by an **abstract** (max 300 words) and a **CV** (max 150 words).

The proposals, as well as any information queries, must be sent to:  
Marcello Cherubini, Chairman of the “Michel de Montaigne” Foundation,  
[marcello.cherubini40@gmail.com](mailto:marcello.cherubini40@gmail.com) (mobile phone: 335 5821080)  
Roberta Ferrari, [roberta.ferrari@unipi.it](mailto:roberta.ferrari@unipi.it)  
Laura Giovannelli, [laura.giovannelli@unipi.it](mailto:laura.giovannelli@unipi.it)

Review notification will be given by **May 14, 2022**.

Please remember that each paper presentation should run **no longer than 25 minutes**.

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Those who wish to participate, whether as speakers or audience, should fill in, sign, and send the enclosed Registration Form to the e-mail (or postal) address specified below **by June 18, 2022**.

Certificates of attendance can be provided for students, teachers, and paper contributors through the Secretary's Office.

Contributors and participants can book a room at the hotels which have an arrangement with the Foundation. A list of these hotels and their rates will be available in due course.

The registration fee is **€130 (one hundred and thirty Euros) per head**. The fee covers conference materials, coffee breaks throughout the conference sessions, the lunch and dinner on Friday, the lunch and social dinner on Saturday, the light lunch on Sunday.

Payment should be made by June 18, 2022 via bank transfer to:

**Fondazione Michel de Montaigne**  
Banco Popolare Società Cooperativa - Agenzia di Bagni di Lucca, Via Casalini, 13 (Italy) CASSA DI  
RISPARMIO DI LUCCA  
AGENZIA DI BAGNI DI LUCCA (ITALY)  
IBAN CODE: IT78N0503470093000000000008  
BIC: BAPPIT21S10

## REGISTRATION FORM

(to be filled in, signed, and sent in paper or electronic format  
by JUNE 18, 2022)

To Prof. Marcello Cherubini, Chairman of the “Michel de Montaigne” Foundation

Postal address: C.P. / P.O. Box 61, 55022 BAGNI DI LUCCA (LU) – ITALY

E-mail address: marcello.cherubini40@gmail.com

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Postal address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip code \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

and/or phone number \_\_\_\_\_

•As detailed in my abstract, I will submit a paper on

\_\_\_\_\_

•Registration fee: payment has been made on \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

•Receipt required (please place a cross on the appropriate option)    Yes        No

•Please indicate if vegetarian or any special requirements \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### **Fondazione Michel de Montaigne**

Banco Popolare Società Cooperativa

Agenzia di Bagni di Lucca

Via Casalini,13 (Italy)

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### **Fondazione Michel de Montaigne**

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