



Seminar

MICHAEL YONAN

Fellow, SCAS.

Professor of Art History, University of Missouri, Columbia

*Lace for the Dress of an Empress:  
Maria Theresa's Artistic Networks*

Wednesday, 9 April, 6:15 p.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall  
SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala  
[www.swedishcollegium.se](http://www.swedishcollegium.se)

The seminar will be followed by a reception.  
Please register by sending an email to [rsvp@swedishcollegium.se](mailto:rsvp@swedishcollegium.se) no later than 7 April.

In collaboration with *Uppsala Interdisciplinary Seminar in Eighteenth-Century Studies*  
and *Department of Art History, Uppsala University*

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## ABOUT MICHAEL YONAN

Michael Yonan studied art history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he received a Ph.D. in 2001. Since 2006, he has been on the faculty of Art History and Archaeology at the University of Missouri, Columbia. He is author of *Empress Maria Theresa and the Politics of Habsburg Imperial Art* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011) and co-editor of *The Cultural Aesthetics of Eighteenth-Century Porcelain* (Ashgate, 2010).

His main field of research is eighteenth-century art in its broadest international manifestations, with particular emphasis on the arts of the former Habsburg Empire, on eighteenth-century decorative arts, and on theoretical questions concerning art history's relationship to the histories of material culture and materiality. In 2011, Yonan published a major article entitled "Toward a Fusion of Art History and Material Culture Studies," which appeared in *West 86th*, the journal of the Bard Graduate Center in New York City. In this same vein, he edits the book series *The Histories of Material Culture and Collecting, 1700–1950*, for Ashgate. With Dr. Stacey Sloboda he is co-coordinator of a forthcoming digital humanities project entitled *Global Arts of the Eighteenth Century*, the planning for which is coordinated through the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

Currently he is president of the Historians of Eighteenth-Century Art and Architecture (HECAA), an affiliate society of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies and the College Art Association, USA.

At SCAS, Yonan plans to complete a book on the sculptor Franz Xaver Messerschmidt (1736–1783), which shall address the ways his sculptures engage with varied discourses in eighteenth-century literature, science, physiognomy, and academic art. He also seeks to understand how disciplinary imperatives and limitations have directed the interpretation of this artist's works.

## ABSTRACT

This seminar traces the history and significance of an important piece of clothing, a sumptuous lace-covered dress commissioned by the Austrian Habsburg Empress Maria Theresa (1717–1780). In 1743, she commanded that the Estates of Flanders in Ghent procure for her a dress made of the highest quality Belgian lace. They responded by sending her in 1745 a garment of great beauty, cost, and manual complexity. To show her gratitude, she had herself portrayed wearing the dress in two different portraits, one sent to Ghent, the other remaining in Vienna. Her actions were based less in fashion and luxury than in politics. This paper traces the political significance of this dress, the paintings it inspired, the lace out of which it was made, and other related works of art to reveal how much a piece of clothing could say about its wearer in eighteenth-century Europe.