

Marble and Flesh. Johan Tobias Sergel and His Times

29 May Nationalmuseum, Blasieholmen, Södra Blasieholmshamnen 2, Stockholm

Magnus Olausson, Nationalmuseum

"Mr Sergel is undoubtedly the first sculptor in Europe". Contemporary Reception and Historical Legacy

Jacob Jonas Björnståhl noted during his visit to Rome in 1771 that Sergel's works elicited "the astonishment of the foreigner." Among those who expressed admiration was William Hamilton in Naples, who regarded the Swedish sculptor as the greatest since Michelangelo.

If Sergel was indeed a central figure among the foreign artists in Rome, how can the rapidity of his subsequent obscurity be explained? This study addresses that question, situating him alongside contemporary sculptors like Antonio Canova and Bertel Thorvaldsen. It concludes with an assessment of Sergel's legacy and his position in the eyes of posterity.

SESSION: THE SCULPTOR'S HAND

Virginie Guffroy, Musée du Louvre

Sergel and the French Sculptors of the Late 18th Century

Throughout his childhood, education, and career, Johann Tobias Sergel was constantly in contact with French artists, particularly sculptors. By examining the connections Sergel established and maintained with the art of French sculptors such as Edme Dumont (1720–1775), Jean-Baptiste Stouf (1742–1826), Claude Michel, known as Clodion (1738–1814), and Joseph Chinard (1756–1813), I will attempt to characterize their respective influences and situate Sergel within a European artistic tradition in which France plays a major role.

Kira Kofoed, Thorvaldsens Museum

Nature and Antiquity – Emotion and Reflection. Johan Tobias Sergel and Bertel Thorvaldsen

Johan Tobias Sergel and Bertel Thorvaldsen only met once in person – a few months before Thorvaldsen as a student set out for Rome. Thirty years apart in age and the same number of years between their first arrival and "artistical rebirth" in Rome, they played different, but central roles in Scandinavian and European Neoclassicism, and are still conceived as their nation's most famous and important sculptors. Focusing on similarities and differences in their handling of motifs, composition, gender

representation, workshop practice and careers, this presentation compares the life and work of Sergel and Thorvaldsen.

Linda Hinners, Nationalmuseum

Ways of Seeing. Sergel – Between Michelangelo and Rodin

Like Michelangelo and Auguste Rodin, Sergel used the human body as the central subject for his art. The three sculptors shared a common interest in trying to capture the body's inner life of feelings and thoughts. Sergel searched for specific fruitful moments in the classical myths that he explored, and he transformed them into vibrant sculptures of life. In that respect, he found a role model in Michelangelo, and Rodin, as a searcher for the true form of the human body, could be considered a successor. Reading the three sculptors together helps us to discover and gain insight into both similarities and differences between them.

SESSION: ART, POWER AND DESIRE IN SERGEL'S STOCKHOLM

Otto Ruin, Stockholm University

Becoming Swedish – Sergel, Desprez and Gustav III:s National Programme

This paper investigates how Johan Tobias Sergel and Louis Jean Desprez took part in Gustav III's national programme. National sentiments thrived during the reign of Gustav III. Art became a propagandistic tool, both promoting national identity and reinforcing absolutist rule. Two artists were particularly central to the monarchs cultural and political program: Johan Tobias Sergel and Louis Jean Desprez. For these international artists, royal patronage proved both a blessing and a curse, offering grand opportunities for artistic production while also constraining their commissions to the king's national agenda.

My Hellsing, Dalarna University

Belles Fesses and Bare Breasts. Gender, Sexuality, Class and Genre Through Sergel's art

In the eighteenth century, there may have existed one category of men, but two different kinds of women: ladies with economic property whose propriety was to be safeguarded, and working women who might undertake any activity, including prostitution, to make ends meet. This division is usually associated with art genres: drawings depicting everyday situations, while sculptures and oil portraits were commissioned by elite clients, thus more idealised or allegorical. By delving into Sergel's sculptures and drawings representing women and couples, this paper discusses the meanings and functions of these works related to their genre and to the social 'reality' of its time.



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