

PhD-topic Cynthia Osiecki

The Language of Sculptures: The Sixteenth Century Migration of Netherlandish Sculptors into the Baltic Sea Region and the Spread of the so-called "Florisstyle"

My research proposal concerns the migration of Netherlandish sculptors to the Baltic Area, which started around the year 1550. Sculptors migrated mainly from the Southern Netherlands, probably without any intension of returning to the Netherlands. On that moment the Netherlands was engaged in the Eighty Years' War (1568-1648) and therefore art commissions were scarce. Old Hanseatic routes, merchant contacts, export of arts from Mechelen and Antwerp since the beginning of the sixteenth century created a market for the Netherlandish artists who were looking for a better economical existence. After the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 many Baltic patrons were looking for highly skilled artists. There were not many local artists, so the migrated artists had little competition. The artists from The Netherlands were available and highly trained, mostly in the Italian Renaissance style. Striking however is that the artworks preserved of Dutch sculptors aren't copies of Italian Renaissance sculptures. There is, on the contrary, to Italian sculpture a lot of attention for the ornament. In most important building projects, in the Baltic Area started after 1555, Dutch sculptors were involved, decorating the rooms and the exterior and on some occasions even were the architects.

At the end of my PhD research I want to gain insight in approximately how many Dutch sculptors worked in the Baltic Area. I also want to map out which countries were the most attractive to establish a workshop, and which countries mostly imported Dutch artworks. I especially want to pay attention to how their network worked, which relations they maintained mutually, locally and with their patrons. In other words, which network had these sculptors to their disposal to gain commissions? The research to artists and their network will explain the corresponding style in the Baltic Area together with the historical background of the Area.