

Call for Papers

Anna Dorothea Therbusch in Context. 18th Century (Women) Artists in Berlin and Europe

Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz,
26 and 27 September, 2024

Organized by Nuria Jetter and Sarah Salomon

Proposals due by 17 September 2023

Born into the Prussian painter family Lisiewsky, Anna Dorothea Therbusch (1721-1782) achieved a remarkable international career in the 18th century, at a time when women's access to artistic training and academies was structurally impeded.

After training with her father Georg Lisiewsky and being influenced by the artistic taste of the Frederician Rococo (Watteau, Pesne, and others), Therbusch devoted herself to the education of her children for twenty years. It was not until 1761, at the age of almost forty, that she began to vigorously pursue her artistic ambitions in a professional manner.

After artistically productive stations at the courts of Stuttgart and Mannheim and admission to the academies of Stuttgart and Bologna, Anna Dorothea Therbusch spent about two years in Paris from summer 1766 to fall 1768. There, not without resistance, she was accepted into the Académie royale with a candlelight painting inspired by Dutch art. She exhibited at the Salon and socialized, among others, with the encyclopedist and art critic Denis Diderot, the engraver Johann Georg Wille, and Prince Golitsyn, who worked as an art agent for Catherine II. In 1768 Therbusch was admitted to the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. She returned to Berlin via Brussels and the Netherlands.

Back in Berlin since 1769, the painter occupied a studio on Unter den Linden in 1772/73, where she worked temporarily with her brother Christoph Friedrich Reinhold Lisiewsky. She became a sought-after portraitist of Berlin high society, also working for the Russian court, and her mythological history paintings had success with Frederick II.

The Berlin Gemäldegalerie is currently conducting an art-historical and art-technological research project on Anna Dorothea Therbusch's paintings held in the collections of the Staatliche Museen in Berlin. The resulting publication will provide new insights into the materials and working methods used by the artist and, with the participation of other public collections in Berlin and Brandenburg, will also present their holdings of Therbusch's works.

This is the occasion to further broaden the view of the artist and her work within the framework of a specialist symposium. It is to bring together researchers in order to illuminate Therbusch's work in larger art historical contexts, to share insights, and to point out further research perspectives. Of particular interest are proposals for presentations on the following topics:

1. Therbusch's artistic models and her working environment:

Which artists did she orientate herself on, which paintings and collections was she able to study in Prussia and on her travels? What was Therbusch's working environment like and how did she relate to other artists?

2. Therbusch's working methods and the thematic range of her oeuvre:

What can be said about the processes of creation and execution of Therbusch's paintings on the basis of art-technological findings and comparisons of works? Where can she be located concerning her painting technique? What were the significance and function of her genre and historical paintings? What modes of representation did she choose for her portraits?

3 Therbusch's networks and career strategies:

How did Therbusch obtain her commissions in Prussia, Stuttgart, Mannheim, Paris (and possibly beyond)? Which acquaintances and family or aristocratic connections could she have used for this purpose? Who were her clients and patrons? How did she promote herself?

4. The early reception of the painter and her work by contemporaries and up to the early 19th century.

Please submit your proposal for a 20-minute presentation (preliminary title, abstract of 300 words max., short biography) in English or German by 17 September 2023 to Nuria Jetter (n.jetter@smb.spk-berlin.de) and Dr. Sarah Salomon (s.salomon@smb.spk-berlin.de).

The symposium will take place on 26 and 27 September, 2024 at the Kulturforum near Potsdamer Platz (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Matthäikirchplatz). If funds are available, a travel allowance will be granted.

Selected bibliography:

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Berckenhagen 1987

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Ruth Irmgard Dalinghaus, Anna Dorothea Therbusch, in: Das verborgene Museum I. Dokumentation der Kunst von Frauen in Berliner öffentlichen Sammlungen, Ausst.-Kat. Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, Berlin, 1987-88, Berlin 1987, S. 112-116.

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Der freie Blick. Anna Dorothea Therbusch und Ludovike Simanowiz. Zwei Porträtmalerinnen des 18. Jahrhunderts, Ausst.-Kat. Städtisches Museum Ludwigsburg 2002/3, bearbeitet von Katharina Küster und Beatrice Scherzer, Heidelberg 2002.

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Die Deutschen Gemälde des 18. Jahrhunderts. Kritischer Bestandskatalog, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Gemäldegalerie, Berlin 2002 [darin Eintrag zu Therbusch und ihren Gemälden der Gemäldegalerie S. 224-234].

Küster-Heise 2008

Katharina Küster-Heise, Anna Dorothea Therbusch, geb. Lisiewska 1721-1782. Eine Malerin der Aufklärung. Leben und Werk, Dissertation Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, 2008. [Als Mikrofilm in Bibliotheken verfügbar].

Bartoschek 2010

Gemeinsam stark? Anna Dorothea Therbusch und ihre Zusammenarbeit mit Christoph Friedrich Reinhold Lisiewsky, in: Christoph Friedrich Reinhold Lisiewsky (1725-1794), Ausst.-Kat. Kulturstiftung DessauWörlitz/Staatliches Museum Schwerin 2010-11, Berlin/München 2010, S. 77-84.

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Lange 2017

Justus Lange, Ehefrau – Schwester – Lehrerin. Anna Dorothea Therbuschs Doppelbildnis in Kassel im Kontext unterschiedlicher Deutungen, in: Künstlerinnen. Neue Perspektiven auf ein Forschungsfeld der Vormoderne, hrsg. v. Birgit Ulrike Münch, Andreas Tacke, Markwart Herzog, Sylvia Heudecker, Petersberg 2017.

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Bärbel Kovalevski, Barbara Rosina Lisiewska (1713-1783). Hofmalerin in Berlin und Braunschweig. Bildnisse mit Geschichten, Berlin 2022.

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