

UC Davis Art History

Templeton Lecture in European Art

Sensing Enlightenment in Rococo Ornamentation



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Rococo art revels in complexity, sensuality, indeterminacy, and seductive surfaces, which are conveyed in the decorative arts through the shell-like rocaille shapes that give the style its name. Rococo design was more than just an art of decoration, however. Its forms reveal the structures that bind object, image, and viewer, making it a meta-style, one in which the ontological conditions of viewer and object are interrogated. This paper explores the theoretical underpinnings of rococo ornament by examining how it transformed the art/nature duality at the center of early modern European aesthetics into a critique of sensation.

EVERSON 157 at 4:30 pm
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