

Julian Gardner

Inaugural Lecture at The Warburg Institute, London

On June 1st. in the Beveridge Hall of Senate House, University of London Professor Peter Mack, the incoming Director of the Warburg Institute gave an inaugural lecture "Thinking about the Audience in Rhetoric, Literature and Painting" before a very large and enthusiastic audience including representatives of the British Academy and many universities. Professor Mack was introduced by the Vice-Chancellor of the University Professor Geoffrey Crossick, who stressed that the Warburg Institute was "one of the jewels in the crown of London University" and that the University had no intention of separating the Library from the Institute.

Professor Mack demonstrated how Aristotle's three types of speech aimed at three types of audience - judicial, deliberative and demonstrative, whereas Roman rhetoric used direct and indirect approaches to, respectively, favourable and hostile publics. He traced the innovations of Renaissance rhetoric in Agricola's *De inventione dialectica* and Erasmus' *Letters* where exposition and argument related to audience, intention and style and how the orator's disposition was devised to suit the aim of the speech and fit it appropriately to its audience. Professor Mack illustrated the new attention accorded to the writer's relationship to the recipient of a letter. He drew telling examples of the influence of ancient rhetoric from Chaucer's *Troilus* and Criseyde and Montaigne's *Essais*, culminating in a virtuoso exposition of Act 2 Scene 4 of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. The last part of the lecture was an examination of the latent narrative of Rembrandt's *Bathsheba* with King David's *Letter* (1654) in the Louvre.

The Warburg has announced a number of new initiatives, Among them is the Conference Leonardo da Vinci: Painting as Philosophy on Thursday 2nd. February 2012 jointly staged by the Institute and the National

Gallery and organized by Peter Mack and Luke Syson. Among the speakers will be Alessandro Nova (KIF) and Robert Zwijnenberg (Leiden). Registration will open in October this year.

Author

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Title

Julian Gardner, *Inaugural Lecture at The Warburg Institute, London*, in: *kunsttexte.de*, Nr. 2, 2011 (1 page), www.kunsttexte.de.