

STATUES' Rumours



This ancient sculpture, popularly known as Madama Lucrezia, is the only feminine figure of the Roman 'talking statues'. It is in Piazza San Marco, Rome.

Pasquino, the most famous 'talking statue' in Rome, and the statues of Marforio, 'L'Abate Luigi', 'Il Babuino' and 'Il Facchino', complete the group.

PHD TITLE

Satues' Rumours: The Communicative Phenomenon of the Italian 'Talking Statues' from the Renaissance to the Present Day

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CONTEXT

Originating in Rome during the Renaissance, 'talking statues' is a creative channel of communication consisting of six separate public sculptures functioning as popular spaces of contestation. The phenomenon operated through anonymous libels against powerful figures, written in scraps of paper, and affixed by people in the bodies or the base of these sculptures, creating an alternative way to circumvent censorship, securing freedom of expression from the streets.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

The thesis aims to provide an extensive analysis on the life and afterlife of the 'talking statues' as a living form of communication in constant evolution and balance between the permeation of public spaces and the media spheres.

MATERIALS

Primary and secondary sources, maps, engravings, Italian handwritten-newsletters, newspapers, tweets, and photographs will be the materials under examination.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The thesis is articulated along two main lines of investigation: the imprints of the 'talking statues' in the urban setting - spatial approach - and in the spaces of media -media approach-.

1. Firstly, the research analyses the spaces of communication that the 'talking statues' have produced, first in Rome and later across the Italian peninsula over the centuries, through the activation of additional public statues for assuming the communicative role.
2. Secondly, it examines their evolution and adaptation to emergent methods of communication over the centuries focusing on the Italian handwritten newsletters (XVII century), on London newspapers (XVIII and XIX century), and on its recent permeation in social media, in particular in Twitter.

INSTAGRAM CHALLENGE

1. Take a scrap of paper and make your favourite public statue speak as the 'talking statues' do in Rome!
2. Post it on Instagram under the hashtag #StatuesRumoursExeter and I will share it on the project's Instagram account @estatuasquehablan

