

The ‘Quality of Relationship’ between person and picture

with **John Armstrong**

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One of the most elusive—but most important—topics in the study of art is that of the relationship between the beholder and the image. Think of how we speak of our relationships to pictures: liking, loving, knowing about, hating, being excited, being bored, being puzzled. These are not just about the object, they are also about how we experience it. I’m going to talk about ‘the quality of relationship’ between a person and a picture—what makes for a good relationship.

This might seem like an unconventional topic. Mostly we talk about the works—and try to find out more about them. But surely that’s all in the service of individual relationships to individual pictures. But the leading edge in intellectual thinking is now paying much more attention to issues of evaluation: what is it to like a picture, to need it in your imagination? Why is it a good object? And this is of deep importance in cultural transmission. Culture isn’t only a matter of knowledge: it’s also to do with liking, loving and caring.

I want to explore how this picture, painted over 250 years ago continues to live, not just as a momento of another time and place, but as a living force in the present.



BERNARDO BELLOTTO RUINS OF THE FORUM, ROME (C. 1743) OIL ON CANVAS 87.0 X 148.0 CM NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA 964-3 FELTON BEQUEST, 1919

Meet at the Information Desk, NGV International, at 10.50 am.

Free event, all welcome, but RSVP to: sgillberg@bigpond.com

Membership of the Fine Arts Network (FAN) is \$65, \$40 students with photocopy of student card; Joint \$80 and includes a copy of *Melbourne Art Journal*, as well as numerous other benefits.

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