

CISEPS Seminar

The Labor Market in the Seventeenth-Century Italian Art Sector

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(joint with Federico Etro and Laura Pagani)

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DEMS, Building U6, room 3062

Abstract

We analyze the labor market for painters in Baroque Rome using unique panel data on primary sales of still lifes, portraits, genre paintings, landscapes and figurative paintings. In line with the traditional artistic hierarchy of genres, average price differentials between them were high. The matched painter-patron nature of the dataset allows us to evaluate the extent to which price heterogeneity is related to unobservable characteristics of painters and patrons. We find that the market allocated artists between artistic genres to the point of equalizing the marginal return of each genre. We explain residual price differences in terms of efficiency wages and incentive mechanisms to induce effort in the production of artistic quality.

CISEPS

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