



# Allie Terry

Tuesday, January 27th, 2009  
201A (Sky Bank Room) BTSU  
1:30pm

## CRIMINALS & TOURISTS: Prison History and the Museum-Going Public in

**What role does historical memory play in viewers' responses to  
beauty?**

This talk focuses on the decision, made in 1865, to create the first National Museum of Italy inside of a former prison and infamous site of torture, known as the Bargello, in Florence. While the visual arts have always been integral to the material fabric of the institution of the Bargello, the transition from criminal to cultural audiences in the nineteenth century signals a conscious transformation in the function of the site and the usefulness of the visual experience to further the agenda of the Italian government.

Despite the Bargello's transformation from a judicial to a cultural institution, violence remained integral to the visual encounter of its audience. The violence that once constituted the criminal's physical experience of punishment was translated into a violently physical aesthetic experience for the viewer of art within the nineteenth-century museum. The talk questions how the viewing process integrated the violence of the past into an aesthetic of redemption for the present, and examines the role of art and architecture to forge a self-fashioned identity for the new nation-state of Italy.

Allie Terry is an Assistant Professor of Art History at BGSU with a research and teaching focus on visual culture in early modern Italy. Concerned with the performative experience of viewing art and architecture, Terry has published on topics ranging from political strategies of art patronage to criminal experiences of torture and punishment. Her talk is part of a larger book manuscript, *Somaesthetics and the Renaissance: Medieval Torture to Aesthetic Redemption at the Bargello*, which she is actively researching and writing as an ICS Fellow during Spring 2009.