



Spaces of Interiority – Sites of Self-Formation: Art and Spirituality in the Society of Jesus (1580–1700)

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Inspired by issues of (inner) perception, this Ph.D. project is dedicated to the formation of the spiritual self in the Society of Jesus. The formation of a Jesuit self was realized in particular by practices of meditation and prayer based on the methodic use of mental and later also material images. These techniques were based on the *Spiritual Exercises* written by the founder of the order Ignatius of Loyola and were intensively exercised in the two-year novitiate and the third year of probation, the *schola affectus*.

Whereas recent studies have mainly analyzed the meaning of meditative prints with regard to spiritual self-formation, systematic research into these ‘technologies of the self’ (Foucault) in the context of real and pictured space still needs to be done. This study is therefore focusing on the relationship between space and self, between interior and interiority. It is particularly interested in how inwardness was produced, how it was formed on the basis of certain ideals, and to what extent the actually built and artistically shaped interior played a part in terms of self-formation. I will explore these contexts in three case studies of Roman Jesuit interiors: the Cappella della Natività in the Gesù, Bernini’s Sant’Andrea al Quirinale, and the ceiling vault in Sant’Ignazio executed by the Jesuit lay brother Andrea Pozzo.

Michel de Certeau’s differentiation between ‘space’ and ‘place’ will provide the appropriate conceptual means to describe the relationship between built space and inner self. To this effect, the practices of mental prayer transform the primary liturgical site into a space of inwardness, thereby becoming a site of self-formation in which religious inwardness was produced and formed on the basis of certain Jesuit ideals and moral concepts. Thus, the spaces of the Jesuits became important instruments for the shaping of one’s soul and for the constitution of the self.