Newberry Seminar in European Art  
Sponsor: The Samuel H. Kress Foundation  

Friday, April 29, 2016  
2:00pm to 5:00pm / Room 2-West  

The Newberry Library / 60 West Walton Street / Chicago IL 60610  

The Metamorphosis of Nature in the Dutch Revolt  
Marisa Anne Bass, Washington University in Saint Louis  

The Antwerp merchant Joris Hoefnagel experienced firsthand the devastating early years of the Dutch Revolt, from the Iconoclasm of 1566 to the plundering of his hometown by Spanish soldiers one decade later. His mercantile prospects destroyed by the war, Hoefnagel found refuge in a second career built upon a talent that he had long nurtured on the side: the creation of splendid miniature paintings of animals and insects. This paper argues that Hoefnagel discovered in the metamorphoses of the natural world a means to process the violent metamorphosis of Antwerp, and to seek out spiritual understanding amidst human discord.  

Vasari’s Speed  
Douglas G. Biow, University of Texas at Austin  

Vasari, who obviously wished to convey to his readers in the 1568 Giuntina edition that he originally wrote the first draft of the 1550 Torrentiniana edition with some alacrity, had a significant investment in speed as a topic in the Lives, particularly when it comes to investigating how he characterized himself as a painter and, just as important, how he ascribed to speed a considerable role in the development of the history of art from the time of Cimabue to the present, precisely during a period of dynamic social change increasingly fueled by a voracious appetite for quality works of visual art. To see how this is so, I will examine in this paper why Vasari was so deeply interested in the concept of prestezza (speed) in the Lives and how it resonated with his own sense of self as a professional artist working in a culture of conspicuous consumption. In conclusion I will briefly consider, in the context of some of the classicizing aesthetic terms that are articulated within the Lives itself, the relationship between Vasari’s exceptional output as a fast-paced writer and his equally remarkable work as a fast-paced visual artist.  

To request a copy of the paper, please email Mary N. Kennedy at kennedym@newberry.org  
Please do not request a paper unless you plan to attend.