

## Sektion auf dem Forum Kunstgeschichte Italiens (Berlin, 7–9 Apr 16)

Berlin, Apr 7–09, 2016

Deadline: Sep 1, 2015

Henrike Haug

Call for Papers: Forum Kunstgeschichte Italiens

Session: *Adottare e adattare*. Practices of Transmission, Methods of Appropriation, and Motives for Transformation during the Middle Ages in Italy

Session organised by: Dr. Henrike Haug (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, MPI), Prof. Paolo Piva (Università degli Studi di Milano), Dr. Christine Ungruh (Freie Universität Berlin), Dr. Maddalena Vaccaro (Università degli Studi di Salerno)

The appropriation and adaptation of 'other' forms of art is a phenomenon that can be observed throughout medieval Italy. The confluence of various cultures in the Mediterranean and the fact that relics of older cultures were ever present in this region, ensured that foreign artefacts, artistic techniques, and forms were not only available, but rather artists and commissioners of the time must have virtually felt compelled to appropriate and adapt them. But what were the methods and the underlying motives for such practices? A consideration of these leading questions may extend across various possible fields of research.

By invoking the creative processes of '*adottare*' and '*adattare*', for example, we would like to bring into focus what sort of 'other' works of art or new iconographies were introduced into the 'own' cultural sphere. This involves the exploration, for example, of the various media for which they were adapted (painting, mosaics, book illumination, etc.), the new contexts for which they were produced, as well as consideration of semantic and symbolic issues. Such perspectives promise a better understanding of the use of models in new contexts and the adjustment of forms and images in relation to context-specific issues, which may have contributed to the adoption of the meanings of figurative elements or details, such as exegesis or liturgy.

Moreover, it becomes evident that art objects, techniques, or forms were not only seized upon to stimulate art production in Italy, but rather were appropriated to constitute and strengthen political, economic or religious networks. In the vibrant socio-cultural climate of medieval Italy, 'foreign' art forms and conceptualizations may have been deliberately chosen and transformed in order to insinuate connections with distant areas or eras, or were appropriated in order to (re-)construct specific notions of the past, or the 'other'. By means of visualizing and in turn integrating such visualizations in the respective social practices, new images, objects, and conceptualizations seem to have been effectively contextualized in order to ensure, for example, the inclusion of the

appropriating party in new concepts of the 'other', and the perpetuation thereof. Proposals are explicitly invited to address the variety of performative practices and (ritual) staging of these artefacts, as the processes of appropriation often become evident in handling the respective objects or interacting with them.

Due to the complexity of the issue, this Call is intentionally broad in scope. For this reason, we expressly invite scholars from neighboring disciplines such as Byzantine studies, musicology, liturgy, or comparative theology, which consider both artistic and social practices in Italy in the Middle Ages, to contribute to the session. Also, young researchers and less explored topics are particularly welcome. The session languages are German, Italian, and English.

Please send your proposal of not more than 300 words and a brief CV to Maddalena Vaccaro (mavaccaro@unisa.it) and Christine Ungruh (christine.ungruh@fu-berlin.de).

Reference:

CFP: Sektion auf dem Forum Kunstgeschichte Italiens (Berlin, 7-9 Apr 16). In: ArtHist.net, Jul 20, 2015 (accessed Jul 13, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/10797>>.