

The function of Medieval Sculpture (Utrecht, 15–16 Nov 18)

Utrecht, Museum Catharijneconvent, Nov 15–16, 2018

Deadline: Sep 15, 2018

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The 5th annual Ards colloquium 'Current research in medieval and renaissance sculpture: The function of medieval sculpture and its relation to formal design and colour' will be held in the Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht on November 15th and 16th 2018.

Ards, M-Museum Leuven (B) and Museum Catharijneconvent Utrecht (NL) are launching a Call for Papers for the 5th annual colloquium 'Current research in medieval and renaissance sculpture', which will be held in the Museum Catharijneconvent on November 16th 2018. During the colloquium we will be inviting keynote speakers on the topic and a selection of submitted papers in plenum. One day earlier on November 15th, we will have the opportunity to visit the magnificent collections of medieval sculpture in Utrecht.

This year we are inviting all researchers and curators working specifically on topics related to the function of medieval and renaissance sculpture, and the ways in which this influences the way these sculptures have been designed or executed, and vice versa to submit papers.

Questions we would like to see addressed during this event are:

The importance of medieval sculpture in western medieval Europe is clear, but why was this discipline so important? How and when did certain formal designs find their origins? In what respect have certain iconographical themes defined the evolution of sculptural design, in relation to the function of these objects? How did the use of certain materials dictate the sculptors work, how, why and where were some materials used? In this respect, we cannot forget about the fact that many sculpted objects were meant to be finished with a polychrome layer and we simply cannot assess these sculptures correctly without taking into account their (once) colourful appearance. Furthermore, does size matter when it comes to designing or carving medieval sculpture?

We also want to look into the semantics of medieval sculpture.

How can we classify this vast group of sculpted and carved products from the middle ages? Are the divisions between figurative or narrative freestanding sculpture and applied architectural sculpture, liturgical objects and church furniture, decorative carvings and even metalwork justified or artificial? What about the division between worldly, non-religiously themed sculpture and sculptures made for a religious context? Should we talk more in terms of function-specific sculpture, which are objects with a clear function that can be used in many settings or contexts such as reliquary busts, saint figures as opposed to more location-specific sculpture, where the place or location for which a piece was made determines its meaning and therefore its function such as choir

stalls with their misericord carvings, pulpits etc. And let's not forget about commission-specific sculpture then, objects that have been ordered specifically and hence have been designed to the wishes of the patron ordering them. Another question in this regard could be what socio-economical tendencies are to be taken into account when studying this domain.

And of course devotional practices cannot be overlooked. What's the use of some objects and do we, in a more secular 21st century mindset, fully understand what certain objects were used for? Not all sculptures were static pieces on a pedestal in a church, or architectural elements of a building but were 'active' elements used in a liturgy practice, sometimes literally moving and used in processions and ceremonies. And lastly, does the devotional function an object still has today change the way we are supposed or even allowed to view, show or research it as art historians or curators?

Call for papers

Deadline: 15.09.18

Would you like to submit a paper for this conference? Your proposal can be of an art-historical, historical as well as a technical or scientific nature. Multidisciplinarity is encouraged.

Priority will be given to speakers presenting new research findings and contributions relevant to the specific conference theme. The conference committee, consisting of sculpture curators from M – Museum Leuven and the Museum Catharijneconvent Utrecht will select papers for the conference. Submissions that are not selected for presentation in plenum, can still be taken into consideration for (digital) poster presentation.

There are no fees, nor retribution of transport and/or lodging costs for the selected papers. After the conference, presentations will be shared online with the Ards-network on the website (via Slideshare), so please make sure your pictures are copyright cleared.

How to submit your proposal?

- Write in English. Presentations must be given in English (with a ppt presentation).
- Include a short CV.
- Max. 500 words for abstracts (excl. authors name(s) and contact details).
- E-mail to marjan.debaene@leuven.be.
- Deadline: 15.09.18

Successful applicants will receive a notification by 30.09.18.

Reference:

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