

Animation in the Middle Ages (Bialystok, 16–19 Sept 21)

Bialystok, Poland, Sep 16–19, 2021

Deadline: Apr 1, 2021

Kamil Kopania

What does Animation mean in the Middle Ages? Theoretical and Historical Approaches

International conference in Bialystok, Poland

Organised by:

A. Zelwerowicz National Academy of Dramatic Art – Branch Campus in Bialystok, Poland
and University of Bergen, Norway

Statement:

This conference is concerned with the agency and life of material objects and evolves around the investigation of two interlaced objectives. First, the project will shed light on understudied aspects of medieval visual culture, focusing in particular on the agency of images and material objects. Second, it will provide new cutting-edge theoretical reflections and methodologies concerning the study of material agency and “living images” today. We argue that the cultural use of and interaction with images may be regarded as more than mere historically or culturally specific phenomenon. Rather, it concerns the ontology of images and constitutes a fundamental aspect of our life with images, in the premodern as well as in the contemporary. It is our contention that images are embedded in social interaction and that animation is deeply constitutive of the production of meaning. Animation, we argue, is not only located in the mind of the beholder, but in the epistemology, creation, interaction, and materiality of images. Furthermore, we will argue that medieval animation may inform contemporary views on animation and provide us with a more precise vocabulary to capture current phenomena for instance in the digital world. The conference aims to be interdisciplinary and transhistorical in its perspective. The conference targets scholars of visual studies, material studies, study of religions, anthropology, medieval studies and theology. It is also relevant more generally for current discussions about the life and agency of seemingly dead matter.

There are four main topics of the conference:

- Physical animation of art-works and other artefacts (sculptures, reliquaries, paintings etc.)
- Mental “animations” of objects (art-works, and other artefacts)
- Animation in a theatrical context (mystery-plays, liturgical plays and staging’s, puppets and other theatrical use of figures and sculptures)
- Medieval and Early Modern animation in the 20th Century and contemporary theatrical practices.

The Conference takes as its point of departure the work of the newly organized international research-project: The Living Image (LIMA): On the ontology, agency and personhood of living images and objects – medieval and modern. This project is coordinated from the University of Bergen, Norway, and consists of a group of researchers from Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Norway, Poland, United Kingdom, and USA, and the work of the international research network: The European Network on the Instruments of Devotion – ENID: <https://enid.w.uib.no/>

The conference in Białystok is designed to be a platform for the exchange of opinions, ideas, and historical documentation, as well as the starting point for a publication. We plan to publish a collection of articles offering an interdisciplinary academic survey of the topic of animation in the Middle Ages, and its reception in the 20th Century.

Confirmed key-note speakers:

Peter Dent, Ph.D., University of Bristol, GB

Prof. Cynthia Hahn, The City University of New York, USA

Prof. Hans Henrik Lohfert Jørgensen, University of Aarhus, Denmark

Amy Whitehead, Ph. D., Massey University, New Zealand

The language of the conference is English. Each contributor will be given 20 minutes to present his/her paper.

Please send abstracts of no longer than 500 words, together with a short CV and personal data to the following email: medievalanimation@gmail.com

Deadline: April 1, 2021.

Conference fee: 25 Euros (15 Euros for Ph.D. students)

Conference organised by:

Kamil Kopania, Ph.D., A. Zelwerowicz National Academy of Dramatic Art – Branch Campus in Białystok, Poland (<https://atb.edu.pl/o-wydziale/pedagogzy/dr-kamil-kopania>)

Henning Laugerud, Associate Professor, Dr. Art., Department of Linguistic, Literary, and Aesthetic Studies, University of Bergen, Norway (<https://www.uib.no/en/persons/Henning.Laugerud>)

Scientific committee:

Henrik von Achen, Professor, Director of the University Museum, University of Bergen, Norway

Kristin Bliksrud Aavitsland, Professor Ph.D., MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society, Norway

Barbara Baert, Professor, Ph.D., Art History, Faculty of Arts, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium

Jørgen Bakke, Associate Professor, Dr. Art., Department of Linguistic, Literary and Aesthetic Studies, University of Bergen, Norway

Carla Maria Bino, Professor, Ph.D., Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Brescia, Italy

Christophe Chaguinian, Associate Professor, Ph.D., College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, University of North Texas, USA

Peter Dent, Ph.D., Department of History of Art, University of Bristol, Great Britain

Rob Faesen, Professor Ph.D., Department of History of Church and Theology, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium

Cynthia Hahn, Professor, Ph.D., Medieval Art History, Hunter College, The City University of New York, USA

Hans Henrik Lohfert Jørgensen, Associate Prof., School of Communication and Culture – Art History, University of Aarhus, Denmark

Jon P. Mitchell, Professor, Ph.D., Social Anthropology, University of Sussex, Great Britain

David Morgan, Professor Ph.D., Religious Studies & Art, Art History and Visual Studies, Duke University, USA

Salvador Ryan, Professor. Ph.D., Ecclesiastical History, Pontifical University St Patricks College, Maynooth, Ireland

Zuzanna Sarnecka, Assistant Professor, Ph.D., Institute of Art History, University of Warsaw, Poland

Laura Katrine Skinnebach, Ph.D., School of Communication and Culture – Art History, University of Aarhus, Denmark

Allie Terry-Fritsch, Associate Professor, Ph.D., School of Art – Art History, Bowling Green State University, USA

The conference will take place in Białystok at the:

The A. Zelwerowicz National Academy of Dramatic Art

Branch Campus in Białystok

(Puppet Theatre Art Department)

H. Sienkiewicza 14,

15–092 Białystok, Poland

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<https://goo.gl/maps/hcfuKHoNqKegPMSK9>

BIAŁYSTOK

General information: <http://odkryj.bialystok.pl/en>

See also: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bia%C5%82ystok>

Reference:

CFP: Animation in the Middle Ages (Białystok, 16-19 Sept 21). In: Arthist.net, Jun 26, 2020 (accessed Jan 24, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/23302>>.