

## Movement and Meaning (Kalamazoo, May 2007)

Giovanni Freni

CALL FOR PAPERS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON MEDIEVAL STUDIES –  
THE MEDIEVAL INSTITUTE - WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY –  
May 10-13, 2007 – KALAMAZOO MI

### Movement and Meaning in Medieval Art and Architecture

In the Middle Ages, buildings and works of art were often experienced through ritual actions involving the movement of objects or through the viewer's own movements. Movement, thus, is a fundamental category for the interpretation of art. Closely related to the functional context of medieval works of art or architecture, it can transmit or even define several layers of meaning. In these two joint sessions we propose to investigate categories of movement relevant to the interpretation of medieval works of art and architecture.

Session A, "The Moving Art Work," explores the specific meanings defined by the ritual movement of both large and small objects. Examples include large winged altarpieces or shrines (i.e. Flügelaltarretabel and Flügelaltarschreine), which display a variety of images or relics, and smaller objects such as books, reliquaries, liturgical vessels, and icons. For this session, we invite papers that focus on objects for which movement is intrinsic to their function, or on artifacts that acquire further layers of meanings once they are set in motion.

Session B, "The Moving Viewer," focuses on larger, works of art, fixed in location, buildings, or urban settings, whose reception depended on the movement of the viewer. Reliquaries or shrines more permanently installed in specially created architectural settings – such as medieval crypts, etc. – are the motionless centers of attention for flows of pilgrims. Processions, public ceremonies and ritual movements of individuals within religious buildings and urban settings convey to these sites and objects meanings, which go beyond their immediate significance.

The papers in these two sessions are intended to discuss the ways in which medieval works of art and /or buildings were experienced in their functional and intellectual contexts. The category of movement provides a broader framework for art historical research, in which approaches, such as formal analysis, iconography, social and mental history, religious study, and more broadly, the study of cultural traditions, find a new synthesis.

Both sessions are complementary and distinct at the same time. They address

the broader theme of movement in art and architecture as a fundamental carrier of meaning, by covering the two ways of motion relevant to the interpretation of art: the perception of the moving work of art and the viewer in motion.

Session organizers:

Giovanni Freni, Index of Christian Art, Princeton University

Nino Zchomelidse, Dept. of Art & Archaeology, Princeton University

To submit a 20-minute paper for either session, please, send an abstract with an abstract cover sheet (downloadable from the congress website: <http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress/42cfp/forms/ACS.pdf>) via mail or fax to and/or contact:

Giovanni Freni, Princeton University - Index of Christian Art, Department of Art and Archaeology - McCormick Hall A9, Princeton NJ 08544

Tel. 609 258 6364; Fax 609 258 0103; email: [gfreni@princeton.edu](mailto:gfreni@princeton.edu)

Only submissions received by September 15, 2006 will be considered.

Reference:

CFP: Movement and Meaning (Kalamazoo, May 2007). In: Arthist.net, Jul 7, 2006 (accessed Dec 17, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/28364>>.