

Geometry in Medieval Art (ICMS Kalamazoo, 7-10 May 09)

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Call for Papers

Dear Colleagues,

Please find our description for the ICMA-sponsored panel, "Practical and Theoretical Geometry in Medieval Art", for the 2009 International Congress on Medieval Studies (Kalamazoo, MI).

Please send abstracts to clakey@berkeley.edu and karlwhittington@berkeley.edu by September 15, 2008.

Practical and Theoretical Geometry in Medieval Art

In the Middle Ages, the discovery of the geometric structure within all created objects was often seen as evidence for God's presence in the physical world; similarly, opticians revealed the geometric basis for human vision as a reflection of the divine. Writers from the mid-twelfth century through the fourteenth made a clear distinction between geometry's practical and theoretical uses. In turn, the practical application of geometry in architecture, cartography, and the mechanical arts was balanced against a more theoretical approach, as in representations of the divine in texts, diagrams and pictures.

This session investigates links between geometric, optical, or spatial-perspectival inquiries and their relationship to medieval representation. Papers could address questions such as: How did geometry influence medieval conceptions and representations of space, both pictorial and architectonic? What evidence exists that suggests a link between newly translated Arabic theories of optics in the medieval west and the pictorial arts? How did the geometry of medieval diagrams influence pictorial representation? With this session, we hope to begin a dialogue concerning geometry's centrality for conceptions of medieval representation in a range of media.

Reference:

CFP: Geometry in Medieval Art (ICMS Kalamazoo, 7-10 May 09). In: ArtHist.net, Jul 11, 2008 (accessed Apr 6, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/30580>>.