

Thinking Small: Scale & Meaning in Medieval Art (Kalamazoo, 13-16 May 10)

Ben Tilghman

13-16 May 10)

CALL FOR PAPERS:

Thinking Small: Scale and Meaning in Medieval Art

Session to be held at the 2010 International Congress on Medieval Studies,
Kalamazoo, Michigan, 13-16 May

Sponsored by The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, MD

Organizer: Ben C. Tilghman (Walters Art Museum)

This session will consider the important role that the size of an art object, particularly smallness, plays in shaping the way that its beholders relate to it and thus understand it. Scale is one of the most important physical aspects of a work of art: large and small objects require different investments of time and resources, elicit different responses from their beholders, and reflect the varying purposes which works were meant to serve. Nonetheless, scale has rarely been considered in depth by art historians. The works of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Gaston Bachelard, and Susan Stewart form a basic theoretical foundation for considering small things, and John Mack has recently offered a general consideration of small art across cultures, but we remain far from a full account of the phenomenology of smallness in art.

Medieval art offers a particularly rich field for pursuing such an account. Whether in miniature books of hours, intricately carved ivories, portable altars, or architectural reliquaries, miniaturization plays a key role in many works of medieval art. This session is open to both broad-based thematic surveys and focused studies on specific objects, but all the papers will deepen our theoretical understanding of miniaturization and smallness as a whole. Possible themes to be considered include but are not limited to: economics and trade, portability and dislocation, gender differentiation, meditation and absorption, the concept of the simulacrum, intimacy and distance, sentimentality, marginalization, and magic.

DEADLINE FOR PAPER PROPOSALS: September 15, 2009

Paper proposals should consist of the following:

1. Abstract of proposed paper (300 words maximum)
2. Completed Abstract Cover Sheet (available at:
<http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress/submissions.html#ACS>)
3. CV with home and office mailing addresses, e-mail address, and phone number

Abstracts and enquiries should be directed to Ben Tilghman at:

btilghman@gmail.com (preferred)

or

The Walters Art Museum

600 N. Charles St

Baltimore, MD 21218

Reference:

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