

Objects of Devotion (online, 20–22 May 21)

online / Ghent University (zoom), May 20–22, 2021

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Anne-Laure Van Bruaene

Objects of Devotion: Religion and its Instruments in Early Modern Europe is an international conference which examines how religious ideas and practice were realized through interaction with objects. We investigate how the presence of sculptures, paintings, books, vestments, and church furniture—their visibility, tactility, and materiality—helped form attitudes toward devotion, sacred history, and salvation. In other words, how did people think with things—both clerics and lay devotee? We will examine the complex role of sacrament houses, altarpieces, pulpits, in molding ideas about the central tenets of Christianity. How, for example, did statues of Christ and the saints make both present and problematic these issues—particularly when they involved performances: carried about the town, taken down from the cross and laid in the sepulcher, or lanced to emit spurts of blood? Tombs helped form ideas about the body, its mortality, and the hope of resurrection.

Historians of the late medieval and early modern period have created an antithesis between spiritual (inward) and physical (outward) devotion, branding the latter as superficial, ritualistic and mechanistic. More generally, from the first Protestant historians to Max Weber and his followers, the Reformation has come to be represented as the classic watershed between material, magical devotion and spiritual, rational belief. In a similar vein, art historians have opposed the notion of the medieval cult image, material and functional, to the early modern work of art, subject to aesthesis (Carolyn Walker Bynum, Hans Belting). Yet, does it make sense to distinguish between late medieval and early modern religious culture, given the fact that the definitions and boundaries of these periods are notoriously problematic and considerably overlap? We will examine the degree to which these differing traditions dictated separate approaches to objects and their role in forming beliefs and practices.

Registration: <https://webappsx.ugent.be/eventManager/events/objectsofdevotion>

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PROGRAM

THURSDAY 20 MAY 2021

ET/CET

8:00/14:00 Welcome: Anne-Laure Van Bruaene (Ghent University)

8:05/14:05 Introduction: Ethan Matt Kavaler (University of Toronto)

Chair: Koenraad Jonckheere (Ghent University)

8:20/14:20 Ralph Dekoninck (Université catholique de Louvain) and Caroline Heering (Université catholique de Louvain / IRPA), The “ornamentalisation” of the Ornamenta sacra in the early modern Low Countries

9:00/15:00 Justin Kroesen (University Museum of Bergen), The afterlife of medieval tabernacle shrines in Scandinavia

9:40/15:40 BREAK (and Break-Out Room Conversation)

10:00/16:00 Ethan Matt Kavalier (University of Toronto), In the beginning came the wood: the altarpiece to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin in Kalkar

10:40/16:40 Ruben Suykerbuyk (Rotterdam, Boijmans-Van Beuningen Museum), Altarpieces and the debate on idolatry in the Low Countries (c. 1520–1585)

11:20/17:20 BREAK (and Break-Out Room Conversation)

11:50/17:50 Achim Timmermann (University of Michigan), Dem heylighen Cruce to Werle’: The staging of civic relics in late medieval Westphalia

12:30/18:30 Elizabeth Rice Mattison (University of Toronto), Between altar and collection: Miniature devotional sculpture in the Low Countries

13:10/19:10 END OF DAY

FRIDAY 21 MAY

ET/CET

8:00/14:00 Opening Remarks

Chair: Ralph Dekoninck (Université catholique de Louvain)

8:10/14:10 Isabelle Frank (City University of Hong Kong), The Compianti of the Passion of Christ: Emotional affect, affective piety, and the flagellants

8:50/14:50 Herman Roodenburg (Free University of Amsterdam), Beweeglijkheid and tears: Devotional objects and affective piety in the 17th- Century Netherlands

9:30/15:30 BREAK (and Break-Out Room Conversation)

9:50/15:50 Anne-Laure Van Bruaene (Ghent University), The arbres d’or of the Golden Fleece between religious rite and political order

10:30/16:30 Koenraad Jonckheere (Ghent University), The image and the object: Johannes a Porta on devotion

11:10/17:10 BREAK (and Break-Out Room Conversation)

Chair: Andrew Spicer (Oxford Brookes University)

11:40/17:40 Ulrich Pfisterer (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich), Sacred economics: medals and rubble as relics

12:20/18:20 Marie Hartmann (Freie Universität Berlin), Domini est salus: Aspects of devotion in text and illumination of Amulet Ms. Princeton 235

13:00/19:00 END OF DAY

SATURDAY 22 MAY 2021

ET/CET

8:00/14:00 Opening Remarks

Chair: Elizabeth Rice Mattison (University of Toronto)

8:10/14:10 Una D'Elia (Queen's University), Misbehaving with devotional sculpture in the Italian Renaissance

8:50/14:50 Kamil Kopania (Aleksander Zelwerowicz National Academy of Dramatic Art, Warsaw), Animation and compassion. The most complicated late medieval animated sculptures of the crucified Christ

9:30/15:30 BREAK (and Break-Out Room Conversation)

9:50/15:50 Andrew Spicer (Oxford Brookes University), Restoring church bells in the southern Netherlands, c. 1585–1621

10:30/16:30 Kathryn Rudy (University of St. Andrews), Handling beads in manuscript rosaries

11:10/17:10 BREAK (and Break-Out Room Conversation)

11:30/17:30 Concluding Discussion

Moderator: Ethan Matt Kavalier (University of Toronto)

12:10/18:10 Closing Remarks: Anne-Laure Van Bruaene (Ghent University) and Ethan Matt Kavalier (University of Toronto)

12:30/18:30 END OF DAY

Reference:

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