Session at CAA (Chicago, 16-19 Feb 22)

Chicago, Feb 16–19, 2022
Deadline: Sep 16, 2021

Armin Bergmeier

Beyond Transfer and Revival: Narrative Creativity in Medieval Italian Mural Decoration (11th–13th c.)

Session at the 110th Annual Conference of the College Art Association (CAA), Chicago, 16–19 February 2022.

Sponsored by the Italian Art Society
Organized by Armin Bergmeier, University of Leipzig & Alison Locke Perchuk, California State University Channel Islands

Deadline for submissions: 16 September 2021
Notification by 23 September 2021

The period 1000–1250 saw vibrant artistic and intellectual creativity in medieval Italian wall paintings and mosaics. Large-format narrative sequences were deployed in new ways to elevate viewers spiritually, perform exegesis, shape communal identity, teach history and theology, and display power. Authors and artists offered sophisticated theorizations of the aesthetic, affective, and communicative capacities of images. While some sequences drew on existing models, notably the paintings and mosaics that accrued to Old St. Peter's, many more were ad hoc creations, mixing old and new motifs, styles, and artistic strategies to generate distinctive compositions intended for specific spaces, sites, and purposes. The historical and conceptual weight of Rome (then as now) and the natural coherence of pictorial recensions versus the heterogeneity of unaffiliated narrative sequences has resulted in a historiographical privileging of passive transfers and revivals over discrete acts of artistic and patronal creative agency. This panel seeks to reset that balance.
Narrative creativity played out in the development of new iconographies, narrative structures, and framing systems, and in the reimagining and repurposing of old ones. New pictorial strategies were generated for new architectural forms and spatio-liturgical arrangements; Byzantine decorative practices were integrated with Latin architecture and vice versa. Collective analyses generally cluster by iconography, region, or artisans; we seek instead to bring together papers underscoring how creativity manifested itself in discrete monuments, whether well-known, like Santa Maria in Cosmedin or Sant'Angelo in Formis, or deserving of greater fame, like San Tommaso ad Acquanegra sul Chiese or San Calocero in Civate.

Please send proposals for presentations of 15–20 minutes to alison.perchuk@csuci.edu and armin.bergmeier@uni-leipzig.de. A complete proposal comprises an abstract of 200–250 words

and a CV. Those whose proposals are accepted will need to become members of the Italian Art Society and the College Art Association, and will need to register for the conference. Participants are expected to cover their own costs of attendance at the conference. The Italian Art Society does offer a limited number of competitive travel grants available; see www.italianartsociety.org for information. The language of the conference is English.

Reference:

CFP: Session at CAA (Chicago, 16-19 Feb 22). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 18, 2021 (accessed Nov 12, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/34389>.