Edited Volume: Medieval Art, Modern Politics

Deadline: Dec 15, 2021

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Medieval Art, Modern Politics

Volume editors: Brigitte Buettner and William Diebold
Deadline for submitting proposals (500-word abstract and a CV): December 15, 2021
Anticipated submission of final texts: End of 2022

Historians of medieval art know that the buildings, objects, and images they study were often created for purposes that were overtly political. They have devoted less scholarly attention to a corollary: the political uses and misuses of medieval art after the Middle Ages. In some cases, the same objects and sites that accrued ideological meanings during the Middle Ages did so again, if differently, in modern times (better known examples include the Bayeux Embroidery, the Horses of San Marco, the Bamberg Rider, the insignia of the Holy Roman Empire, the Crown of St. Stephen, and Dome of the Rock).

This is a call for papers for a volume of essays that seeks to complicate our understanding of the afterlives of medieval art by concentrating on the politics of its reception. While the ideological instrumentalization of the Greco-Roman artistic legacy has been recounted many times and stories of the rediscovery of national antiquities in eighteenth-century Europe and the revival of Gothic art in the subsequent century are familiar, the use of the medieval legacy has tended to be framed as either an affair of taste or of intellectual and cultural histories. The way in which post-medieval regimes (whether monarchic, imperial, totalitarian, or progressive) or individuals have reframed specific medieval sites, artefacts, and iconographies still await detailed examination.

We invite papers that unpack instances of the uses and misuses of medieval art in various post-medieval contexts and directed towards different political goals. We encourage submissions that represent the full geographic and temporal scope of the medieval period. Possible questions to be addressed include: What messages were extracted from “Gothic” and “barbarian” antiquities that differed from the discourses retrojected into ancient or early modern art? How were medieval visual creations literally and figuratively repositioned to serve modern political ends? What were the impulses—aesthetic and ideological—that explain why modern regimes have found it useful, even necessary, to reinvest in the visual legacy of the Middle Ages?

Please direct all inquiries and submissions to Brigitte Buettner (bbuettne@smith.edu) and William Diebold (wdiebold@reed.edu). We will notify authors of the status of their proposal by January 15, 2022. We anticipate c. 8000-word essays and peer review. We are also planning a workshop-type gathering to comment on the papers before publication.

Reference:
CFP: Edited Volume: Medieval Art, Modern Politics. In: ArtHist.net, Oct 21, 2021 (accessed Nov 23, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/35150>.