

## The Itinerant Shrine (London, 30 Jun – 1 Jul 22)

London, The Courtauld Institute of Art, Jun 30–Jul 1, 2022

Registration deadline: Jun 30, 2022

Matteo Chirumbolo

Clive's Conference / The Itinerant Shrine: Art, History, and the Multiple Geographies of the Holy House of Loreto

The Santa Casa, or Holy House of the Virgin Mary, is a relic in constant motion. Legend holds that at the end of the thirteenth century, a company of angels flew Mary's small stone house—the site of the Annunciation and Jesus's childhood home—out of Nazareth before eventually depositing it in Loreto, a remote hill town in the Marche region of Central Italy. Over the ensuing centuries, the House prompted the movement of people to the sanctuary that grew up around it: migrant communities that had been excluded from other Italian cities came to settle in Loreto just as a growing number of Christians set out on pilgrimage in order to visit the miraculous incorporation of the Holy Land into Europe. As the site grew in prominence, it attracted artists from multiple centres who produced opulent votive adornments in painting and sculpture. At the same time, the sanctuary became a point of transmission for devotional memorabilia, including prints, statuettes, ceramics, and tattoos. As a result of this proliferation of media, architectural reproductions of the Holy House emerged throughout Europe and as far afield as the Amazon Basin and modern-day Canada. Through contact with the original relic or one of its surrogates located across the globe, Loreto has continued to inspire devotional and artistic responses into the present day.

Drawing on the recent scholarly interest in the cult of the Holy House, this conference endeavours to serve as an important milestone for academic discourse on Loreto, bringing together scholars working in a variety of disciplines and employing diverse methodological approaches. Participants will investigate the cult of the Holy House by addressing broader themes of mobility, migration and cultural contact, conversion, colonisation, patronage, artistic and cultic reproduction, and the development and articulation of place, among others. Responding to the humanities' recent global turn, the conference will investigate how a small town in the Italian hinterland became a central node in an expansive geographic network.

Organised by Matteo Chirumbolo (The Courtauld Institute of Art; Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut), Erin Giffin (I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies) and Antongiulio Sorgini (Johns Hopkins University).

Clive's conference is kindly supported by Dr Nicholas Murray and Mr William Sharp in loving memory of Mr Clive Davies.

PROGRAMME:

Thursday, June 30

Lecture Theatre 1, The Courtauld, Vernon Square Campus, Penton Rise

13:00 - Registration

13:30 - Institutional Introductions

Alixé Bovey, The Courtauld Institute of Art

Nicholas Murray and William Sharp

14:00 - Conference introduction

Matteo Chirumbolo and Antongiulio Sorgini

Material Foundations between Nazareth and Loreto (Chair: Lloyd de Beer, The British Museum)

14:30 - Margaret Meserve, University of Notre Dame - 'Dust, Verses, and Veils: Contact Relics at Loreto'

15:00 - Emily Price, Newcastle University - "'But Above All We Desired to See Nazareth": Visiting the Site of the Annunciation after the Rise of Loreto'

15:30 - Break

Defining the Sacred Landscape (Chair: Alison Wright, University College London)

15:45 - Bianca Lopez, I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies - 'To Bring Together Heaven and Earth: Regional, Spiritual, and Mundane Economies at Santa Maria di Loreto, 1379-1453'

16:15 - Mattia Guidetti, University of Bologna - 'An Ottoman Flag in the Sanctuary of Loreto'

18:00 – 19:30 - Concert at King's College Chapel, The Strand, London

'Lauretan Litanies through the Ages'

The Choir of King's College London under the direction of Joseph Fort

Friday, July 1

Lecture Theatre 1, The Courtauld, Vernon Square Campus, Penton Rise

Displaying Devotion: Patrons, Artists and Pilgrims (Chair: Amanda Hilliam, I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies)

9:30 - Ferruccio Botto, Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa - 'From Limoges to the Marche: A Tabernacle Shrine, the Cult of the Eucharist, and Early Devotion to the Virgin of Loreto'

10:00 - Francesca Coltrinari, University of Macerata - 'Loreto and the Counter-Reformation: The Decoration of the Apsidal Chapels of the Holy House in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century'

Feats and Fates of the Flying House (Chair: Robert Maniura, Birkbeck, University of London)

10:30 - Eelco Nagelsmit, University of Groningen - 'From Whorehouse to Holy House: Venus and the Virgin at the Brussels Minim Convent during the Counter-Reformation'

11:00 - Josef Kadeřábek, Charles University, Prague - 'Two Against Many: The Fate of the Santa Casa in Slaný during the Communist Normalization'

11:30 - Break

New Itineraries (Chair: Scott Nethersole, The Courtauld Institute of Art)

11:45 - Luisa Elena Alcalà, Universidad Autónoma of Madrid - 'Methodological Approaches to a Mexican Case: The Image and the Church, the People and the City'

12:15 - Erin Giffin, I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies - 'In Retrospect: Trends in European "Sante Case"'

12:45 - Final remarks

Gerhard Wolf, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut

Free. Booking will close 30 minutes before the start time of the first day. To register: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-itinerant-shrine-tickets-348791784617>.

Information on how to register for the concert will be published on the Courtauld website closer to the date. For further information, please contact: [researchforumevents@courtauld.ac.uk](mailto:researchforumevents@courtauld.ac.uk).

Reference:

CONF: The Itinerant Shrine (London, 30 Jun - 1 Jul 22). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 9, 2022 (accessed Jul 5, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/36896>>.