Medieval Images of the Virgin (Bamberg, 22-23 May 25)

Universität Bamberg, May 22–23, 2025
Deadline: Mar 15, 2025

PD Dr. Katharina Christa Schüppel

Medieval Images of the Virgin. Materialities, Environments, Ecologies.

Medieval images of the Virgin do not exist in isolation, but as part of living, constantly changing environments. They interact with human and non-human actors. And, most importantly, they possess a specific materiality that deepens their message as artefacts, but can also be in tension with it, complicate it or even call it into question.

A central assumption of the workshop is that both materials and environments of medieval images of the Virgin Mary are meaningful: The materials because of their chemical properties, their histories and cultural encodings. The environments – natural and artificial light, sound, scent, heat, cold, moisture, and the contact with living nature in general – because they have physical effects on the artefact and also determine the conditions for its perception.

The aim of the workshop is to examine these complex interactions and to explore possible references to the multifaceted and changing medieval concepts of Mary – Virgo, Theotokos, Sedes Sapientiae, Queen of Heaven, Mediatrix and many more.

The workshop will focus on three-dimensional, medieval images of the Virgin. The notion of sculpture is deliberately interpreted widely and explicitly includes all kinds of materials (stone, wood, metal, plaster, wax, ivory and many more). But contributions from the fields of painting, mural painting and book illumination are also welcome.

The environments and ecologies to be discussed include the multi-sensory church space and its liturgical settings, museum settings, as well as the contact with plants and the elements in specific outdoor scenarios (both historical and contemporary).

The keynote lecture is given by Heather Pulliam (Professor of Medieval Art, University of Edinburgh): “Eco-iconography of eighth-century Iona: The Virgin Mary, ‘dark waters’ and ‘the tabernacle of the sun’”.

The workshop is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and will be published with University of Bamberg Press. The costs for travel and accommodation will be reimbursed within the usual limits. Conference language is English.

Interdisciplinary Workshop

Please send proposals with an abstract of ca. 300 words together with a short CV to the following address by March 15, 2025: katharina.schueppel@uni-bamberg.de

University of Bamberg, Institute for Archaeological Sciences, Heritage Sciences and History of Art, Chair of Medieval Art History, 22–23 May 2025

Reference:

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