

1 session at CAISC 2025 (online/Bologna, 6-7 and 9-10 Jun 25)

Università di Bologna / Online, Jun 6-10, 2025

Deadline: Mar 20, 2025

Franziska Kleine, Mathilde Legeay

Crowds in Italian painting between the Quattrocento and the Ottocento.

As a manifestation of the nameless and the innumerable, the crowd plays a secondary role in the narrative picture, which was primarily codified in modern Italian painting. Peripheral, ephemeral and informal groups oppose the clearly contoured hero at the center, the individual who acts willfully. Nevertheless, as its counterpart, the crowd can both demonstrate the protagonist's power and question it. If we consider the crowd as a minimal form of community, often uniting the most marginalized of society, the position it takes in narrative paintings becomes a political issue.

During this session, we want to explore representations of the crowd in Italian narrative painting between 1400 and 1900. We propose to consider the following topics, but are open to additions on the list:

- The making of the crowd: How did painters proceed to give shape to the crowd as an under-determined, maximally variable and expandable entity?
- The reception of the crowd: What connection does the picture of a crowd entertain with its location and its viewer?
- The sociology of the crowd: Which stereotypes of social groups do the different representations of the crowd maintain or break?
- The politics of the crowd: Which agency or agenda can be ascribed to a represented crowd?

Proposals of 250-300 words, along with a brief biographical note, should be submitted via email to the panel organizers Franziska Kleine (f.kleine@fu-berlin.de) and Mathilde Legeay (Mathilde.Legeay1@univ-nantes.fr) by March 20, 2025.

Reference:

CFP: 1 session at CAISC 2025 (online/Bologna, 6-7 and 9-10 Jun 25). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 3, 2025 (accessed May 25, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/43863>>.