

ReImagining Allegory in Alchemical Tradition (Venice, 16–17 Jun 25)

Venice, Palazzo Giustinian Lolin (University of Warwick Venice Centre), Jun 16–17, 2025

Deadline: Apr 15, 2025

Sergei Zotov

Call for papers - *Visita Interiora*: ReImagining Allegory in Alchemical Tradition

Organizer: Sergei Zotov

Keynote speaker: Jennifer M. Rampling

Alchemy is often associated with the imagery of flasks, furnaces, and laboratories. However, the universe of alchemical iconography extends far beyond these familiar motifs, encompassing a rich tapestry of symbols and allegories tied to both chemical processes and cultural phenomena. Thanks to extensive archival efforts and digitisation projects, we now have access to thousands of alchemical image series preserved in manuscripts and printed books. How might our understanding of this visual tradition deepen if we approach alchemical allegorical iconography using the same methodologies applied to other forms of imagery – such as iconographic analysis and the study of text-image relationships?

This conference invites case studies on the allegorical iconography of alchemy (1400–1800), aiming to foster new perspectives on the role of visual culture in the history of science. We particularly emphasise manuscripts and material culture and encourage submissions that engage with previously unstudied or undigitised sources. The key topics include, but are not limited to:

Iconographic Trends: What trends emerge in alchemical iconography? Why did certain allegories gain widespread popularity while others remained obscure?

Sources of Influence: What visual or textual traditions – including non-European and non-alchemical ones such as sacred art, emblem books, or scientific imagery – influenced specific images or image series in European alchemy?

Methods of Analysis: How can we assess the role and function of allegorical images in alchemy? For instance, what do variations in the same image series across different manuscripts reveal about cultural, religious, or laboratory contexts?

Material Evidence: What insights can be gained from the imagery on objects such as alchemical medals, coins, book covers, or laboratory apparatus like furnaces?

Reception: How was allegorical alchemical imagery received in later alchemical or non-alchemical

traditions?

We warmly invite you to the historic Palazzo Giustinian Lolin in Venice this June, where the Baroque setting will provide a fitting backdrop for scholarly discussions on alchemical allegories and their visual traditions.

Please complete the registration form here:
https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/ias/researchandnetworks/calendar/upcomingevents/visita_interiora/

Alternatively, send your submissions to sergei.zotov@sas.ac.uk, including a short biographical note (50 words) and a presentation abstract (250 words) by April 15, 2025.

Reference:

CFP: Relmaging Allegory in Alchemical Tradition (Venice, 16-17 Jun 25). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 19, 2025
(accessed Feb 18, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/43995>>.