

2 Sessions at ICMS (Kalamazoo, 14–16 May 26)

Western Michigan University Kalamazoo / Online, May 14–16, 2026
wmich.edu/medievalcongress/call

ArtHist.net Redaktion

[1] Timely Tusks: New Approaches to Global Medieval Ivories

[2] Contesting the Sacred: Profanation, Theft, and Claims over Religious Images

[1] Timely Tusks: New Approaches to Global Medieval Ivories

From: Svea Janzen

Date: 17 Jul 25

1997 was a landmark year for the study of Gothic ivories, with the exhibition "Images in Ivory" at the Detroit Museum of Art and a plenary talk and two sessions at Kalamazoo. Thirty years later, the field has seen an explosion of scholarship and approaches, making for a timely revisit. The proposed session welcomes papers that examine ivory from 500-1500 – from anywhere and of any type. Topics might include the trade and market in raw materials, the organization and processes of production, the use and handling of various object types, issues of iconography, and post-medieval collecting, reception and treatment.

The session is organized by Paula Mae Carns (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign) and will be held in a hybrid format.

Paper proposals require the author's name, affiliation and contact information; a title and an abstract (300 words) for consideration by session organizer(s); and a short description (50 words) that may be made public, if the proposal is accepted.

To submit a proposal, please refer to the congress website and use the official Confex portal at:

<https://wmich.edu/medievalcongress/call>

[2] Contesting the Sacred: Profanation, Theft, and Claims over Religious Images

From: Julie Roussel

Date: 15 Jul 25

- Online -

This session investigates the complex dynamics involving sacred images and relics in the medieval period, focusing on profanation, theft, and disputes over ownership that reshaped their spiritual, social, and cultural significance. It examines acts of contestation that challenged established hierarchies and redefined sacrality. The panel will explore how medieval communities negotiated power, devotion, and identity through their relationships with sacred objects, with particular emphasis on the intertwined role of images and relics in religious life and social contexts.

Interdisciplinary contributions are encouraged, particularly in art history and anthropology. Through in-depth case studies covering various media, geographic areas, and historical periods, participants will analyze both symbolic meanings and practical implications of possession and contestation. The session will explore the social, legal, and theological frameworks that shaped late medieval perceptions of ownership, sacrality, and profanation, highlighting their role in conflicts and negotiations surrounding sacred objects. This session aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how medieval societies engaged with sacred images and relics beyond veneration. It will highlight the cultural, devotional, and political tensions underpinning these interactions, offering new perspectives on authority, piety, and subversion within the medieval religious landscape.

Scholars are invited to submit a 300-word abstract, excluding references. Proposals should also include name, affiliation, email address, the title of the presentation, 6 keywords, a selective bibliography, and a short CV. Please send the documents to kalamazoocallforpapers@gmail.com by September 13, 2025.

Reference:

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