

Speaking Hospitals (Munich/online, 5 Feb 2026)

Online / Munich, Zentnerstraße 31, Institute of Art History, Room 004, Feb 05, 2026

ERC-Project ARCHIATER

Hospitals in the medieval and early modern periods were far more than places of medical care. They functioned as powerful communicative agents within urban societies, addressing rulers, civic communities, benefactors, and the faithful through architecture, images, ritual practices, and spatial organization. In this sense, hospitals “spoke” — about charity and salvation, authority and representation, social order and communal responsibility. The workshop Speaking Hospitals aims to explore these multifaceted forms of communication and asks how hospitals articulated their functions, values, and claims in visible and experiential ways.

With presentations by Dr. Margit Krenn (Universität Heidelberg), Dr. Joana Balsa di Pinho (Universidade de Lisboa) und Prof. Dr. Christina Vanja (Universität Kassel).

Organized by the ERC-Project ARCHIATER - Heritage of Disease: Prof. Dr. Chiara Franceschini, Dr. Frieder Leipold, Miriam Siebert, Isabella Limmer und Lily Baumeister.

PROGRAM

16:30 - 17:00 | Welcoming Coffee

17:00 - 17:15 | Chiara Franceschini & Frieder Leipold: Introduction and Update of the Project

17:15 - 17:45 | Christina Vanja: Fundraising for Hospital Upkeep and Hospital Inmates

17:45 - 18:15 | Margit Krenn & Lily Baumeister: Salvation off the Wall - New Insights on the Hospital Murals in Lübeck

18:15 - 18:30 | Break

18:30 - 19:00 | Joana Balsa de Pinho: The All-Saints Royal Hospital in Lisbon: Charity and Power

19:00 - 19:30 | Round Table

ABSTRACTS

Christina Vanja: Fundraising for Hospital Upkeep and Hospital Inmates

For the daily functioning of hospitals, endowment income alone was often insufficient. In order to fulfill their charitable functions, hospitals had to actively solicit donations. This included considerations of the institution's location and the design of its entrances, as well as processions through the city and guided tours of the premises. In these ways, the social value of hospitals as sacred institutions for the community of believers was communicated in multiple forms—an approach that proved largely successful.

Margit Krenn & Lily Baumeister: Salvation off the wall - New insights on the hospital murals in Lübeck

This talk examines the early 14th-century wall paintings of the Heiligen Geist Hospital in Lübeck. Recent observations reveal surprising parallels with the illustrations of a contemporary Heilsspiegel, raising new questions about the ways spiritual and social agendas were communicated visually. These findings offer fresh insights into the period's hospital visual culture as a means of civic representation.

Joana Balsa de Pinho: The All-Saints Royal Hospital in Lisbon: Charity and Power

The All-Saints Royal Hospital in Lisbon was founded around 1492 by King John II and became the most important Portuguese hospital of the Early Modern Era. Throughout the 16th century, the crown promoted interventions in the building that reveal a unique relationship between function and symbolism.

PARTICIPATION:

The event takes place in a hybrid format. You can either attend in-person or via Zoom:
Meeting-ID: 651 5516 2852 | Passcode: 050226

Further information: <https://archiater.hypotheses.org>

Reference:

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