The Visualities of Ancient Mediterranean Art (Winston-Salem, 21-24 Oct 26)

Winston-Salem, North Carolina, USA, Oct 21–24, 2026
Deadline: Apr 1, 2026

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A Sight to Behold? The Visualities of Ancient Mediterranean Art.

Over the last two decades, scholarship on ancient Mediterranean art has intensified its analytical attention to the materiality of works of art, with pronounced interest in their agential capacity (as "things") or potential affordances in specific environments or situations. This approach is predicated upon the assumption that ancient peoples had at least visual access to the object(s) being studied. Yet, despite their visual properties and even the materials and labor invested in their creation, not all objects were necessarily made to be seen by many or, indeed, any. And this is beside the point that ancient objects were rarely, if at all, experienced in the isolated, static, eye-leveled, and uniformly lit manner to which museum exhibits and photographs have accustomed us. In short, ancient objects did not necessarily possess the same kinds or degrees of visuality. This session seeks context-sensitive examinations that address objects' (in)complete (in)visibility in a diversity of Mediterranean cultural contexts between the Late Bronze Age and the Roman imperial era. How might greater sensitivity to varying visualities enrich our understanding of ancient experiences of, inter alia, the agency or affordances of objects? What new insights may arise from questioning the link between the visual and the visible?

Interested scholars should submit for consideration an abstract of 200 words (max) via the following online portal: https://secac.secure-platform.com. The portal will remain open for submissions from Monday, 2 February through Wednesday, 1 April 2026 at 11:59 p.m. EDT. Questions regarding the above art history session may be addressed to the chair at fowlerma@etsu.edu. For general inquiries about the annual meeting, please contact Conference Director Tracy Stonestreet (SECACdirector@umw.edu).

N.B. This is a fully on-ground session. Any scholar whose paper is accepted to the session must be (or become) an active member of SECAC through the date of the conference and pay the conference registration fee.

Reference:
CFP: The Visualities of Ancient Mediterranean Art (Winston-Salem, 21-24 Oct 26). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 4, 2026 (accessed Sep 17, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/51653>.