

Image and Heresy in Medieval West and Islamic World (Basel, 29–31 May 26)

eikones Forum, Rheinsprung 11, 4051 Basel, May 29–31, 2026

Mariia Denisova

This conference examines visual discourses surrounding heresy across Latin Europe and the Islamic world from the seventh to the sixteenth centuries. It highlights the complex roles images played in defining, contesting, and policing religious orthodoxy. At the same time, images themselves could be suspected of heretical potential. Accusations directed at artists, iconographies, and image practices reveal how deeply disputed visual media were within medieval religious cultures. By bringing diverse regional and historical perspectives into dialogue, the conference develops a comparative framework for understanding how visibility intersected with authority, belief, and exclusion. A joint event of the University of Basel and the Georg-August University of Göttingen.

Image and Heresy in the Medieval West and the Islamic World.

Conference Programme:

Friday, May 29

17:00–17:20

Introduction – Stefanie Lenk and Martin Schwarz

17:20–18:20

Sara Lipton (New York)

Lies in the Letters of the Laity: Dangerous Images, Vicious Viewers

Saturday, May 30

Coffee 08:30

09:00–10:00

Mattia Guidetti (Bologna)

Questioning the Image: “Heresy”, Prohibition, and Visual Practices in Early Islam

10:00–11:00

Nourane Ben Azzouna (Strasbourg)

The Image of Heresy: The Representation of Pre- and Co-Islamic Idols in Medieval Islam

11:00–11:30

Coffee Break

11:30–12:30

Aila Santi (Leiden)

Rethinking Heresy: Funerary Architecture beyond the "Orthodox" Paradigm in Early Islam

12:30–14:00

Lunch Break

14:00–15:00

Francisco Prado-Vilar (Santiago de Compostela)

Seducing Saints: Heresy and the Embodiment of Desire on the Iberian Frontier

15:00–16:00

Stefanie Lenk (Göttingen)

Between Heresy and Lay Demands: Negotiating Images and Material Culture in 13th- Century León

16:00–16:30

Coffee Break

16:30–17:30

Jan Maliszewski (Warsaw)

Viewing the Host, Seeing the Church: Parisian Sacramental Theology around 1200

17:30–18:30

Martin Schwarz (Basel)

Malefic Images: The 1320 Consultation of Pope John XXII

Sunday, May 31

Coffee 9:00

09:30–10:30

Oliver Coulson (Norwich)

Architecture Against Heresy: Norwich's Urban Stage and the Execution of William White

10:30–11:30

Amanda Valdés Sánchez (Madrid)

"Marian Heretics": Marian Imagery, Islamic-Spanish Identity, and Inquisitorial Rhetoric in Castile from the Medieval Era to the 1500s

11:30–12:10

Coffee Break

12:10–13:10

Katérina Horníčková (Olomouc)

Eucharistic Heresy: Between Multiple Interpretations and Confessional Discipline

13:10–14:40

Lunch Break

14:40–15:30

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Final Discussion – Aden Kumler (Basel)

Organized by Stefanie Lenk (University of Göttingen) and Martin Schwarz (University of Basel).

Reference:

CONF: Image and Heresy in Medieval West and Islamic World (Basel, 29-31 May 26). In: ArtHist.net, May 2, 2026 (accessed May 3, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/52357>>.