

Speaking Hospitals

Deadline: Jul 1, 2026

ERC Archiater – Heritage of Disease: The Art and Architectures of Early Modern Hospitals in European Cities

ARCHIATER - Heritage of Disease is a five-year project (2024-2029) funded by the European Research Council and based at the LMU, Munich (grant agreement No. 10109/906). It explores the artistic and material heritage fostered by early modern hospitals.

The project is planning an edited volume with the working title: SPEAKING HOSPITALS – The Art and Materiality of Early Modern Care in European Cities.

This edited volume is structured around three interrelated perspectives on the hospital as a communicative space. Submissions may address but are not limited to the following themes:

I Speaking to the Outside: Appearances, First Encounters and Thresholds

How do hospitals present themselves to the outside world? Contributions may explore how hospital architecture and design communicate with external audiences: How are hospitals integrated in urban or rural contexts? How do they welcome people? How do they construct the border between the inside and outside, for example through the design of doorways or gates. How do such elements negotiate the passage between health and illness?

II Speaking to the Inside: Spatial Organization and Art Objects

Within the walls of the hospital, space is structured by the movement of the people. How did groups and individuals interact or not; how does the architecture reflect that? How did they interact with art and what does it depict? And does the function of a work of art change when viewed by different groups (patients vs. doctors vs. carers vs. visitors)?

III Speaking Through the Senses: Multisensory Experiences

This section dives deeper into the nature of Early Modern Hospitals and tries to look at them through the perspective of multiple senses. We are not only interested in how the hospitals looked visually. Contributions may also explore how they sounded, looking at the music played or sung. What did people smell and how was smell handled? How did people taste food or medicine? What tactile experiences did the surfaces and materials create for patients and hospital staff? How were these sensory experiences reflected in architectural design and medical practice?

We invite scholars at all career stages. Please submit abstracts in English (max. 500 words) and a short biographical note (max. half page) to archiater@kunstgeschichte.uni-muenchen.de by 01.07.2026. Selected authors will be invited to discuss drafts and ideas at an intermediate workshop.

Reference:

ArtHist.net

CFP: Speaking Hospitals. In: ArtHist.net, Jun 15, 2026 (accessed Jul 6, 2026),
<<https://arthist.net/archive/52722>>.