CLAUSTRUM. Art, Iconography and Spirituality (online/Santarém, 23-24 Oct 26)

Online / Sá da Bandeira Theatre, Santarém, Portugal, Oct 23–24, 2026
Deadline: Aug 4, 2026

IHA - Comunicação

CLAUSTRUM. Art, Iconography and Spirituality in Medieval Franciscan Convents.

The Art History Institute at NOVA FCSH, Lisbon, in partnership with the Municipality of Santarém and the Diocesan Museum of Santarém, is pleased to announce the Call for Papers for the International Conference "Claustrum: Medieval Art, Iconography and Spirituality in Franciscan Convents", to be held in a hybrid format on 23–24 October 2026.

The conference is organised within the framework of the IHA seed-project "Claustrum. Convent of St Francis", which examines the cloister of the Franciscan Convent of Santarém as an experimental research laboratory, bringing together different scholarly disciplines to investigate the construction, decoration and lived experience of one of the oldest medieval Franciscan convents in Portugal.

Held during the eighth centenary of the death of St Francis, this conference aims to provide an interdisciplinary forum for discussion, bringing together Art History, History, Spirituality, Ecology (Environmental History and Ecotheology), Epigraphy and Heraldry, with a chronological focus spanning the 13th to the 15th centuries. Its purpose is to explore how Franciscan thought and religious practice shaped medieval European visual culture, while also laying the historical foundations for a sensitivity towards, and respect for, the natural world that continues to resonate today.

Researchers, established scholars and doctoral candidates working in these fields are invited to submit proposals addressing one of the following thematic strands:

Theme 1: Medieval Art History and Iconography:
- Artistic representations of St Francis and the Franciscan Order.
- Architecture, urbanism and the built heritage of Franciscan convents.
- Manuscript illumination, painting, sculpture and the decorative arts within the Franciscan tradition.

Theme 2: Medieval Spirituality, History and Written Sources:
- The study of written sources, chronicles, hagiographies and theological texts.
- The expansion of the Order of Friars Minor throughout medieval Europe, and the dynamics of patronage and artistic commissions within Franciscan convents.
- Franciscan mysticism, poverty and theology from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, and their relationship to the artistic culture of the Order's convents.

Theme 3: St Francis and Ecology: Historical, Artistic and Philosophical Perspectives:
- The Canticle of the Creatures and the emergence of a new understanding of the natural world.
- The representation of nature and the natural world in medieval Franciscan iconography and its dissemination.
- Environmental History, Ecotheology, and the continuing relevance of Franciscan thought in the face of contemporary environmental and climate challenges.

Submission Guidelines

Proposals should be submitted in Word or PDF format by email to claustrum2026@gmail.com and must include the following:

1. Anonymous Cover Page
- Title of the paper (clear and concise);
- Abstract (maximum 300 words);
- Up to five keywords;
- Indication of the thematic strand under which the proposal is submitted.

2. Author Information (submitted as a separate document)
- Full name(s) of the author(s);
- Institutional affiliation (University and/or Research Centre);
- Short biographical note (maximum 100 words);
- Contact / e-mail address.

Official Languages: Portuguese, Spanish and English.

Presentation Format: Each paper will be allocated 20 minutes for presentation.

Key Dates:
- Deadline for abstract submission: 4 September 2026
- Notification of acceptance: 12 September 2026
- Publication of the provisional programme: 25 September 2026
- Conference dates: 23–24 October 2026

Review Process

All submitted abstracts will undergo peer review by members of the Scientific and Organising Committee:
• Carla Varela Fernandes (IHA – NOVA FCSH / IN2PAST)
• João Luís Fontes (IEM – NOVA FCSH)
• Luís Urbano Afonso (ARTIS – FLUL)
• Paulo Almeida Fernandes (IHA – NOVA FCSH / IN2PAST)
• Pedro Almeida Flor (IHA – NOVA FCSH / IN2PAST)
Contact Information

For further information, please contact the Organising Committee at claustrum2026@gmail.com or visit our website https://claustrum.godaddysites.com/

Reference:

CFP: CLAUSTRUM. Art, Iconography and Spirituality (online/Santarém, 23-24 Oct 26). In: ArtHist.net, Jul 19, 2026 (accessed Nov 25, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/53504>.