Off the Wall: Mural Painting in Early Modern World (Florence/online, 3-4 Dec 26)

I Tatti - The Harvard University Center, Florene / Online, Dec 3–04, 2026

Katharine Stahlbuhk

Materials, Technique and Style of Mural Painting in the Early Modern World.

3 December 2026:

9:45 Alina Payne, Maria Gabriella Matarazzo and Katharine Stahlbuhk
Introductory Remarks

Technique, Style, and Theory's Blind Spots
chair: Raffaele Marrone

10:00 Cecilia Frosinini, Giotto and a secco Painting: The Legacy of the Maddalena Chapel in the Palazzo del Podestà

10:30 Maria Gabriella Matarazzo, Guido Reni's "Sleeping Cupid" and the Paragone between Fresco and Oil Painting

11:00 Discussion

11:20 Coffee

Color I: The Semantics of Technique
chair: James Pilgrim

11:40 Katharine Stahlbuhk, (Mono)Chromatic Experience: Visual Strategies and Devotional Practices among the Lombard
Observant Franciscans

12:10 Anne Lise Seastrand, Beyond Precedent: Reconsidering Regional Innovation and Material Technique in South Indian Murals

12:40 Discussion

13:00 Lunch

Color II: Pigments, Value, and Desiderability
chair: Johannes Makar

14:30 Dobrochna Zielińska, Immaterial aspects of the material side of Christian Nubian paintings

15:00 Mengistu Gobezie Worku, The Paintings of Yimrehane Kristos Church (Ethiopia): New Insights into Chronology and Origins

15:30 Sarah E. Fraser, Mobile Color, Fixed Walls: Murals as Sites of Embodied Knowledge and Tibetan–Chinese Transcultural
Labor

16:00 Discussion

16:30 Tea

Intermediality I: From Paper to Wall, and Back Again
chair: Morgan Ng

16:50 Carmen Bambach, Raphael's Putto Fragment from the Accademia di San Luca Revisited

17:20 Dominic-Alain Boariu, Lying Flat, Standing Tall: Designs for Painted Façades North of the Alps

17:50 Discussion

18:10 aperitivo

4 December 2026:

Intermediality II: Textile
chair: Morgan Ng

10:00 Lan Pu, Reading Layers of History Through Marouflage: The Technological Transition of Bhutanese Wall Painting from the
Early Modern Period to Contemporary Practice

10:30 Andreas Huth, The Origins of Italian Sgraffito: Affordance, Joints and the Depiction of Ashlars

11:00 Discussion

11:20 Coffee

Mobility I: Adaptation and Resistance
chair: Catalina Ospina

11:40 Elsa Arroyo Lemus, Beyond Hybridity and Syncretism: Materials and Techniques in Sixteenth-Century Mural Painting in
New Spain

12:10 Gabriella Siracusano, Ancient Materials for a New Song. A Comprehensive Approach to 18th-Century Andean Mural
Painting

12:40 Discussion

13:00 Lunch

Mobility II: Transfer of Knowledge
chair: Catalina Ospina

14:30 Sussan Babaie, Chehel Sotun Murals in Isfahan: Why Are They There?

15:00 Theocharis Tsampouras, Wall Paintings for the Many: Village Workshops and the Reshaping of Mural Painting in the
Ottoman Balkans

15:30 Nuria Martínez Jiménez, Circulation of Practices and Technical Knowledge between Italy and Spain in 16th-Century Alhambra: From the Nasrid Tradition to an Interconnected Artistic Culture

16:00 Discussion

16:30 Final Remarks

17:00 Aperitivo

This conference posits mural painting as a privileged vantage point from which to examine how material knowledge was produced, transmitted, and adapted across the globe in the early modern period. Bringing art history into dialogue with conservation science, it explores how wall-painting techniques evolved across different environments, cultures, and social contexts, foregrounding the forms of knowledge embedded in processes of making. Through both comparative and interconnected frameworks, the conference examines how different cultures responded to shared technical challenges, while also considering how global entanglements fostered the adaptation and transformation of technical practices, generating new meanings and forms of production.

More information and ZOOM-Link: https://itatti.harvard.edu/event/international-conference-wall-materials-technique-and-style-mural-painting-early-modern

An International Conference organized by Maria Gabriella Matarazzo and Katharine Stahlbuhk at Villa I Tatti

Reference:

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