



# ICMA NEWS

...AND MORE

Summer 2020, no. 2

Melanie Hanan, Editor

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT, NINA ROWE

Dear ICMA Members,

I write to you at a moment of great challenge, but also promise. When I composed my President’s letter for the spring issue of *ICMA News*, colleges and universities had only recently responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by moving teaching online and museums were just beginning to close their doors and reconsider exhibition and event schedules. Now, at the height of summer 2020, many among us are preoccupied with the care of loved ones, engaged with activist responses to social inequalities, and disoriented by uncertainties in our professional lives. At the ICMA we have taken measures to try to help our members weather this period and we have reason for optimism that we will come out stronger as an organization and community.

It is good to be able to announce a development that will help us stay connected during a time when we cannot gather in person. We applied for and received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the CARES government relief program to fund a part-time, six-month hire—a Coordinator for Digital Engagement. By the moment that this newsletter reaches you, we expect to have announced the position, reviewed applications, and perhaps even extended an offer for this important job. Among the digital projects to be launched are:

- A revamp of the portion of our website on *Resources for Online Teaching*, with guidance on a variety of pedagogical platforms for remote learning
- The development of a system for orchestrating *Digital Drop-Ins* of experts to classes
- The organization of *Mining the Collection* online events with curators
- The coordination of a suite of *Zoom Mentoring Sessions*, tailored to the concerns of students, academics and museum professionals
- The launch of an *Oral History Project* in which students interview senior scholars on the history of the ICMA and the field more generally

We are determined to bolster ties to the membership and foster your professional growth in whatever ways we can during this period of social distancing, and we are delighted that the NEH recognized the merits of these priorities.

As you are aware, however, the health crisis of COVID-19 has done more than shake up career trajectories or rupture professional networks. In the United States, the pandemic kindled noxious expressions of racist hostility toward Asian communities, and the disease has taken its greatest toll on people of color. As an organization committed to nurturing scholars of all backgrounds who study “every corner of the medieval world,” we denounce words and acts aimed at undermining the dignity of any individual, and we encourage our members to reflect on societal inequities laid bare by current conditions. The global attention to systemic racism, especially

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that which plagues the United States, and the energetic protests inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement led the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the ICMA to issue a Statement of Solidarity and Action on June 5, 2020. I express particular thanks to Board members **Andrea Achi**, **Beatrice Kitzinger**, **Thelma Thomas**, and **Nancy Wu**, who collaborated with me on the core of the document. We reproduce the Statement in this newsletter and call on our members not only to learn from the bibliography linked therein, but also to act in the service of justice in the various spheres in which you circulate—as teachers in the classroom, as curators in museums and other cultural institutions, as administrators at colleges and universities, as members of local communities and faith organizations.

This summer we launch initiatives that will help steer the ICMA as we draw inspiration, derive momentum, and gain new focus from the upheavals of the day. Recognizing the need for strategies to diversify the field of medieval art history, in the coming months we will institute a Diversity Working Group, a body to be facilitated by **Paroma Chatterjee**. We will also inaugurate a New Initiatives Working Group, headed by **Debra Strickland**, aimed at identifying new programs and means for engagement (online and in person), with particular consideration of our international membership. Finally, the Publications committee of the ICMA seeks a new editor for our Viewpoints book series (deadline July 15), a venture aimed at amplifying the voices of scholars engaged with timely debates and novel perspectives in the field.

We welcome your input for further new projects. Please email your ideas to: [icma@medievalart.org](mailto:icma@medievalart.org).

I imagine that most every one of you has had to grapple recently with the disappointment of canceled research trips and shuttered libraries, and many have had to put scholarship aside in the service of tending to the health and emotional needs of others or the imperative to master new technologies for the academic and museum seasons ahead. But through the cloudiness of the moment, I hope that you can see glimmers of possibility and draw strength from the camaraderie of our community.

As I look forward to the day we can gather again, I offer my gratitude and support.

Sincerely,



Nina Rowe  
President, ICMA  
Associate Professor of Art History  
Fordham University  
[nrowe@fordham.edu](mailto:nrowe@fordham.edu)

## A STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY AND ACTION

### A STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY AND ACTION

June 5, 2020

We add our voices to the chorus of scholarly and cultural institutions standing in solidarity with the tens of thousands of people who are protesting the systemic racism manifest in the killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, David McAtee, Tony McDade and countless other Black individuals in recent months and over the 400-year history of what has become the United States. We offer a full-throated commitment to the declaration that Black Lives Matter.

In this moment of national and international crisis, we also wish to recognize the local impacts of both racism and the current pandemic, which in many cases intertwine. The ICMA's headquarters is at The Cloisters, located in Fort Tryon Park in northern Manhattan, and the surrounding neighborhoods of Washington Heights and Inwood have been ravaged by COVID-19. Despite the challenges of the day, on Sunday, May 29, roughly 1,500 members of the community came out for a vigil against police brutality held on The Cloisters Lawn. That gathering brought solace and redoubled commitment to productive change and healing.

In the same spirit, we encourage our members to undertake self-reflection and action, and to that end, we direct you toward this [document of anti-Racism resources](#). It is beyond our capacity at this moment to review and vouch for every one of the links included; so please recognize that our aim in sharing this collection is to stimulate your own engagement and discernment. We also direct your attention to directives for [Expanding the Discourse of Medieval Art](#), compiled by Andrea Achi (ICMA Board Member and Assistant Curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art) and Meseret Oldjira (PhD Student, Princeton), which appeared in *ICMA News* (Fall, 2017) and inspired initiatives of our Advocacy and Programs & Lectures committees. That document will continue to guide us as we move forward with our work, aiming to highlight issues of race and social justice as they pertain to the study and exhibition of medieval culture. We welcome input that will help us expand the resources available on the section of the ICMA website dedicated to [Teaching a Global Middle Ages](#), and we are eager to undertake new initiatives supporting inclusive practices in pedagogy and scholarship. Please be in touch with your ideas.

The International Center of Medieval Art is in a moment of transformation, with the recent confirmation of a new mission statement that articulates our commitment to supporting research of the visual and material cultures of “every corner of the medieval world,” broadening the definition of our field. Moreover, we have initiated programs proactively aimed at nurturing scholars identified with groups traditionally excluded from the academy. The panel “Expanding the Medieval World,” held at the ICMA Annual Meeting during CAA in February in Chicago; the workshop on “Considering Race in the Classroom,” co-organized with the Material Collective, to be held at the ICMS at Kalamazoo in May 2021; and research by many members of the ICMA community that increasingly expands our knowledge of interconnected medieval communities, including work on various facets of Medieval Africa, the museological presentation of African-American experiences, and modern racist appropriations of the medieval past exemplify productive directions in our discipline.

As historians of art and architecture, we are particularly attuned to the ways in which images and structures can bolster assertions of authority, and we understand that the creative work of artists equally can shine a light on ugly truths. Though most in our community specialize in the culture of the distant past, we can use our expertise and critical skills to educate

## A STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY AND ACTION

*(continued)*

and inspire as we analyze the photographs and videos documenting the demonstrations, memorial gatherings, marches, and clashes of the past weeks.

We in the leadership of the ICMA hope that you will join us as we continue to promote and pursue projects being advanced worldwide aimed at education and social justice.

### **Executive Committee of the ICMA**

Nina Rowe, President

Stephen Perkinson, Vice President

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Anne Heath

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Nancy Wu

### **Executive Director of the ICMA**

Ryan Frisinger



## MEMBER NEWS

### Member Awards

If you are a member and your work has garnered a national or international award in the twelve months prior to October 2020, please send your information to Melanie Hanan, [newsletter@medievalart.org](mailto:newsletter@medievalart.org), by **October 15, 2020** (for publication in the November issue).

**Olga Bush** (Vassar College) was awarded a membership at the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton for the Fall 2020 for her current book in progress under the working title *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral: Visual Culture of al-Andalus and the Medieval Mediterranean in Light of the Environmental Turn*.

**Mary Carruthers** (New York University and Oxford) has been elected a 2020 Fellow of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences.

**Francesca Dell'Acqua** (Università di Salerno), **Chiara Lambert** (Università di Salerno) and **Daniel Reynolds** (University of Birmingham) received a Special Mention in the European Heritage Awards from Europa Nostra and the European Commission in May 2020 for their conception and direction of The Crossroads of Empires Project, which brought together a team of international experts from the UK, the Czech Republic and Italy, to conduct a full archaeological and historical investigation of the ninth-century Lombard church of Sant'Ambrogio in Montecorvino Rovella, Salerno (Italy).

**Holly Flora** (Tulane University) and **Maile Hutterer** (University of Oregon) were both awarded grants from the CAA's Art History Fund for Travel to Special Exhibitions. Dr. Flora will be teaching an advanced level art history seminar in the Fall 2021 entitled "Art, Cosmopolitanism, and Intellectual Culture in the Middle Ages." The class will explore the role of the visual arts in the intellectual life of the medieval universities and will

be centered around an upcoming exhibition at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville entitled "Medieval Bologna: Art for a University City." The grant funds will be used for her students to participate in a study day at this exhibition. Dr. Hutterer will be teaching a seminar entitled "Time in Medieval Art and Architecture" that explores the concept and representation of time in the Middle Ages. As a research-based seminar designed for advanced undergraduate and graduate students, the class's pedagogical aims straddle deep content mastery and professional practices. The grant funds will allow her students to travel to see the Getty's upcoming special exhibition "Transcending Time: The Medieval Book of Hours," where they will have direct access to original objects and exposure to professional art historical practices in the museum context.

**Elina Gertsman** (Case Western Reserve University) received a 2020 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship. She is among the 175 Fellows, "appointed on the basis of prior achievement and exceptional promise," who comprise the Foundation's 96th class and who were chosen from nearly 3,000 applications. The award will support research for her new book project, *Withdrawal and Presence: Visualizing Medieval Abstraction*, which grew out of her work on the monograph now in production with Penn State University Press, *The Absent Image: Lacunae in Medieval Books*.

**Karl Whittington**, Associate Professor of History of Art at The Ohio State University, has been named a Paul Mellon Visiting Senior Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA). He will be on fellowship from June-August 2020, working on completing his book manuscript, "Trecento Pictoriality: Form, Meaning, and Diagrammatic Painting in the Age of Giotto."

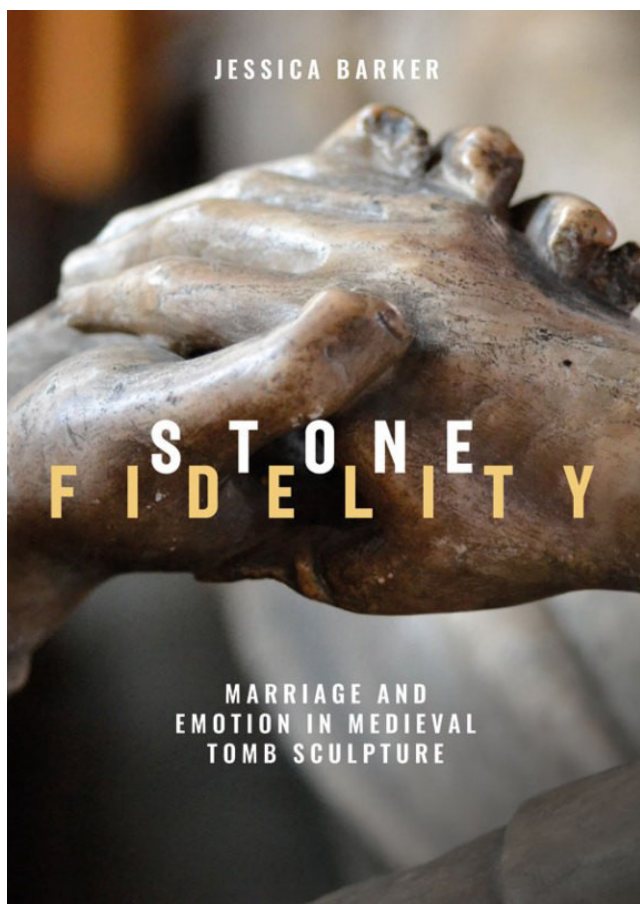
**Kathryn A. Smith**, Professor of Art History, New York University, was elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society earlier this year.

## MEMBER NEWS

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### Recent Books By Members

If you are a member who has published a book (or equivalent research project) twelve months prior to October 2020, which has not yet been announced in this newsletter, please send a full citation and hyperlink to Melanie Hanan, [newsletter@medievalart.org](mailto:newsletter@medievalart.org), by **October 15, 2020** (for publication in the November issue).



Barker, Jessica. *Stone Fidelity: Marriage and Emotion in Medieval Tomb Sculpture*. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2020.  
<https://boydellandbrewer.com/stone-fidelity.html>

Brown-Grant, Rosalind, Patrizia Carmassi, Gisela Drossbach, Anne D. Hedeman, Victoria Turner and Iolanda Ventura, eds. *Inscribing Knowledge in the Medieval Book: The Power of Paratexts*, Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 66. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 2020.  
[www.degruyter.com/view/title/558088](http://www.degruyter.com/view/title/558088)

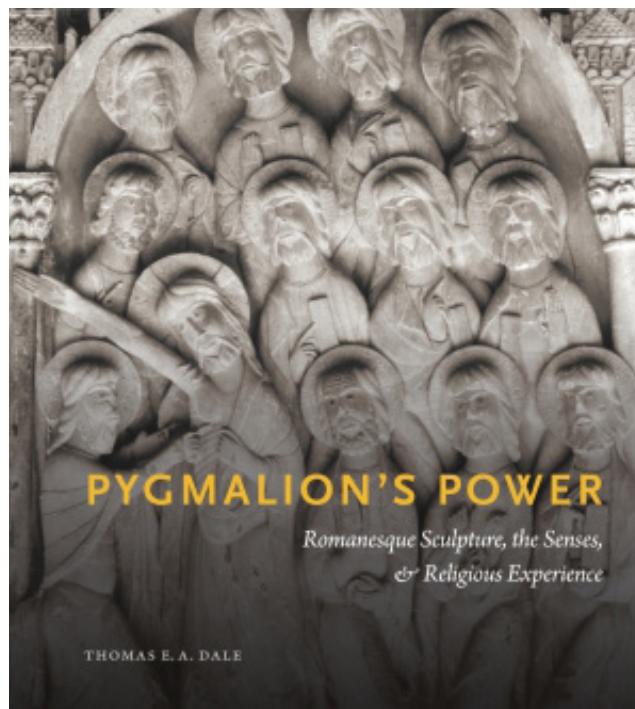
Dell'Acqua, Francesca. *Iconophilia: Religion, Politics, and the Use of Images in Rome c.680–880*, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies, 27. Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2020.

<https://www.routledge.com/Iconophilia-Politics-Religion-Preaching-and-the-Use-of-Images-in-Rome/DellAcqua/p/book/9780415793728>

Deuffic, Jean-Luc. *Le Livre D'heures Enluminé En Bretagne. Car Sans Heures Ne Puyt Dieu Prier*, eds. Adelaide Bennett and Alison Stones. Manuscripta Illuminata, 5. Turnhout: Brepols, 2019.

[http://www.brepols.net/Pages/ShowProduct.aspx?prod\\_id=IS-9782503584751-1](http://www.brepols.net/Pages/ShowProduct.aspx?prod_id=IS-9782503584751-1)

<http://www.brepols.net/Pages/BrowseBySeries.aspx?TreeSeries=MI>



Dale, Thomas E. A. *Pygmalion's Power. Romanesque Sculpture, the Senses, and Religious Experience*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2019.

[http://www.psupress.org/books/titles/978-0-271-08345-2.html?utm\\_source=PH-PList&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=KZOO20](http://www.psupress.org/books/titles/978-0-271-08345-2.html?utm_source=PH-PList&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=KZOO20)

Godden, Richard H., and Asa S. Mittman, eds. *Monstrosity, Disability, and the Posthuman in the Medieval and Early Modern World*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

This collection examines the intersection of the discourses of “disability” and “monstrosity” in a timely and necessary intervention in the scholarly fields of Disability Studies and Monster Studies. Analyzing Medieval and Early Modern art and

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## MEMBER NEWS

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literature replete with images of non-normative bodies, these essays consider the pernicious history of defining people with distinctly non-normative bodies or non-normative cognition as monsters. In many cases throughout Western history, a figure marked by what Rosemarie Garland-Thomson has termed “the extraordinary body” is labeled a “monster.” This volume explores the origins of this conflation, examines the problems and possibilities inherent in it, and casts both disability and monstrosity in light of emergent, empowering discourses of posthumanism.

<https://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9783030254575>

Kurmann-Schwarz, Brigitte, and Elizabeth Carson Pastan, eds. *Investigations in Medieval Stained Glass: Medium, Methods, Expressions*, Reading Medieval Sources Series. Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2019.

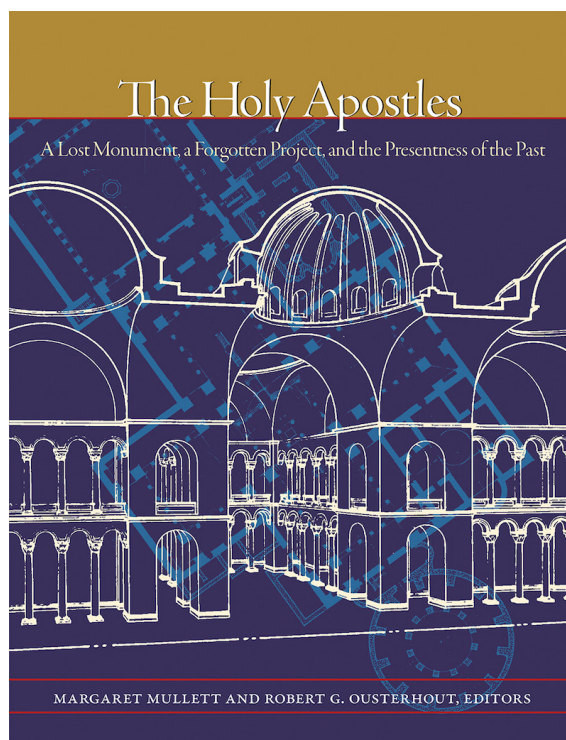
Contributors include:

Wojciech Balus, Karine Boulanger, Sarah Brown, Madeline H. Caviness, Michael W. Cothren, Francesca Dell’Acqua, Uwe Gast, Françoise Gatouillat, Anne Granboulan, Anne F. Harris, Christine Hediger, Michel Hérold, Timothy B. Husband, Alyce A. Jordan, Herbert L. Kessler, David King, Claudine Lautier, Ashley J. Laverock, Meredith P. Lillich, Isabelle Pallot-Frossard, Hartmut Scholz, Mary B. Shepard, Ellen M. Shortell, and Nancy M. Thompson.

<https://brill.com/view/title/39493>

Jasperse, Jitske. *Medieval Women, Material Culture, and Power: Matilda Plantagenet and Her Sisters*. Leeds: ARC Humanities Press, 2020.

Focusing on Matilda Plantagenet, daughter of Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine and King Henry II of England, and her sisters Leonor of Castile and Joanna of Sicily, this book highlights the value of material culture for elite people in shaping medieval life regardless of their sex. It is through these objects, rather than charter evidence, that history, from visual to social to cultural, can be told. The book also is available in open access (<http://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/37333>), which allows scholars from around the world to read it. Arc Humanities Press intends to publish *Medieval Women, Material Culture, and Power* as an affordable paperback in the near future.



Mullett, Margaret, and Robert G. Ousterhout, eds. *The Holy Apostles: A Lost Monument, a Forgotten Project, and the Presentness of the Past*. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2020.

Founded by Constantine the Great, rebuilt by Justinian, and redecorated in the ninth, tenth and twelfth centuries, the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople was the mausoleum of emperors, patriarchs and saints. It was also a key station in the ceremonies of the city, the site of an important school, a major inspiration for apostolic literature, and briefly the home of the patriarch. Despite its importance, the church no longer exists, replaced by the mosque of Mehmet II after the fall of the city to the Ottomans. Today it is remembered primarily from two important middle Byzantine *ekphrases*, which celebrate its beauty and importance, as well as from architectural copies and manuscript illustrations. Scholars have long puzzled over its appearance, as well as its importance to the Byzantines. Anxious to reconstruct the building and its place in the empire, an early collaborative project of Dumbarton Oaks brought together a philologist, an art historian and an architectural historian in the 1940s and 1950s to reconstruct their own version of the Holy Apostles. Never fully realized, their efforts remained

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## MEMBER NEWS

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unpublished. The essays in this volume reconsider their project from a variety of vantage points, while illuminating differences of approach seventy years later, to arrive at a twenty-first century synthesis.

<https://www.doaks.org/resources/publications/books/the-holy-apostles>

Neff, Amy. *A Soul's Journey: Franciscan Art, Theology, and Devotion in the Supplicationes variae*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2019.

The publication of this book was in part made possible through the ICMA Kress Research and Publication Grant that Dr. Neff received in 2016.

<https://pims.ca/publication/isbn-978-0-88844-210-9/>

Reeve, Matthew. *Gothic Architecture and Sexuality in the Circle of Horace Walpole*. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020.

<https://www.psupress.org/books/titles/978-0-271-08588-3.html>

Sandron, Dany, and Andrew Tallon. *Notre Dame Cathedral: Nine Centuries of History*, trans. Andrew Tallon and Lindsay Cook. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020.

[http://www.psupress.org/books/titles/978-0-271-08622-4.html?utm\\_source=PH-PList&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=KZOO20](http://www.psupress.org/books/titles/978-0-271-08622-4.html?utm_source=PH-PList&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=KZOO20)

Teviotdale, Elizabeth C., *Das Stammheimer Missale: Kommentar zur Faksimile-Edition*, with contributions by Gerhard Lutz, Christine Sciacca, and Nancy K. Turner, edited by Kristen Collins. Luzern: Quaternio Verlag, 2020.

<https://www.shop-quaternio.de/faksimilemappen/48/das-stammheimer-missale>

Campbell, James W. P., and Michael Tutton. *Doors: History, Repair and Conservation*. London / New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis, 2020.

In *Doors: History, Repair and Conservation*, readers are guided through the function, history, development, care, repair and conservation of doors by chapter authors who are experts in their field. This book offers depth and range of detail from dating and archaeology right through to the surveying, recording engineering and curation of the door, its furniture and the part of the building into which it is set.

<https://www.routledge.com/Doors-History-Repair-and-Conservation/Tutton-Campbell/p/book/9781138121157>

## New Appointments and Positions

*If you are a member who would like to announce a new position or appointment, please send your information, a photo and a brief bio (under 100 words) to Melanie Hanan, [newsletter@medievalart.org](mailto:newsletter@medievalart.org), by **October 15, 2020** (for publication in the November issue). All announcements are voluntary.*

**Caroline Bruzelius**, Professor Emerita at Duke University, has been elected as a member of the American Philosophical Society.

**Elizabeth Lastra** has been appointed Assistant Professor of Art History at Vassar College.

## Member Events

*Previously-planned ICMA events are currently on pause given the COVID-19 crisis. If you would like to organize a virtual event or a study day for the ICMA at your local museum once conditions have changed, please contact Ryan Frisinger at [icma@medievalart.org](mailto:icma@medievalart.org). International events are welcome.*

## MEMBER NEWS

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### In the Media

*This feature showcases media appearances by members of the ICMA leadership.*



**Andrea Achi, ICMA Board Member, Assistant Curator, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.** “Medieval Art & the Afterlife: A Conversation with Andrea Achi,” *idioma*, published May 29, 2020. See: <https://idioma.nyc/blogs/culture/conversation-with-andrea-achi>.



*Photo by Barbara Herrenkind*

**Jitske Jasperse, Associate Member of the ICMA Board, Professor, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin.** A Q&A in which Dr. Jasperse tells more about her recent book *Medieval Women, Material Culture, and Power: Matilda Plantagenet and Her Sisters*. See: <https://arc-humanities.org/blog/2020/04/05/qa-on-medieval-women-material-culture-and-power-matilda-plantagenet-and-her-sisters/>.

## COMMEMORATIONS

If you would like to submit a commemoration of an ICMA member who has died in the twelve months prior to October 2020, and which has not yet been announced in this newsletter, please send a 200-500 word obituary and, if possible, an accompanying photo to Melanie Hanan, [newsletter@medievalart.org](mailto:newsletter@medievalart.org), by **October 15, 2020** (in advance of the November issue).

### In Memoriam: Walter Cahn, 1933 – 2020<sup>1</sup>



Walter Cahn

I first met Walter Cahn in the fall of 1974 when I was a junior at Barnard College. Columbia University's Department of Art History and Archaeology had invited Cahn, then Associate Professor at Yale, to teach a graduate lecture course on Romanesque sculpture. An art history major interested in all things medieval, I received permission to take it. The discovery of works beyond the famous exemplary portals that I had already encountered in undergraduate surveys was a thrill I vividly recall to this day. By the semester's end, I knew that I wanted to pursue a PhD under Cahn's direction. Looking back on my earliest impressions of his pedagogical approach and personal demeanor, what had compelled me to study with him

were the very qualities that would secure his legacy as both a remarkable teacher and a prodigious scholarly force.

Behind Cahn's consummate professionalism in demonstrating academic methods of art historical analysis lay the intensity of a visceral engagement with art. Born in Karlsruhe, Walter and his older brother Norbert survived the Holocaust, unlike their murdered parents, to arrive in 1948 in Brooklyn, where they lived with their aunt and uncle. Notwithstanding the childhood trauma of the family's destruction and the boys' repeated displacement to places of safety, Walter graduated at the top of his class at New York's School of Industrial Arts in 1952 (now the School of Art and Design). He received his bachelor's degree from the Pratt Institute in 1956 while working part-time as a designer for advertising agencies. Following his service in the United States Medical Corps (1956–1958), he picked up a part-time stint in design even as he attended the Institute of Fine Arts (1958–1962, M.A., 1961). He spent the early Sixties in Paris researching his dissertation on the Souvigny Bible and began his teaching career outside London with courses geared to art students. From the Ravensbourne College of Art, he took up the position of Acting Instructor at Yale (1965). There, after the award of his PhD (1967), he rose through the ranks to become Professor (1976–1986). From 1986 until his 2002 retirement, he held the distinguished title Carnegie Professor of the History of Art (1986). Craft practices as well as artists' negotiation of religious requirements and institutional cultures are questions to which Cahn repeatedly returned across his published oeuvre (e.g., "The Artist as Outlaw and Apparatchik: Freedom and Constraint in the Interpretation of Medieval Art," 1969; *Masterpieces: Chapters on the History of an Idea*, 1979; "The Rule and the Book: Cistercian Book Illumination in Burgundy and Champagne," 1984). For an expressive outlet, watercolor was his medium of choice.

In the classroom and on the printed page, Cahn scrutinized artworks through description attentive to their visual characteristics. Sensitive appraisals of form and style, along with archeological inquiry and historical contextualization at the micro and macro levels, entered into his insistence on the material situatedness of art. He was committed, that is, to drawing out the mutually informative relations between particular specimens and the larger spheres of production to which they belonged. He thus poured years of research into corpus volumes that became go-to resources in the field: *Romanesque Bible Illumination* (1982), *Romanesque Manuscripts: The Twelfth Century* (1996), and, with Linda Seidel and others, *Romanesque Sculpture in American Collections*, published by the ICMA (1979, 1999). At the same time, he authored

<sup>1</sup> A formal appreciation of Cahn's scholarly contributions is currently being drafted for the Medieval Academy of America by Jeffrey Hamburger, Elizabeth Sears, James Marrow and Marcia Kupfer. It will be read at the 2021 meeting of the Fellows and published in *Speculum*. In the meantime, for an in-depth intellectual biography, see Elizabeth Sears, "The Art-Historical Work of Walter Cahn," in *Romanesque: Art and Thought in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Colum Hourihane, The Index of Christian Art Occasional Papers 10 (Index of Christian Art, Department of Art and Archeology, Princeton University in association with Penn State University Press, 2008), pp. 13–23, and the bibliography pp. 24–30 for full citations of publications referenced here.

## COMMEMORATIONS

(continued)

numerous articles focused on the iconography of singular images. Just as he remained cautious about attributions of meaning in his own interpretive essays, so too he instilled in his students a healthy skepticism with regard to their own hermeneutic proclivities (as Sara Lipton reminded a Zoom group of his former students that I will discuss shortly). Cahn's restraint, I believe, sprang from a deep respect for limits on our access not only to the past but also to what art means. Not everything about medieval artworks can be recovered or explained. He resisted procedures of decoding that reduce art's ludic dimension to a theological script. He eschewed doctrinaire positions.

My own recollections of my *Doktorvater* were much enriched during a Zoom session on June 5 with twenty-three of his former students.<sup>2</sup> I take the liberty of interpolating the gist of their shared reminiscences in order to sharpen the portrait of our mentor and friend, with attributions in parentheses. For all his seriousness and reserve, Cahn had delightfully surprising ways of animating his material. From my Barnard days, I will never forget his unselfconscious, spontaneous dramatization of the dance moves of the female performer in the late tenth-century Troper-Proser from southwest France (BnF, MS lat. 1118, fol. 114r), with which he introduced his lecture on the musical themes of the Cluny hemicycle capitals. He regaled Yale undergraduates in his course on Early Christian art with slides showing Brooklyn's myriad religious sects in order to help them imagine the mix of cults, and Christianity's minority status, in Late Antique Rome (Fran Terpak). His disarming wit and wry humor endeared him to generations of students. "Anyone who wants to study Romanesque art has to be a capitalist," he quipped, ironically invoking the cultural discourse of the moment to refer to an element of the architectural sculpture that is a hallmark of the period-style (Jill Caskey's contribution to a slew of anecdotes about his jocular side). He might well conclude his demanding graduate seminars, in which he purveyed article-worthy topics, with light-hearted challenges to the group: everyone had to bring in a Romanesque cookie or, in another case, manna (Melissa Conway, Caroline Hull). Seemingly the stuff of urban legend, but actually true, was the story of his residence during the War in a children's home in Moissac of all places, and his handball games against the reliefs in the porch of the abbey church.

Cahn taught his advisees by modeling the practice of research scholarship as the interplay of creative inquiry and disciplined craft. My first visit to his office at Yale

(September 1976) was a revelation – the stretches of packed bookcases, the long table on which he had laid out projects, and *oh*, the boxes of 3"×5" index cards for organizing bibliography! As if in a flash, it became evident that interesting questions and original insights could emerge only in conversation with other voices. An intimidating cacophony but also a pulsating, open collectivity. Cahn actively participated in dialogue with colleagues worldwide through the genre of the book and exhibition review, to which he devoted considerable energy (I've counted 48 reviews from 1964–2015, apart from his 101 articles and books). He counseled us on developing good intellectual habits. One should dedicate a regular time each week to catching up on the periodical literature (Elizabeth Sears observed him spending Friday afternoons in the Yale Art Library doing just that); and every summer, read at least two books outside of one's field. Together with a "magisterial" command of his research areas, Cahn's encyclopedic knowledge was nothing short of astonishing (Jeffrey Hamburger). Indeed, the scope of his reading could take your breath away. He could move with ease from discussing some aspect of the Middle Ages to Antonio Gramsci's *Letters from Prison* (Minott Kerr).



Walter Cahn and Ilene Forsyth

Well into the 1990s, the reputations of elite art history programs and the careers of their PhDs were contingent on the prestige value of specialization in celebrity artists and the canonical great works. Cahn nevertheless encouraged his students to tackle unconventional projects, provided the topics were sound. He readily explored areas with which he was less familiar so that he might accompany his advisees on their doctoral journey (as Zsombor Jekely recalled with respect to his thesis on medieval Hungarian art). For Cahn, the raw findings of investigation did not take precedence over their proper articulation. His polished writings led us

<sup>2</sup> Sears, p. 22, n. 45, lists the twenty-nine doctoral dissertations that he supervised and co-chaired between 1973 and 2006.



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*(continued)*

to appreciate tight structure, rigorous argumentation and limpid prose in which precise wording and economy of expression coexisted with organic segues and elegant turns of phrase. He conveyed these preferences beyond Yale through his work as editor of *Gesta* (1968–1970) and *Art Bulletin* (1988–1991).

Important as it was that Cahn set high academic standards, even more importantly he exemplified how to be a genuinely good human being, the kind of person for whom the Yiddish high compliment *mensch* is reserved. His deeds and comportment reflected his ethical integrity and quiet modesty. Unassuming, he never flaunted his achievements. We were awed by his vast learning but basked in his patience and generosity. To be sure, he could seem guarded, “enigmatic,” “inscrutable.” Yet how could he be otherwise given that his very survival had depended on concealing his identity (Camille Serchuk), on having to move fluently, like a linguistic chameleon, between French, German and English. Although all his cohorts shared with him times of jovial comradery, we could not help sensing an air of sadness that tinged his gentle soul.



Walter Cahn, John Williams and Cahn's second wife Brenda Lee Danet  
(d. 2008) amidst conference-goers

President of ICMA (1990–1993), Walter Cahn shaped our field, and more broadly that of art history, in ways acutely meaningful to the membership today. And he celebrated the past and future of the organization in a “chronicle,” published in the issue of *Gesta*, celebrating the ICMA’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.<sup>3</sup> Cahn came to the United States a stateless refugee. He bridged French, German and American styles of scholarship, welcoming young people to think about the medieval in new ways. A Jew from multicultural Brooklyn, he found himself in an Ivy League university department where, in the 1960s and 1970s, senior professors, having inherited wealth at their disposal, considered art history the preserve of WASP gentlemen. With grace and magnanimity, not to mention the support of many peers, he shep-

herded his department and the organizations he served into an era of change. As we push onward to full inclusivity, may his memory be for a blessing.

Marcia Kupfer  
Independent Scholar

*All photographs of Walter Cahn were taken by Elizabeth Sears at the conference “Romanesque Art and Thought,” held at the Index of Christian Art, Princeton, October 26-27, 2006.*

### In Memoriam: Paul Crossley, 1945-2019



Many members of the ICMA will have experienced the Paul Crossley effect. Endowed with charm, warmth and good humor, he radiated *joie-de-vivre*. With his ability to tell hilarious tales (often against himself), and his gift for mimicry, he could transform a stiff social gathering into a fun-filled, lively party within seconds. Yet at the same time he had an acute awareness of the individual. In a quiet corner he could draw out anxieties, as well as hopes, through probing questions which were always friendly and never intrusive, creating a conviction of his deep interest in the well-being of whomsoever he was talking to. It was this mixture of qualities which made him an outstanding teacher and, in particular, a perceptive and encouraging guide to those of his students who were going through the rigors of PhD research.

Paul was educated at the well-known English Benedictine school, Downside Abbey. The Christian beliefs that he absorbed there remained with him throughout his life. He was a very able student and in 1963 went to Cambridge to read Law. His decision to abandon this subject (with its promise of worldly success) in favor of History of Art (a new subject at

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the time) must have surprised many, especially as he possessed the eloquence that would have made him an outstanding barrister, an eloquence which members of the ICMA will have experienced from attending his lectures or hearing him talk in front of medieval churches and cathedrals.

As an undergraduate, Paul attended seminars on medieval architecture by Peter Kidson of the Courtauld Institute, and thus it was that after a first-class degree he embarked on PhD studies under Kidson's supervision. Again, he chose to pursue a path that must have seemed full of risk and uncertainty, selecting as his subject the Gothic architecture of Poland, a country whose language he had to learn, and which in the late 1960s was regarded by many in England as alien territory, set back as it was behind the Iron Curtain, under the dominance of Soviet authority. However, Poland was for Paul a positive life-changer. His way there was smoothed by Professor George Zarnecki of the Courtauld Institute, who enlisted relatives and academic colleagues in Cracow to help Paul. Professor Tomasz Węclawowicz of Cracow University remembers that Paul acquired the reputation of "this wonderful Englishman who took some research of the Gothic architecture of Lesser Poland and also learned to read and speak Polish." Paul's research work, which was published as *Gothic Architecture in the Reign of Kasimir the Great: Church Architecture in Lesser Poland, 1320–80*,<sup>1</sup> not only raised awareness of the late Gothic architecture of Poland in Western Europe, but also, as Professor Węclawowicz has pointed out, opened new research horizons for Polish scholars because the study of Polish Gothic architecture had been neglected during the communist era.<sup>2</sup>

Paul ascribed a significant development in his academic approach to medieval religious architecture to his early studies in Poland. Many years later in 2012, he described how before his visit there he had been trained as an architectural historian to "plot stylistic evolution." "I was learning to count stone, to draw molding profiles, to establish chronologies of construction." In Cracow he became aware of what he termed the "architectural symbolism of the Middle Ages."<sup>3</sup> Paul's great strength as a scholar was the facility with which he combined and moved between these seemingly different approaches. For instance, in his 2012 Cambridge Slade Lectures "The Gothic Cathedral: A New Heaven and a New Earth," he could with

equal facility examine the cathedral as a work of engineering and advanced technology in one lecture and discuss the rhetorical notions of *ductus* and *memoria* in relation to liturgy and religious experience at Chartres cathedral in another lecture. He never lost sight of the cathedral or church's essential function as a religious building. As he put it, "the cathedrals were planned as vast instruments of persuasion and pedagogy." For him, each one was far more than an architectural construct; it was an amalgam of sculpture, stained glass and painting, "a lucid, systematic and essentially rhetorical arrangement of images held in place by the discipline of architecture" whose purpose was to enhance the spiritual experience of those who entered it.<sup>4</sup> These two approaches to medieval architecture underpinned Paul's teaching and now resonate throughout the academic world through the teaching and publications of students who absorbed his ideas at the undergraduate and post-graduate level. In this context, his Courtauld MA course "The Gothic Cathedral" has been particularly fruitful.

Paul was a Lecturer and Senior Lecturer in the History of Art at Manchester University from 1971 to 1990. In 1990, on the retirement of his friend and former tutor Peter Kidson, he joined the teaching staff of The Courtauld Institute, first as a Senior Lecturer and then (from 2002) as a Professor. Paul dealt with his PhD students' efforts with kindness but firmness. As a student myself, I left his one-to-one discussions of my work feeling happy and confident. This was surprising because with his acute eye for unscholarly assumptions and unsubstantiated speculation he had often demolished the entire argument I had presented, leaving me to start again. But he had also armed me with a number of crucial sources and with the warmth and encouragement to see me through the hurdles facing me.

Paul was honored for his scholarship by being elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1987, a Fellow of the Polish Academy of Arts and Science in 1999, and a Fellow of the British Academy in 2016. He was Slade Professor in the History of Art at Cambridge University from 2011-2012. He served as editor of the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*.<sup>5</sup> He is survived by his wife, Joany, and his children, Nick and Kate.

Paul left a rich legacy which includes his published books and articles, amongst them his magisterial revision of Paul

<sup>1</sup> Paul Crossley, *Gothic Architecture in the Reign of Kasimir the Great: Church Architecture in Lesser Poland, 1320–80* (Cracow: Min. Kultury i Sztuki, 1985).

<sup>2</sup> Professor Tomasz Węclawowicz's words within his speech which was intended to be delivered at a celebration of Paul's life at the Courtauld Institute on 14 March 2020. This was cancelled because of COVID-19.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Crossley, "The Longest Way Around Is the Shortest Way Home: A Latecomer to the Warburg," *Common Knowledge*, vol. 18 no. 1, 2012, p. 174-179. *Project MUSE* [muse.jhu.edu/article/465052](http://muse.jhu.edu/article/465052).

<sup>4</sup> The lecture is available to read online as "DUCTUS AND MEMORIA: CHARTRES CATHEDRAL FROM VERBAL TO VISUAL, A lecture by Paul Crossley at Harvard, March 12, 2013." <http://www.friendsofchartres.org/aboutchartres/scholarship/ductus-and-memorial-chartres-cathedral-from-verbal-to-visual/>

<sup>5</sup> Paul Frankl, *Gothic Architecture*, ed. Paul Crossley (New Haven and London, 2000).

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Frankl's *Gothic Architecture*, a task which he estimated to finish within five years but which in fact took fifteen to complete. Indeed, so great is the number of his books, articles, essays and reviews that they occupy five pages in the front of the *Liber amicorum*, the *Festschrift* by friends, colleagues and students to mark his retirement in 2011.<sup>6</sup> Equally important, Paul's way of thinking about and investigating medieval architecture, distilled through the teaching of his students, will be an inspiration for scholars for many years to come. In addition, his library, a gift to the Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Cyprus, is designated the "Crossley Collection" and in the process of being catalogued.

It is not by chance that the words "rhetoric" and "eloquence" have featured already in this obituary. In his persuasive words, whether delivered by mouth or in writing, Paul combined the skills of rhetoric, acquired through the effort of unremitting hard work, with the innate gift of eloquence. Like the Father of the Church St John Chrysostom, he was "golden-tongued." In his lecture *Ductus and Memoria* he quoted Saint Bonaventure, "A well-ordered sermon, beautifully spoken resembles the crystalline clarity of a well-designed stained glass window." With his lack of self-regard, it is unlikely that Paul realized that he was writing about himself.

Lesley Milner  
PhD, FSA

### In Memoriam: Robert Suckale, 1943-2020



Robert Suckale in 2017 (TU Berlin)

Reprint of text originally appearing in Burlington Magazine, vol. 162 (April 2020).

**A scholar with an exceptionally cosmopolitan outlook, Robert Suckale made major contributions to the study of medieval art across a wide range of media, from architecture to sculpture and manuscript illumination.**

On 13th February 2020, after a courageous struggle with Parkinson's disease that lasted more than thirty years, Robert Suckale, a renowned scholar of medieval art and architecture and a beloved teacher of many generations of students, died in Berlin at the age of seventy-six. Born in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad) in 1943 to a family that was forced to flee to western Germany as a result of the Second World War, Suckale, whose scholarly commitments were deeply shaped by the student protests of 1968, felt throughout his career a keen sense of obligation to study the art and architecture of Eastern Europe. For decades prior to the reunification of Germany in 1989, he cultivated scholarly ties to colleagues working in the Eastern Bloc. Among the many fruits of this ongoing engagement, which was political as well as personal, were numerous publications on the art of Bohemia, which culminated in his last book, *Klosterreform und Buchkunst: Die Handschriften des Mettener Abtes Peter I.* (2011), a revised version of his habilitation thesis of 1975, to which can also be added important publications on the art of medieval Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and Poland. Suckale's publication on painting in Franconia prior to Albrecht Dürer (much of which was exported east) stands as a monument to his decades-long engagement with the art of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as with Early Netherlandish panel painting.<sup>7</sup> The book also testifies to his commitment to the close study of works of art in situ, often in collaboration with students, especially during his decade as professor of art history at the University of Bamberg (1980–90), years that also saw a series of important studies on the architecture, sculpture and painting of the city. These included an influential essay that marked an important departure from the largely iconographic and stylistic frameworks that had dominated previous publications on medieval sculpture; a co-authored art-historical city guide; and an exhibition catalogue that, inter alia, examined the antisemitism that informed the painting known as the Capestrano panel in the Historisches Museum, Bamberg.<sup>8</sup> The beginnings of Suckale's deep investments in

<sup>7</sup> Robert Suckale, *Die Erneuerung der Malkunst vor Dürer*, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Suckale, "Die Bamberger Domskulptur. Technik, Blockbehandlung, Ansichtigkeit und die Einbeziehung des Betrachters," *Münchener Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst* 38 (1987), pp. 27–82; Robert Suckale et al., *Bamberg - ein Führer zur Kunstgeschichte der Stadt für Bamberger und Zugereiste*, Bamberg 1989; and Robert Suckale, "Die kunstgeschichtliche Stellung der Capestranotafel," in H. Ruß, ed.:

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<sup>6</sup> Zoë Opačić and Achim Timmermann, eds., *Architecture, Liturgy and Identity: Liber Amicorum Paul Crossley* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011), and *Image, Memory and Devotion: Liber Amicorum Paul Crossley* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011).



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*Denkmalpflege* (heritage) and *Bauforschung* (architectural investigation) can also be traced to these years.

A cultivated intellectual cosmopolitanism was a hallmark of all Suckale's work, which constantly sought to place the art of the German-speaking world in its broader European context. No less important was his critical stance towards the history of German art history, infected as it had been by nationalist and National Socialist ideology. His numerous publications on the subject include an article on Wilhelm Pinder and German art history after 1945.<sup>1</sup> In many respects, the carefully chosen title of his book *Kunst in Deutschland. Von Karl dem Großen bis Heute* (1998) summed up his position: not German art but art in Germany.

Suckale's greatest love as a scholar, however, remained the art and architecture of medieval France. Having studied art history as well as classical archaeology and Latin philology at the Freie Universität, Berlin, as well as in Bonn, Paris and Munich, he received his doctorate in 1970 at the Ludwig-Maximilian University, Munich, for his thesis "Studies on the formation and transformation of the style of Virgin statues in the Île-de-France between 1230 and 1300." Significantly, Suckale approached style not as an evolutionary and teleological phenomenon, like most of his peers; instead he developed the concept of "Stillagen," according to which there was a hierarchy of different styles at the same time from which an artist or a patron could choose, in the way that a rhetorician might choose a style of speech to address a particular audience.<sup>2</sup> In 1990 Suckale returned to Berlin as professor of art history at the Technische Universität, where he played an instrumental role in founding the Schinkel-Zentrum, an interdisciplinary research center devoted to the city and the region of Berlin-Brandenburg. He also successfully opposed the dissolution of the university's department of art history. Many publications on Marian statuary and iconography followed, including remarkable discoveries informed by his relentlessly critical eye, keen stylistic intuition and ever-present skepticism.

With a typical combination of pride and self-deprecation, Suckale sometimes referred to himself as a *Trüffelschwein*

("truffle pig"). Among the fruits of his determined digging were both attributions and de-attributions, some controversial, but all constructive, documented in numerous publications.<sup>3</sup> The impact of French Gothic sculpture in Central Europe remained a constant of Suckale's career and stood at the heart of such publications as *Die Hofkunst Kaiser Ludwigs des Bayern* (1993) and his exhibition on "Beautiful Madonnas," *Schöne Madonnen am Rhein*, in Bonn in 2009. Another constant of Suckale's career was his interest in the art and architecture of female monasticism, which culminated in an exhibition held in Bonn in 2005, which he conceived together with the present author.<sup>4</sup> Central to Suckale's intellectual activity throughout his career were his collaborations on numerous publications with his wife, Gude Suckale-Redlefsen, a noted scholar of medieval manuscript illumination.<sup>5</sup>

Of Suckale's many remarkable achievements, which notably encompassed virtually all media of medieval art, from architecture and monumental sculpture to stained glass, panel painting and manuscript illumination and also included studies of political patronage and iconography, perhaps the greatest, if not always recognized as such, was his book, with contributions from Dieter Kimpel, on French Gothic architecture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>6</sup> In its interweaving of considerations of form with historical context, as well as analyses of structure and technique, it marked an exemplary departure from the formalism and functionalism of what Willibald Sauerländer memorably called "Mod Gothic" and paved the way for more integrated approaches.<sup>7</sup> Although the first edition was translated into French in 1990, the fact that it was

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, R. Suckale and S. Roller: 'Mittelalterliche Veränderungen älterer Marienstatuen und ihre Erklärung: Reparatur? Verschönerung? Umdeutung?' in A. Morath-Fromm, ed.: *Unter der Lupe. Neue Forschungen zu Skulptur und Malerei des Hoch- und Spätmittelalters, Festschrift für Hans Westhoff zum 60. Geburtstag*, Ulm and Stuttgart 2000, pp.3 9–50; R. Suckale and J. Fajt: 'Der "Meister der Madonna von Michle" – Das Ende eines Mythos? Mit einem Anhang zur "neuen" Löwenmadonna der Prager Nationalgalerie', *Umění* 54 (2006), pp.3–30; R. Suckale: 'An unrecognized statuette of the Virgin Mary by a Vienna court artist, ca.1350', *Rev* 53/54 (2008), pp. 104–20; and idem: *Auf den Spuren einer vergessenen Königin: ein Hauptwerk der Pariser Hofkunst im Bode-Museum*, Petersberg 2013.

<sup>4</sup> R. Suckale and J.F. Hamburger, eds: exh. cat. *Krone und Schleier: Kunst aus mittelalterlichen Frauenklöstern*, Bonn (Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland) and Essen (Ruhrlandmuseum), 2005.

<sup>5</sup> See *Mauritius - Der Heilige Mohr / The Black Saint Maurice*, Munich 1987; *Stift Obernkirchen, Kreis Schaumburg*, Königstein im Taunus 2001; and K. Hranitzky, G. Suckale-Redlefsen and R. Suckale: *Guido de Columnis. Der Trojanische Krieg, Codex 2773 der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, Wien, Lucerne 2008.

<sup>6</sup> R. Suckale with contributions from D. Kimpel: *Die gotische Architektur in Frankreich 1130–1270*, Munich 1985, rev. ed. 1995; and *L'architecture gothique en France 1130–1270*, Paris 1990; transl. F. Neu.

<sup>7</sup> W. Sauerländer: 'Mod Gothic', *The New York Review of Books* (8th November 1984).

exh. cat. *Der Bußprediger Capestrano auf dem Domplatz in Bamberg. Eine Bamberger Tafel um 1470/75*, Bamberg (Historisches Museum) 1989, pp. 87–94.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, 'Wilhelm Pinder und die deutsche Kunstgeschichte nach 1945', *Kritische Berichte* 14, no. 4 (1986), pp. 5–17.

<sup>2</sup> Among his more recent publications on the subject is R. Suckale: 'Stilgeschichte zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts: Probleme und Möglichkeiten', in B. Klein and B. Boerner, eds: *Stilfragen zur Kunst des Mittelalters. Eine Einführung*, Berlin 2006, pp. 271–81.

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never translated into English had (and continues to have) a negative impact on English-language scholarship.

The recipient of many honors, among them a fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton (2005), an honorary degree from the Courtauld Institute of Art, London (2011), and election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2014), Suckale supervised hundreds of master and doctoral dissertations on the widest range of topics imaginable. With his death, the world of medieval art history and of European art history more generally has lost one of its most significant and generous voices, but one whose influence lives on in the work of his many students, colleagues and admirers.

Jeffrey F. Hamburger  
Kuno Francke Professor of German Art & Culture  
Harvard University

## IN BRIEF

**The Medieval Kingdom of Sicily Image Database**, <http://kos.aahvs.duke.edu>, has added circa 600 wonderful new images since the beginning of 2020.

### News from the Center for Early Medieval Studies, Brno *Spring 2020*

Since the last news in Spring 2019, numerous books have been published, conferences organized, and projects set up at the *Center for Early Medieval Studies* in Brno. Like in previous years, the Center has proposed international scholarly activities but also, and perhaps even on a wider scale, dedicated itself to mediating research with a wider audience. This commitment to the dissemination of scholarly activities outside of academia has become, over the years, part of the DNA of the Center and represents, we believe, a fundamental step for a renewal of the discipline of medieval art history and a consciousness of its societal role.

This desire is perhaps best represented by our series of lectures intended for the wider audience and entitled *Středověk JinaX* (“The Middle Ages Differently”). Composed of evening conferences in Czech and English, we can highlight the recent lectures proposed by our guests Yves Gallet (Université Bordeaux Montaigne), Finbarr Barry Flood (New York University) and Bryan Ward-Perkins (University of Oxford). In the first half of 2020, the COVID-19 crisis and its restrictions have challenged our way of conceiving

these large audience events: the response has been an overwhelmingly well-received cycle of online public lectures streamed live on the [YouTube channel of the Center for Early Medieval Studies](#) and held from February to May 2020. These lectures deeply questioned the burning actuality and necessity of understanding late antique and medieval visual cultures across the Mediterranean, from miracle-working panel paintings to the transcultural entity that is Norman Sicily. These lectures, intended to reach a wide audience, served to highlight the Center for Early Medieval Studies’ non-Eurocentric and non-colonial approach to the study of premodern cultures. Especially in the current social and political context, the question of “de-colonizing” the field of art history appears of renewed importance.

It is from the same desire to understand the ins and outs of the field of medieval art history and its relevance to contemporary society that a roundtable entitled [Medieval Art Today, Why?](#) was organized in October 2019, and it gathered some of the major scholars in the field around Europe. Michele Bacci (Université de Fribourg), Hans Belting (Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung, Karlsruhe), Francesca Dell’Acqua (Università degli Studi di Salerno), Ivan Foletti (Masaryk University, Brno), Klaus Krüger (Freie Universität, Berlin), Tanja Michalsky (Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rome), and Serena Romano (Université de Lausanne), with Ladislav Kesner (Masaryk University, Brno) as a respondent, led a fruitful discussion open to the widest possible audience. One of the key questions was to understand the study of medieval art as a humanistic discipline today and its ability to tackle societal challenges in times of rising populist tendencies across the globe. The proceedings of this roundtable will be published in the next issue of *Convivium* VII/2. It was with the same idea of understanding the field from a historiographical point of view that the international workshop [De-Marginalizing Byzantium](#), organized by Armin Bergmeier (Universität Leipzig) and Ivan Foletti was held in December 2019 at the *Centro Tedesco di Studi Veneziani* in Venice. The ways in which the very fluid entity of “Byzantium” was considered by scholars throughout historiography, starting with its first reuses immediately after the fall/conquest of Constantinople in 1453 until the most recent uses and abuses, as discussed by scholars from around Europe and the USA. The “de-marginalization” process of Byzantine studies goes hand-in-hand with the understanding of the national, colonial and transcultural gazes that have variously been applied to the notion of “Byzantine.”

In February 2019, the conference [Transformed by Emigration. Welcoming Russian Intellectuals, Scientists, and Artists 1917–1945](#)

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was held at the Hans Belting Library, Brno. Crossing the boundaries of art history, the international conference explored the impact of Russian emigration to Europe and America on a variety of disciplines ranging from literary studies to biology. The proceedings of the conference will be published in a special issue of *Convivium Supplementum* in 2020.

From 11–13 March 2019, the conference *Spaces of Initiation* questioned how the interaction between visual cultures, architectural spaces and rituals enabled the process of “initiation.” This international conference explored precisely these interactions and dialogues, with a special focus on the rite of baptism. This theme is intrinsically linked also with a series of encounters which had been held around the notion of liminality and medieval art. A supplementary volume of *Convivium*, entitled *The Notion of Liminality and the Medieval Sacred Space* and edited by Klára Doležalová and Ivan Foletti, stemmed from the second of these encounters. Each of the volume’s articles are co-written by authors with different specialties, in order to provide a genuinely interdisciplinary perspective on this topic. The volume as such presents itself as an important milestone in the joint study of ritual phenomena and their materialization.

The notion of initiation, and specifically of the “Christianization” of the Mediterranean world, is at the heart of the Center’s present interest. Currently, a project on this topic is being held in the frame of an ERC submission, and several members of the Center are dedicating their scholarly work, including several PhD dissertations, to the material, visual and performative dimensions of this crucial phenomenon. It is around one of the dimensions of this phenomenon—the “material” one—that an international conference entitled *Materiality and Conversion. The Role of Material and Visual Cultures in the Christianization of the Latin West* will be held from 30 November to 1 December 2020.

From 14–15 October 2019, the organization of an international conference entitled *Rome in a Global World* investigated another of the research axes of the Center. Specifically focusing on the period of the “Carolingian transition,” the conference examined the role of Rome as the receiver and vector of the transformation of the “globalized” world from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, it inscribed itself into a much larger endeavor promoted by several projects at the Center: the desire to shed new light on the “forgotten” eras and monuments of Roman material culture and their reflections around the Mediterranean from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages. The proceedings

of the conference, encompassing the contributions of several international authorities in the field, will be published as a supplementary issue of *Convivium* under the direction of Chiara Bordino, Chiara Croci and Vedran Sulovsky in the autumn of 2020.

On the subject of collective and individual publications, three important volumes stemming from the individual points of focus of members of the Center for Early Medieval Studies must be mentioned. One is the book of Zuzana Frantová, *Ravenna: Sedes Imperii. Artistic Trajectories in the Late Antique Mediterranean*, published in the series *Studia Artium Medievalium Brunensia* by Viella in 2019. Derived from her doctoral dissertation, this volume represents an important milestone in studies on Late Antique Ravenna, aiming to reconsider the city’s role in the artistic production of the Mediterranean during the Late Antique period. The book is premised on the author’s conviction that individual surviving examples of architecture, along with their decoration, sarcophagi, ivory and gold objects, can be best understood not only by examining their historical context and iconography, but also by looking at the very material of these objects and how their production was organized. The book therefore focuses primarily on craftsmen and their traditions, on deliberate breaks with tradition, and on the way workmen moved about the Late Antique world and thereby fostered the exchange and spread of technology and artistic models.

Also in 2019, Alžběta Filipová published *Milan sans frontières. Le culte et la circulation des reliques ambrosiennes, l’art et l’architecture (IV<sup>e</sup>–VII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, the first volume of the new series *In Between. Images, Words and Objects*. This series, published by Viella, responds to the growing need for transdisciplinary studies bridging academic fields in the humanities. As such, its scope incorporates various disciplines allied with art history—anthropology, archaeology, archaeometry, historiography, liturgy and, of course, cultural and social history. Filipová’s volume, also arising from her doctoral dissertation, is dedicated to a wide network of cultural transfers orchestrated by Bishop of Milan Ambrose (and his successors) between the city of Milan and the Christian West. Generated by donations of relics, multiplied from the holy remains preserved in Milan, these cultural transfers consist essentially of the dissemination of architectural and figurative models. This book, however, also allows us to reflect on the cultural, ecclesiastical and political role played by the city of Milan, often overshadowed by Rome in scholarly literature, during this crucial period of transition between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.

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## COMMEMORATIONS

(continued)

Lastly, in 2020 Ivan Foletti published the book *Objects, Relics, and Migrants. The Basilica of Sant’Ambrogio in Milan and the Cult of Its Saints (386–972)*, a translation of the Italian original of 2018. Through the study of some of the renowned works conserved in the basilica of Sant’Ambrogio in Milan—including the chapel of San Vittore in Ciel d’Oro, the golden altar and the Saint Ambrose ciborium—this book deals with the interaction between the building’s topology and its objects, the relics around which the basilica was built and the notion of “migrants.” The aim, in other words, is to analyze over the *longue durée* how some objects became a reflection of the relics, and how the material sanctity stemming from them was used to include or exclude certain people from local social and religious groups, thus reflecting the complicated ethnic situation found in the area. In this second volume of the *In Between* series, special attention was given to photographs that serve to document rich iconographic material.

Regarding publications, other further important volumes must be mentioned. *Inventing Medieval Czechoslovakia 1918–1968. Between Slavs, Germans, and Totalitarian Regimes*, edited by Ivan Foletti and Adrien Palladino and published in 2019, uses a series of case studies to explore the history of how the process of “inventing the medieval past” occurred in Czechoslovakia within the period from about the end of the First World War until the 1960s. It focuses specifically on the re-invention of the “national” Middle Ages at the background of the meeting of different linguistic and ethnic groups—Czechs, Slovaks, Germans and Russians—where one group would often negate, reshape and ignore the point of view of the other within an increasingly fractured political geography of the country. As such, understanding the historiography of art history also contributes to redefining Central Europe as a place of transcultural encounters and dialogue beyond its historical ruptures. Within the volume *Byzantium or Democracy? Nikodim P. Kondakov’s Legacy: Seminarium Kondakovianum and Andrej Grabar, 1925–1952*, soon to be published as the result of a three-year research project supported by the Czech Science Foundation, Ivan Foletti and Adrien Palladino investigate how the personal experience of emigration to the democratic countries of France and Czechoslovakia shaped the concept of Byzantine studies introduced by Russian émigrés in the first half of the twentieth century.

Among the regular and supplementary issues of the *Convivium* journal, two are particularly worthy of mention. In the course of 2019, a thematic issue entitled *Movement, Images, and Iconic Presence in the Medieval World* was published;

it dwells on the notion of “iconic presence” and came out of the proceedings of a conference organized by the Center in late 2017. The editors introduced a wider conception of this notion while focusing on the question of perception of artistic objects transformed by the corporal movement and bodily experience. So far the latest issue (VII/1), entitled *A Hub of Art. In, Out, and Around Venice, 1177–1499* and edited by Herbert Kessler (Johns Hopkins University) and Serena Romano, is dedicated to the artistic production of the city of Venice between the reign of Frederick Barbarossa and the Ottoman defeat of the Venetian fleet. Throughout the volume, the authors attempt to view Venice as a place of lively cultural exchange, which means on the one hand that it adopted “Byzantine” forms but simultaneously also developed its own unique and specific artistic language.

Current calls for papers are available on the official website of *Convivium*.

## PUBLICATIONS LIST:

### Convivium

- (forthcoming) *Convivium Supplementum II (2020): Rome in a Global World. Visual Cultures during the Carolingian Transition*, Chiara Bordino, Chiara Croci, Vedran Sulovsky eds.
- (forthcoming) *Convivium Supplementum I (2020): Transformed by Emigration. Welcoming Russian Intellectuals, Scientists, and Artists 1917–1945*, Ivan Foletti, Adrien Palladino eds, with the collaboration of Karolina Foletti.
- *Convivium VII/1 (2020): A Hub of Art. In, Out, and Around Venice, 1177–1499*, Herbert L. Kessler, Serena Romano eds, with the collaboration of Karolina Foletti.
- *Convivium Supplementum (2019): The Notion of Liminality and the Medieval Sacred Space*, Klára Doležalová, Ivan Foletti eds.
- *Convivium VI/1 (2019): Movement, Images, and Iconic Presence in the Medieval World*, Hans Belting, Ivan Foletti, Martin F. Lešák eds.

### Studium Atrium Medievalium Brunensia

- (forthcoming) *Step by Step towards the Sacred: Ritual, Movement, and Images in the Middle Ages*, Martin Lešák,

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Sabina Rosenbergová, Veronika Tvrzníková eds, Viella: Rome 2020.

- Zuzana Frantová, *Ravenna: Sedes Imperii. Artistic Trajectories in the Late Antique Mediterranean*, Viella: Rome, 2019.
- *Studi sulla circolazione del mosaico in area nord-adriatica*, Valentina Cantone ed., with the collaboration of Klára Doležalová, Viella: Rome, 2019.

### Parva Convivia

- (forthcoming) Ivan Foletti, Adrien Palladino, *Byzantium or Democracy? Kondakov's Legacy in Emigration: the Institutum Kondakovianum and André Grabar, 1925–1952*, Brno/Rome 2020.
- *Inventing Medieval Czechoslovakia 1918–1968. Between Slavs, Germans, and Totalitarian Regimes*, Ivan Foletti, Adrien Palladino eds, Brno/Rome: Viella, 2019.

- Ivan Foletti, Katharina Meinecke, *Jupiter, Kristus, Chalífa. Obrazy mocných a zrození středověku (IV.–VII. století)* [Jupiter, Christ, the Caliph. Images of Power and the birth of the Middle Ages (4<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> century)], Brno/Rome: Viella, 2019.

### In Between. Images, Words and Objects

- Ivan Foletti, *Objects, Relics, and Migrants. The Basilica of Sant'Ambrogio in Milan and the Cult of Its Saints (386–972)*, Rome: Viella, 2020.
- Alžběta Filipová, *Milan sans frontières. Le culte et la circulation des reliques ambrosiennes, l'art et l'architecture (IV<sup>e</sup>–VI<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Rome: Viella, 2019.

Report compiled by Klára Doležalová and Adrien Palladino.

## SPECIAL FEATURES

### REFLECTIONS

#### Thoughts on Medieval Art and Two Pandemics

By Judith Steinhoff

The outbreak of Black Death that ravaged most of the then-known world in 1348 had a number of uncanny similarities with the COVID-19 virus today. While it is much too early to know how COVID-19 will influence 21<sup>st</sup> century art, this pandemic offers a potentially fruitful opportunity to reflect on the human experiences of it and the Black Death and on the art historiography of the latter (Fig. 1). Millard Meiss's famous theory that Italian art made in the last half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century uniformly expressed a new, widely-held belief in the need for penitence through style and imagery that was uniformly more conservative and visually abstract is now untenable in light of subsequent research.<sup>1</sup> We can, however, point to social and economic developments in the aftermath of the Plague that impacted artists and artistic production. Engaging new types of art historical questions from those of Meiss's time, we may also discover previously unrecognized aspects of 14<sup>th</sup>-century Italian works



FIG. 1 - Giovanni del Biondo, *Black Death scene from St Sebastian altarpiece*  
(photo: author)

that responded to the circumstances of the post-Plague period. As a Trecento art historian, I will concentrate on that culture and its art.<sup>2</sup>

Having studied the social, political and economic impacts of the Black Death and their possible consequences for *Trecento* art for many years (although that was some years ago by now!), I have been particularly struck by the parallels between the period records of the 14<sup>th</sup> century pandemic and our experiences of the current one. The sudden, frighteningly large numbers of deaths we are seeing from this virus compare all too closely with the descriptions of those who experienced the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century Bubonic Plague and the staggering statistics the chroniclers record of the percentages of the population that died (30-80% reported in various chronicles for different cities and regions; 40-60% of all people in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa).<sup>3</sup> For 14<sup>th</sup> century Italy, the most well-known and by now canonical accounts are the introduction to *The Decameron* by Boccaccio and the Italian chronicles of Agnolo di Tura in Siena, and Matteo and Giovanni Villani in Florence. These writings are probably best-known for their emphasis on the panic and fear induced by the rapid spread and devastating death toll of the disease: “The unheard of contagion...implanted so great a terror in the hearts of men and women that brothers abandoned brothers, uncles their nephews, sisters their brothers, and...wives...their husbands...Even worse, and almost incredible...fathers and mothers refused to nurse and assist their own children.”<sup>4</sup> Similar descriptions of people abandoning the infected and the dead occur in chronicles and stories by merchants, lawyers, friars and others from so many regions throughout Eurasia that some scholars have suggested they must be tropes.<sup>5</sup> Equally vivid and moving are Agnolo di Tura's simple statement that he buried his five children with his own hands, and the distraught letter of Petrarch: “Alas! my beloved brother...How shall I begin? Whither shall I turn? On all sides is sorrow; everywhere is

<sup>2</sup> It is also worth pointing out here that scholars of Northern European and other cultures have never made claims of a widespread or uniform response in art produced during or in the immediate aftermath of the Black Death.

<sup>3</sup> Green, 2014, 9.

<sup>4</sup> Similar descriptions come from Ireland, England, France, Germany, Scotland, Poland and elsewhere (Cohn, 2017). *The Decameron* is set in the countryside where a group of people had fled to try to escape the Plague. Interestingly, no mention is made of husbands leaving their wives.

<sup>5</sup> Cohn argues that the records are actually richly diverse in details and focus, and that—except for rare cases that cite Boccaccio as their source—most were original and firsthand descriptions and observations (2017, and n. 23 and n. 24). Cohn's article includes excerpts from many of the primary sources worldwide; however, I have listed key online translations of primary sources at the end of this essay.

## REFLECTIONS

(continued)

fear. I would...that I had never been born, or, at least, had died before these times.”<sup>6</sup>

Part of the terror inspired by the 1348 Black Death was the rapidity of contagion; equally frightening was the confusion over its cause and effective treatment. Today, epidemiologists have a far better understanding of the COVID-19 virus—despite its continual ability to surprise with new symptoms and patterns of morbidity—than 14th-century medical practitioners had of the Plague bacterium.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless and despite the large number who believed God’s wrath caused the Plague, most people in the Gothic period did realize that person-to-person contact was the dominant means of transmission through the breath, speaking and touching. Much as we are now required to maintain physical distance from relatives, friends and especially the more vulnerable, some 14<sup>th</sup> century commentators noted the widely-recognized need for social distancing: “One did not dare help or visit the ill.”<sup>8</sup> Additional precautions similar to the present included the ban on entrance to Florence by sick people. We learn of another all too familiar present-day problem from Boccaccio, who remarked that “besides the qualified there [were those]...who practiced without having received the slightest tincture of medical science—and, being in ignorance...failed to apply the proper remedies.”<sup>9</sup>

Boccaccio also made some astute observations about the socio-economics of the disease that have been noticed today as well, specifically that the lower and middle classes suffered worse than others.<sup>10</sup> He and several writers criticized people who rejected the “quarantine” necessary to prevent widespread infection and deaths. While the Plague raged, but especially after it ended (after a few months in some places, a couple of years in others), we find some chroniclers fairly openly blaming the Black Death for destroying the traditional social order and mores. Matteo Villani tellingly complained that “all money had fallen into the hands of nouveaux riches” and that “the common folk, both men and women, by reason of the abundance and superfluity that they found, would no longer labor at their accustomed trades.”<sup>11</sup> Women, and especially widows, were also sharply

criticized ostensibly for sexual promiscuity.<sup>12</sup> Villani’s views were echoed by Boccaccio who bitterly noted: “whereby practices contrary to the former habits of the citizens could hardly fail to grow up among the survivors.”<sup>13</sup> While such remarks might be rooted in observations, they also seem to reflect subjective unease about shifts in the social order that followed the economic disruptions of the Black Death.

Indeed, one of the critical long-lasting impacts of the 1348 Black Death was drastically reduced populations, which took over a century to recover. One demographic consequence of this were shifts in the economic status of people from social classes that previously had been stuck in the lower strata. Workers received higher wages due to labor shortages and, in Siena and Florence, revolts against governance by an upper middle-class oligarchy resulted in wider representation.<sup>14</sup> In addition, the testamentary bequests of the dead contributed to some redistribution of wealth and power. In Siena, for example, the “Ospedale” or Church of the hospital of Santa Maria della Scala, which had cared for many of the dying, acquired new wealth, some of which it wisely used to acquire important relics, including that of the Virgin’s belt. From this time through the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Ospedale became the third center of power in Siena, along with the City Government and Cathedral. The socio-economic shake-up also permitted some previously poor people to become landowners by obtaining property held by richer but now deceased individuals.<sup>15</sup>

Given the anxieties induced by the pandemic today, many people are inclined to think that art made following the Black Death must have been influenced by the pervasive disturbing experiences of that time. Indeed, the Black Death style Millard Meiss proposed in his famous book of 1951 offered just such an explanation.

We might first recall that before Meiss, most art historians dismissed art of the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century in Italy as “bad” art. In my mind, their posture has something in common with the attitudes of early scholars of 14<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts and especially books of hours and psalters for personal use, who wrote off the marginalia that proliferated as “ugly” and “ridiculous,” decrying that they ruined a perfect lovely miniature. Subsequent scholars of 14<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts found a wealth of meaning in those marginalia, including social and political satire and much other imagery meant to instruct as well as entertain. For Italian altarpieces

<sup>6</sup> Petrarch’s letter to his brother as he waited out the Plague in Parma. [https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian\\_Studies/dweb/plague/perspectives/petrarca.php](https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian_Studies/dweb/plague/perspectives/petrarca.php).

<sup>7</sup> Of course, as of this writing, we still also lack an effective treatment or a vaccine to prevent COVID-19.

<sup>8</sup> Carmelite Jean de Venette (Cohn, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> “Introduction,” *The Decameron*. <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/boccacio2.asp>.

<sup>10</sup> <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/boccacio2.asp>.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.u.arizona.edu/~afutrell/w/%20civ/%2002/plaguerreadings.html>.

<sup>12</sup> John of Reading (Cohn, 2017, citing Horrox, 1994, 87).

<sup>13</sup> <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/boccacio2.asp>.

<sup>14</sup> An annotated bibliography of the literature on these issues can be found in Cohn, 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Cohn, 2010; van Os, 1981.

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*(continued)*

and frescoes of the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Meiss's erudite and persuasively-written *Painting in Florence and Siena After the Black Death* changed the discourse. He ascribed meaning to that "bad" art as a purposeful return to traditional styles and themes. He argued that peoples' fears and need to appease God's anger (to which they attributed the pandemic) were directly translated into the art, which at that time was most often commissioned for religious purposes and settings. The works he selected to illustrate his thesis exhibited reduced naturalistic form and space, and more austere representations of holy figures.

Although Meiss's theory served as the dominant paradigm for many decades, trecento specialists began almost immediately after Meiss's book came out in 1951 to re-evaluate possible relationships of the social, political, religious and economic disruptions of the period to artistic style and iconography.<sup>16</sup> One of the first critiques was that death and images about it proliferated throughout the medieval period due to the fact that premature or sudden death from many causes was rampant. In addition, Meiss's and others' characterizations of art in the wake of the Black Death and later in the century as flat, abstract, austere did not actually pertain to much surviving visual evidence. Some of the works Meiss selected were discovered to pre-date 1348 (e.g., the *Last Judgment* in the Campo Santo, or cemetery, of Pisa), while others were better understood as relating to their very specific purposes and contexts (e.g., Orcagna's *Strozzi Altarpiece* for the Strozzi family burial chapel in the Church of Santa Maria Novella, Florence) (Fig. 2). Anecdotal detail from daily life and the expression of tenderness amongst figures did not disappear in art where it was called for; neither did deep spatiality or naturalistic form (Fig. 3).

In other research since Meiss, such as that by Louise Marshall, we learn that a new type of image developed: miracles of saints protecting whole communities from the Plague. Such imagery points to another dimension of the psychological climate, one of hope, which helped people cope with fears during the 1348 and especially successive outbreaks of the pandemic at least through the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Some saints were newly associated with Plague and protection from it; others, like St. Sebastian, appear more frequently in paintings than before (Fig. 4).<sup>17</sup> In addition, records from locales like Bologna reveal a very different response to the pandemic than claimed in Boccaccio's and others' colorful writings. They demon-

<sup>16</sup> For some of the literature addressing Meiss's theory, see the bibliography on art history at the end of this essay.

<sup>17</sup> The Virgin of Mercy, her cloak protecting the masses, also began to serve as an image of protection from Plague (Marshall, 1994, 2000, 2002).



Fig. 2 - Strozzi family Chapel (photo: author)



Fig. 3 - Strozzi Chapel—detail of Judgment wall (photo: author)

strate that, at least in some places, medical professionals, priests and even notaries stayed to serve the populace.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Wray, 2001, and other articles by the same author.

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Fig. 4 - Giovanni del Biondo, *St. Sebastian Altarpiece* (photo: Wikimedia Commons)



Figs. 5a, 5b and 5c – *St. Victor Altarpiece*: Bartolomeo Bulgarini, *Adoration of the Shepherds* (photo: author); “Palazzo Venezia Master” (Federigo Memmi?), *Saints Victor and Corona* (photo: Norman Muller)

While the results of economic and social disruption varied from place to place, historians agree it was a time of social and economic uncertainty. These conditions inevitably affected artistic commissions and production. In Siena, the *St. Victor Altarpiece*—commissioned for the Cathedral right after the Plague subsided—embodies the beginning of a new type of collaboration among disparately trained artists that entailed sharing premises, personnel, shop properties and even painting and decorative techniques (Fig. 5).<sup>19</sup> Like the three widely-known altarpieces from the same cycle honoring the city’s then most-important patron saints (besides Mary herself), the *St. Victor Altarpiece* already

exemplified a novel, Sienese invention begun in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century: a large central narrative image from the Virgin’s life flanked by the saint whose relics were preserved at the altar and another figure with an important relationship to the primary saint.<sup>20</sup>

After the Black Death, the government, which appointed the Head of the Cathedral Works, sought the surviving lead representatives of the Simonesque and Lorenzettian “schools,” probably to project Sienese unity, much as they had often used art to further important political agendas.<sup>21</sup> The collaboration of Bartolomeo Bulgarini and the formerly anonymous Simonesque painter known as the “Master of the Palazzo Venezia Master”<sup>22</sup> initiated a wider ongoing inter-workshop consortium which helped artists limit their financial risks during a time of job insecurity.<sup>23</sup> In addition, a fresh look at the Adoration of the Shepherds at the center of the *St. Victor Altarpiece* may reveal the influence of social changes after the Black Death. The shepherds were often included in Nativity scenes, sometimes also in the foreground as here. However, the Siena Cathedral version appears to be a very early example of such a large-scale representation as well as the first instance where the lower-class figure on bended knee is foregrounded, thereby serving as the surrogate for the viewer at the scene.<sup>24</sup> This very preliminary observation opens a topic for future research about the possibility that a new awareness of class arose after the Black Death.

Having a more personal and immediate understanding of the horrors wrought by a pandemic will not give Meiss’s theory of post-Black Death art renewed credibility. We no longer find it plausible that all art produced in a given culture or even during the same short period reflects a single shared collective idea or feeling. Indeed, we no longer find meaningful the kinds of generalized statements about a “spirit of the times” that were possible in the intellectual climate in which Meiss developed his Black Death theory. We have instead developed an appreciation of the

<sup>20</sup> I.e., *The Annunciation* for the altar of St. Ansanus, by Simone Martini and Lippo Memmi (1333); *The Birth of the Virgin* by Pietro Lorenzetti (1342); and *The Purification of the Virgin* by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (1342). The cycle was first delineated as such by van Os, 1984, 77-89, and discussed further by Beatson, Muller, Steinhoff, 1986, and Steinhoff, 2000 and 2007.

<sup>21</sup> Beatson, Muller, Steinhoff, 1986. Also see *Art as Politics in late Medieval and Renaissance Siena*, Timothy B. Smith and Judith B. Steinhoff, eds. (Surrey, England and Burlington, 2012).

<sup>22</sup> Most recently identified as Tederigo or Federigo Memmi (Lippo’s brother and partner in art) by Machtelt Israels, “The Memmi-Martini Compagnia” in *The Bernard and Mary Berenson Collection of European Paintings at I Tatti*, Machtelt Bruggen Israels and Carl Brandon Strehlke, eds. (Milan, 2015), 441-443

<sup>23</sup> Beatson, Muller, Steinhoff; Steinhoff 2000 and 2007.

<sup>24</sup> First noted by H. W. van Os, 1984, 86.

<sup>19</sup> Beatson, Muller, Steinhoff, 1986; Skaug, 1994; Steinhoff, 2000 and 2007.

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(continued)

diverse results produced by the circumstances of individual works of art and the people who made and viewed them. Despite many similarities, the Bubonic Plague and the COVID-19 pandemics both reveal that variations in circumstances and responses in each particular locality can make a difference. Finally, we would be wise to be

more aware of history, but not try to compare the two pandemics too closely, especially in terms of long-lasting results or the impact on art.

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*(continued)***Pivoting to Online Learning During COVID-19**

By Anne Rudloff Stanton

The word “pivot”—a term that has been used frequently in memos, blogs and directives from my institution about the massive course redesign that took place this spring—implies to me a speedy, precise movement. But to relate here how I “pivoted” to remote learning seems an inaccurate description of my own speedy but very clumsy steps. While Matthew Reeve’s essay in this issue of *ICMA News* is a meditation on what the coronavirus pandemic means to graduate research, what follows here is a more procedural description of my experiences since mid-March, 2020.

My institution started issuing alerts and travel advisories in late January. By March 22, all local education moved online and campus had closed; my house had become the only office space for me and my spouse, the school for our teen, and a safe place for my elderly mother. I cannot reflect on the spring without considering how two working adults adjusted to sharing spaces and bandwidth with a home-schooling teen and a news-hungry nonagenarian.

I was offering two scheduled courses and advising several graduate students in the final stages of writing. The courses included a broad “caves to contemporary” survey and a graduate seminar. The graduate seminar was relatively easy; I set up Zoom meetings during our regular weekly class. To combat very real Zoom fatigue, everyone posted their presentations ahead of our meetings on Canvas, the LMS our university uses, so that we could spend our class time discussing them, and continue our discussions asynchronously. This worked well enough, but inevitably someone would have technical difficulties; the loss of library resources, and studio access for the MFA students enrolled in the course, was a significant hindrance for everyone. A large portion of my time was spent trying to secure research resources for these students and for my graduate students. I depended on social media to find pdfs of various sources that often were provided by members of this organization, and here voice my gratitude for your generosity.

This was my first semester to teach the undergraduate course, a new one-semester version of our broad surveys. Students purchased inexpensive access to the online version of Kleiner’s *Art Through the Ages: A Global Concise History*; this was simply the text, rather than the publisher’s more expensive e-learning suite, which we had tried in earlier iterations of the survey. I already had a very robust site

in Canvas in which I had organized materials for each cultural unit or era into what Canvas terms “modules.” These modules included a short synopsis of what I thought was most important about the era, followed by directions for readings in Kleiner, a list of important terms and objects/monuments to remember, and then links to interesting sites from Smarthistory, UNESCO and archaeological groups.

For the first half of the semester I lectured in class about ancient and medieval material twice a week, with the Canvas modules providing the substrate for 70-minute long explorations of particularly important monuments and objects in their cultural and chronological contexts. My lectures included a lot of questions based on comparisons and discussions of “unknowns,” and a significant part of the grade was based on in-class pop quizzes. I gave class members many opportunities for extra credit, as one of the most important course goals was to see how much our current visual milieu owes to the history of art. Students were encouraged to look around their own environments—considering the architecture on campus, advertisements, internet memes, the framing of journalistic photography, the staging of cinematography, the design of fabrics—and to make connections with the past. Their semester paper was completely based on personal interaction with exhibits in our campus museum.

I had a great time with the class up to the middle of the semester, lecturing to a packed room and taking the history in broad sweeps. So when it was time to “pivot” online, I was very disappointed that I would not be able to maintain this environment. And I had to make a lot of decisions very quickly: synchronous or asynchronous? Zoom lectures or recorded PowerPoints? Proctored online exams or open-book essays? Put the pop quizzes online or replace those points with a completely different type of assignment? And what to do about that museum-based paper, now that the museum—and all museums—were closed?

There were additional considerations. I knew that most of the students would be leaving their dorms to shelter at home, many sharing bandwidth with other home-bound family members. This was certainly an issue in my household where my family and I could not avoid occasional concurrent Zoom sessions in different parts of our house. I knew that some of my students would lose reliable internet access, and all would be dealing with courses they had never planned to take online. The general advice on our campus was to develop asynchronous versions of our courses, given the uncertainty of the spread of the virus and the varied situations and time zones in which our

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students might be living. So I reorganized the rest of my semester topics into weekly asynchronous units: the “Arts of Sub-Saharan Africa,” the “Arts of 18<sup>th</sup>-century Europe,” for example. Aiming to create a clear order of operations, I was much more deliberate about the structure of the materials I posted for each module than I was when I relied on the spontaneity of in-class exchange.

My biggest challenge was to translate those in-class lectures for online delivery. It was still important to provide the broad narrative, but a 60-70 minute audio lecture over my PowerPoints would, frankly, be deadly dull for me and for the students. Besides, I had made such recorded PowerPoints before and knew that even a 30-minute lecture can produce a very large data file. Our campus provides different options for recording lectures, so I decided to make short VoiceThread lectures, which allowed me to import my slides and then add audio comments. This tool has two distinct advantages over other options. First, the size of the data files it produces are smaller, which spoke to some of my concerns about student internet access. And second, students could comment directly on each slide by voice, text or even video. So I could build in many of the discussion options I would have included in the lectures to encourage interaction

between the students. We used this for my graduate seminar as well, which allowed asynchronous discussions in addition to the ones we had together over Zoom.

This screenshot from my undergraduate course hints at the asynchronous conversation between me (AS) and two students soon after we went online (Fig. 1). It was not as smooth as an in-person discussion, or even a Zoom meeting, but I wanted to incorporate discussion interchanges into the lecture environment.

I posted two or three VoiceThreads in each module, each one no longer than 10 minutes. Early attempts, like the one from which I took this screenshot, included too many slides and were too long. But with practice I boiled my lectures down, focusing on connections with other things we had studied, or with larger themes, contemporary events or issues that were not addressed in the textbook. This process made for some very late nights as I struggled to focus my comments and update my material while maintaining time-sensitive graduate advising.

At the end of each module I added a low-stakes, open-book quiz to replace the in-class pop quizzes. I also created two

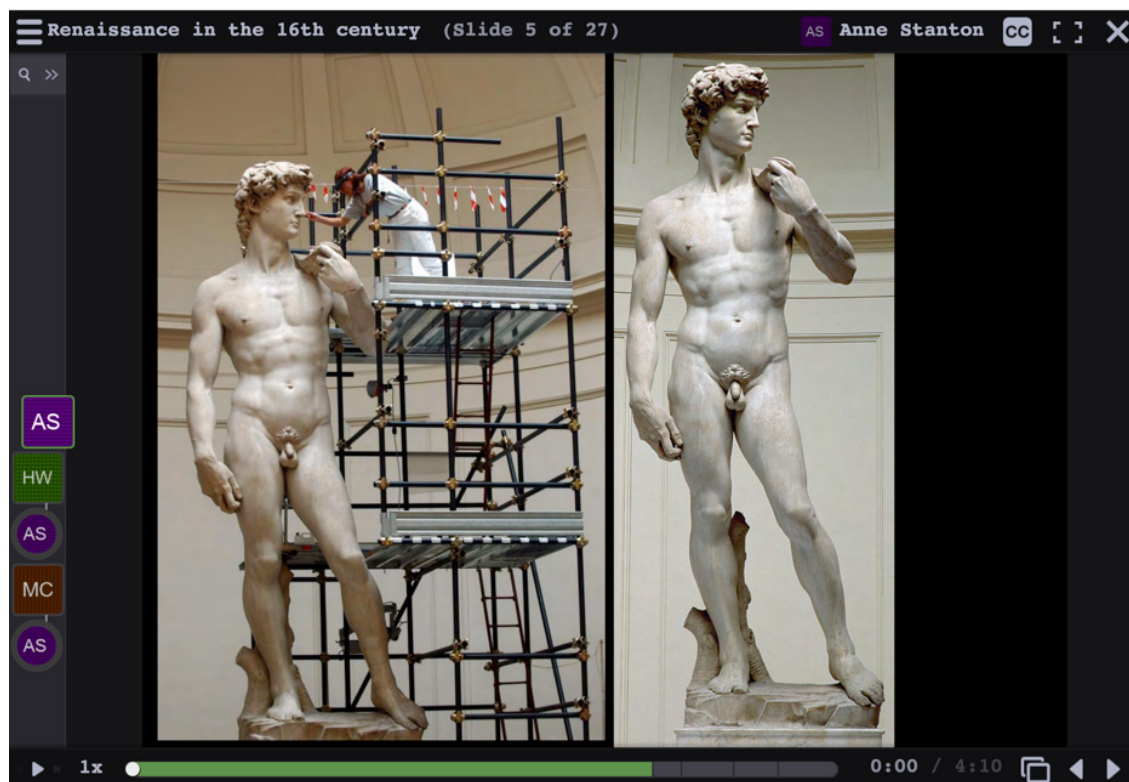


Fig. 1: VoiceThread Screenshot from *Introduction to Art History Survey at the University of Missouri*, Spring 2020 (Anne Rudloff Stanton)

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other options for their paper assignment, and emphasized possibilities for extra-credit points, building upon the kinds of things I had discussed while we were meeting in person. When I set up the course over a few days in March, facing an uncertain spring, I wanted to give my students flexible options to do well and, naturally, to live out my original course goal of seeing the history of art in their current environments.

I was certainly unhappy with aspects of the course. And as I plan for a fully online delivery this fall, I will be refining my structure and my use of various digital tools. The students really appreciated the weekly structure and the daily flexibility, and most responded very well. While a smaller percentage participated in the VoiceThread discussions, some of the students who got engaged with the remote course had never spoken up before in class. I count that as a victory. I lost some rigor, certainly, in my rush to ensure that students in difficult circumstances had every opportunity to do well. Many were assiduous with the quizzes and extra credit opportunities, so in the end I marked a lot of very high grades. I will probably have to justify those grades at some point.

And yet.

Several students contacted me to say that the course really helped them at a rough time. For some, the course was an anchor; the consistent schedule and organization provided stability in the chaos. Others remarked on the content; the material provided a new way of thinking about history and of considering our visual environment as something with its own history. The students in the graduate seminar appreciated the way that the seminar topic—art fragmented, revised and remixed—ended up being unexpectedly poignant, and found some valuable new ways to think about material in their own fields. I received some of these comments at a time when I was quite wrung out, as the physical, social and financial effects of the pandemic kept rolling on and my working nights kept getting later. It was clear that what we did in those classes, even the undergraduate survey, made a difference.

I am designing my fall courses with this in mind. I probably will still be sheltering at home with most of my family. My students will still be dealing with financial and health worries, and many will be balancing their classes with work and with social activism, even in our small town. The best I can do for them is to make sure that their art history class matters even more.

*Anne Rudloff Stanton is Associate Professor of Art History at University of Missouri, Columbia.*

## Graduate Teaching During COVID-19

By Matthew M. Reeve

On March 13-14 of this year I was at the University of Guelph for the Canadian Conference of Medieval Art Historians with two of my graduate students who were giving their first public lectures. Although we didn't know it at the time, it was a pivotal moment. In the leadup to the conference, COVID-19 had become major news and "social distancing" was just entering common parlance, but it was not yet clear exactly how serious the situation was or how long-lasting it would be. But the signs were ominous, and several colleagues who had just been in Europe had to drop out and self-isolate at home. The conference was nonetheless a great success and I was extraordinarily proud of my students: their papers were smart, occasionally humorous and beautifully presented. They had gotten over the all-important hurdle of giving their first papers with grace and style and I was delighted to be there see it. I celebrated with them afterward at the conference dinner, but sadly, I have not seen them since. I left them after dinner to continue on with celebrations and I took the elevator up in the conference hotel with my colleagues. The gravity of what was to come began to sink in and take the place of the giddiness of the conference.

When I returned to campus, I gave my last class to my undergraduates. I came to my Friday 8:30 a.m. class to meet ashen faces. My normally loquacious students were silent and quite clearly in shock. I tried to engage them about COVID-19 and offer the university's standard brief (as was required of me), but clearly they were not in need of yet more information. And really, what could I say that was of use? I knew little more than they did, and they just needed to go home. For undergraduate students and many graduate students (mature students excepted) the COVID-19 pandemic will surely be a formative event in their lives, as it will be for all of us. But for 18-25-year olds in particular, this may well represent for them the first significant tear in the fabric of their culture. My generation was raised in what now seems a much more vulnerable, insecure and pessimistic time: acid rain, AIDS/HIV, the 9/11 attacks in London, New York and Washington, catastrophic oil spills, and various wars and famines seemingly prepared us for tremendous adversity. With much of their connections to the world being mediated by digital media and distorted by social media (neither of which existed in my youth), it would seem that this demographic is, through no fault of their own, particularly unprepared for the brutal reality of a COVID-19 world. But that world is upon them, and I left that meeting with the thought that for many of them, this would be their AIDS or 9/11.

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COVID-19 has temporarily (we hope) but profoundly changed the contours of graduate study. The sudden closure of universities, university libraries, college facilities and so on has sent many graduate students back home (especially those living in university residences which have closed or transformed into self-isolation centers) or back to their houses or apartments. Some are working abroad on research and are not able to even get home. For all of us, Zoom/Skype and other online platforms have become the new way of teaching and advising. For many—including myself—this was not easy or natural. Zoom was completely unknown to me, and now it is standard in academic life (and of course in our personal lives). I don't teach from a script or even use many notes, so the formalization of my quickly-paced, interrogative lectures (which demand participation from students—hence no laptops or cellphones!) into PowerPoint audio slides took much of the fun out of teaching for me and for many. On the bright side, I do expect that online teaching may make participation easier for those who find it daunting to speak up in class. As I consider graduate teaching in the fall, we will necessarily use an online platform for seminars and one-to-one meetings will also be virtual. Insofar as graduate student supervision is concerned, I have had to substitute our informal meetings in my office or in the cafes or pubs on campus with regular telephone meetings with students to keep up with them, help with drafts of their essays and chapters, and generally try to keep their chins up. The show must go on.

And go on it has, although the current state of affairs—even at its best—is far less satisfactory than any graduate student could hope for or expect. The closure of libraries has been particularly challenging. At Queen's, curbside book pick-up and drop-off is just beginning as I write this. And the university has not made the process easy. As a tenured faculty member, I had to seek decanal approval to get books I needed; my graduate students had to go through yet more levels of approvals (including from me) just to pick up a few books. To alleviate the lack of reading materials, I have essentially loaned out much of my personal library to students. It is a somewhat covert affair in which we agree to a time when I can drop off a load of books in our department, and then they come in 30 minutes later to collect them and race off home to get down to work. My graduate students have independently initiated a digital network to share resources—mostly scanned chapters, etc.—to other students in our department during these difficult times. When I did not own

the materials they needed, I have gone to the computer and bought books for them on Amazon (a necessity, alas) which have taken extra weeks to arrive in the current mail glut. My students and I are grateful to a number of members of the ICMA who have generously offered their time to answer questions or offer opinions on my students' research. In this respect, e-mail has taken the place of those occasionally nerve-wracking 15-minute coffee meetings at Kalamazoo or Leeds where graduate students meet with admired specialists who help to supplement their supervisor's advice. As a footnote, the ICMA is soon to offer online mentoring sessions for students which will surely provide vital support. While hardly perfect, these contributions have offered crucial Band-Aid solutions that are helping us to get through the summer.

What is the immediate future of graduate studies in the history of art and in medievalist art history in particular? Will graduate school be on in the fall? Will all classes be moved online or will there be a blend of online and in-person learning? There are various responses to these questions and, at the moment, many institutions have not yet answered them and opted to wait and hedge their bets. Two weeks ago, we were asked to describe what graduate courses could and could not be taught online in the fall, and my plans to use my funding to take my graduate seminar to Wales to embark on a new research project have been shelved for the foreseeable future. How will graduate students be compensated for the lack of teaching? And should they be compensated, especially given that a pandemic is hardly the fault of any university administration? How will students travel for their work—especially those in the middle of their post-comps fieldwork? Will they get to North Africa, Europe, the Middle East, etc. to do the vital fieldwork required for graduate study? Due to a generous donor, our students working on European art are given a one-year travel scholarship to allow them to spend a year working in Europe. It is difficult to overstate the importance of this experience for each student or for the pedagogical and professional practices of medievalist art history in general. In an increasingly virtual, digital world, the absolute need to do those long and frequently solitary trips to study objects at first hand, to commune with them and to really *know* them as physical objects—whether churches in the city or parish, manuscripts and documents in the archive, or metalwork in the diocesan museum—is greater than ever. And of course, this is only part and parcel of habituating oneself to the

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linguistic, social and religious environments in which our objects are nested. The advice given to me by my supervisor when I got to grad school: “go out and get your hands dirty looking at things and then we can talk” is as good as it ever was. We study material objects and no amount of digital mediation will take the place of interacting with our objects in real time.

But what worries me most is the loss of the social aspect of graduate study and the profound effect this is having on students. Scholarship, at least as far as I practice it, is not and has never been a solitary activity. The friendships I had in graduate school were what kept me going and what made me the scholar and teacher I am now. Julian Luxford (now Professor Luxford) and I would meet every day in the Cambridge University Library and have coffee at least twice. If I did not show up, he would come to my rooms and make me go! Often enough, 8 hours at the library led to beers at one of Cambridge’s many pubs where we would work on Latin translations or discuss what we had found that day. These graduate school relationships create vital spaces to share ideas, find inspiration, to feel like less of a fraud (as all graduate students do), and just to have a good laugh. While we have been able to alleviate at least some of the dearth of resources for our students during the pandemic, we cannot recreate that vital synergy. I am glad that my students are having physically-distant meetings, sharing resources when they can, and of course having the same Zoom chatting and drinking sessions that many of us have been having. These offer fun, companionship and the basic pleasure of dishing about we most love to do.

It is impossible here to address to the sheer diversity of experiences in graduate school during COVID-19. I fear for those students who are new to the big cities of our discipline: Toronto, New York, London, Munich and so on. It must be extraordinarily alienating to be in a new place and to have, perhaps, little more than one’s work to sustain oneself. Needless to state, the situation is compounded by those who are foreign to the country in which they go to grad school and may not be native language speakers. What is the experience of trying to raise children or support older or unwell family members and finish a PhD during COVID-19? I have spent three solid months with my three-year-old and it has been impossible to find sufficient mental and physical space to really work. But this is certainly compounded by the anxiety of a looming doctoral defense, the absolute necessity to get

the thesis in on time to examiners, and the uncertainty about whether there might one day be a job in their field. Finance is another issue. COVID-19 will have significant effects on the amount of money available to fund MAs and PhDs and I know that not all countries had the same liberal policy of funding all people—whether students or not—during this time as my own country did when their income was necessarily reduced.

Much remains uncertain about our future. Yet it is hard not to reflect on the fact that our discipline was formed within a series of crises, including the two world wars of the last century. Thinking on just this issue, I have collected a series of “posts” around campus and our neighborhood. One was taped to the door of a house of graduate students close to where we live (Fig. 1). Citing Albert Camus, it was a lively and optimistic reflection of hope in the first month of the pandemic: “In the depth of winter, I learned that within me lay an invincible summer.” Two months later I was heartened to see a piece of graffiti adorn the pavement in front of my office: the stunning Romanesque Revival building called Ontario

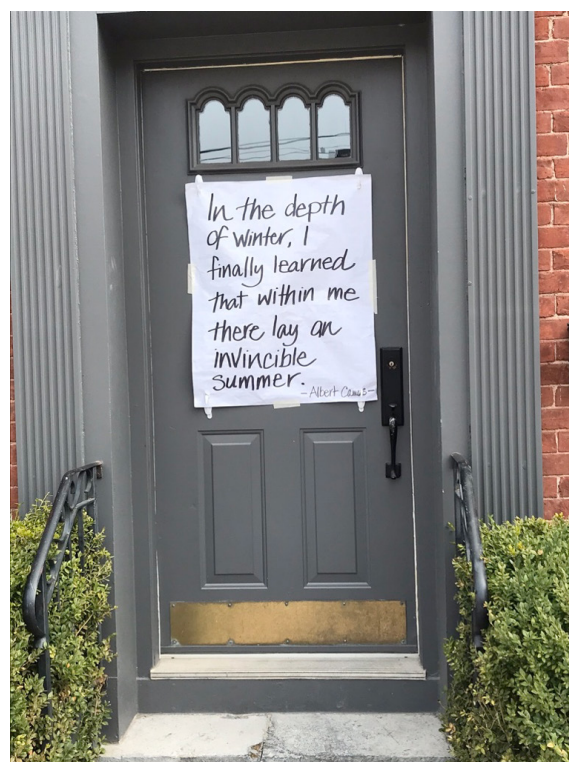


Fig. 1 - Post taped to door of house of graduate students

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*Fig. 2 – Using the Queen’s University Q to make a statement on campus*

Hall (Fig. 2). Taking the place of painted graduation plaques, homecoming murals and other emblems of old, traditional universities, was a hand-drawn chalk boss with the distinctive Queen’s University Q. Clearly done by

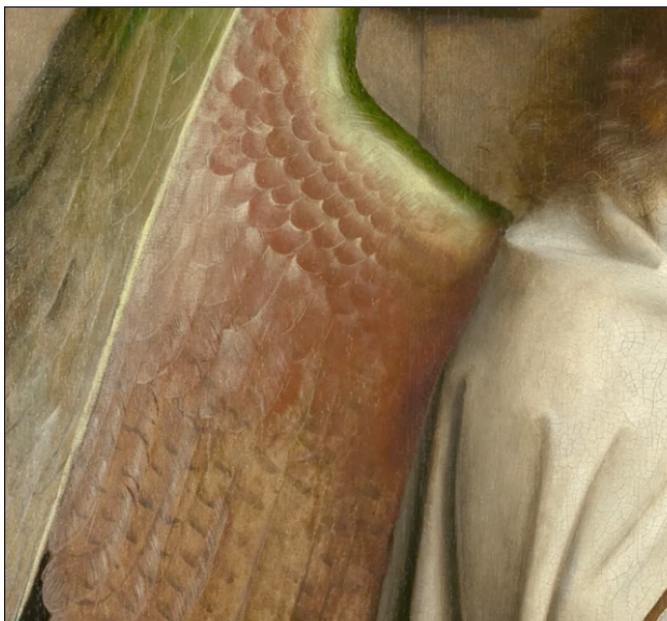
graduate students—the only students left on campus—this was a profound statement of presence and fortitude: “Q—still here.”



## REFLECTIONS

*(continued)***Medieval Collections in the Time of a “Great Plague”**

By Gerhard Lutz

**Van Eyck. An Optical Revolution**

The largest Jan van Eyck exhibition ever

01.02.20-30.04.20

exhibition

From February 1st until March 12th 2020, the MSK hosted the largest Jan van Eyck exhibition in history. During these weeks, nearly 130,000 visitors came closer to Van Eyck than was ever possible before, but unfortunately the COVID-19 crisis forced us to close the exhibition earlier. You can find a retrospective on the [Van Eyck website](#).

*Website of the exhibition “Van Eyck. An Optical Revolution” at the MSK in Ghent after its early closing*

Like all other areas of life, the COVID-19 crisis has hit museums worldwide suddenly and in a fundamental way. From one day to the next, most institutions had to close. Long planned special exhibitions such as the Van Eyck show in Ghent (Belgium) had to close and could not be reopened. In some cases, it was possible to convince the lenders to extend the exhibition, such as the Raphael exhibition in Rome or “Nord & Sud: Art medieval de Noruega i Catalunya 1100-1350” in the Museu Episcopal de Vic, which is now showing until September 15, 2020. In other cases, an opening has been completely postponed, as in the case with the exhibition on Master Arndt in the Museum Schnütgen in Cologne. Other exhibitions that were only in the planning stage have also been

postponed, such as the Thomas Becket exhibition at the British Museum, the new running dates of which have not yet been officially published. The international loan traffic, especially between the USA and Europe, has come to a complete standstill due to the travel bans. Loaned works of art are stuck until they can be transported back to their institutions.

Much of the extensive discussion that has been taking place in the media since the museums were closed naturally relates first and foremost to the economic consequences and logistical difficulties. To varying degrees, all institutions are affected by loss of income. In this respect, many European museums, which are publicly funded, initially have some advantage. In these cases, deficits can be absorbed by the state. The difficulties here tend to be downstream, since it is to be feared that in the coming years, spending cuts in all areas will also severely restrict the possibilities of museums. North American museums in particular are affected by the crisis often much more directly since they are foundations with varying levels of assets. The more income from admissions plays a role, the more drastic are the losses. Income from sales and rentals are also largely disappearing for the time being as shops will not be able to open or events are being cancelled for the foreseeable future.

But this is only one side of the coin. Interestingly enough, completely new horizons of experience open up to visitors who nevertheless venture into the already reopened museums. Due to current high restrictions on access, the number of visitors is manageable. This is especially true for museums that are normally overrun by tourists but now offer downright contemplative possibilities for viewing works of art, an opportunity that some have not had for decades. It is not yet possible to

*Website of the Cleveland Museum of Art at its reopening on June 30<sup>th</sup>*

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assess the extent to which this will change ways of seeing in the long term or whether we will soon return to old habits before the crisis.

With the closure of museums, digital offerings have considerably increased under great time pressure. Online exhibitions, videos or Instagram postings are just some of the elements that have met with increased user interest. One of the main problems is that it is not simply possible to bring the museum's standard offerings onto the Internet but rather that individual approaches and questions have to be found to convey them. The demand in this area has increased considerably. When museums return to normal operation, it will ultimately become apparent whether new groups of visitors have been addressed in this way, or whether the museum has simply saved the public—who would come to the museum anyway—from the drought. The approaches on both sides of the Atlantic are quite comparable, depending also on the possibilities of the respective institution. Even smaller museums are characterized by promising approaches.

The screenshot shows the website of the Dommuseum Hildesheim. It is divided into two main sections: 'AKTUELLES' (Current) and 'FÜHRUNGEN' (Tours). Under 'AKTUELLES', there is a headline 'Hildesheimer Dommuseum mit Einschränkungen geöffnet!' (Hildesheim Cathedral Museum with restrictions open!) dated June 1st. The text below explains that normal opening hours are restored, but with a limited capacity of six visitors at a time and mandatory social distancing. It also lists that various tours and events are suspended until further notice. Under 'FÜHRUNGEN', there are three video thumbnails. The first is titled 'Lieblingsstücke aus dem Dommuseum: Die Elf...' (Favorite pieces from the Dommuseum: The Elf...). Below the thumbnails, a caption reads: 'In der Reihe "Unsere Lieblingsstücke präsentieren Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter des Hildesheimer Dommuseums ihr ganz persönliches Lieblingsstück.'" (In the series "Our favorite pieces" the staff of the Hildesheim Cathedral Museum present their personal favorite piece.)

*Website of the Dommuseum Hildesheim after its reopening with additional online offerings*

However, if one asks about specific discussions that directly affect medieval art, the debate about the future of blockbuster exhibitions is the first thing that comes to mind.

These are part of an established repertoire on both sides of the Atlantic. In the first few weeks of the Van Eyck exhibition in Ghent, for example, more than 100,000 visitors came to the show. However, the numbers vary greatly in Europe and recently have fallen far short of expectations at several shows. In most cases, visitor numbers are calculated to be well below 100,000. On the other hand, the costs of insurance and transport in particular have risen considerably in recent years.

In the near future, it is to be expected that a lot of money in Europe will be diverted to other areas, and expensive exhibitions will become increasingly difficult. Similarly, budgets for special exhibitions in North America will be significantly lower. Nevertheless, numerous exhibition projects are still in preparation. Often they are linked to anniversaries that cannot be postponed and are also based on the interests of local politicians. In this respect, a collapse is not to be expected. It is possible that people will try to concentrate a little more on their own collections or focus less on expensive star objects and instead think more in terms of content and communication. Such a concentration would certainly be welcome.

Another aspect could possibly be targeting provocation in order to spark a debate. Eike Schmidt, director of the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, recently suggested returning sacred art from museums to the churches for which it was originally created. As an example, he cited one of the most famous works of his own house: the *Rucellai Madonna* by the Sienese painter Duccio. At four and a half by almost three meters, it is after all the largest altarpiece of the 13th century. Schmidt said that it was not about paintings acquired long ago in a fixed collection context but rather about altarpieces that were kept in museum depots or temporarily removed from churches without a change of ownership. In fact, altarpieces were not created for the museum but for the devotion of the faithful. They have a function that can only be understood in a church. What at first sight sounds plausible reaches its limits when one considers that today the churches no longer offer the supposed context for which they were created. Over the centuries, and especially since the 19th century, they have mostly undergone fundamental changes, but today—in the face of tourism—they often function more as museum spaces. In addition, both the security and the climate in church rooms sometimes cause considerable problems.

And finally, the global health crisis shows one of the central tasks of medieval studies: like no other discipline, it can open our eyes to how a pandemic was dealt with in the

**REFLECTIONS***(continued)*

past, since the great plague of the 14th century was the last similarly drastic event and ended up impacting people's lives even more dramatically than what we are seeing today. But the answers are not easy, for example, if one looks in vain for direct reactions to the Bubonic plague in the arts. What is needed here is to make developments in the visual arts understandable to today's audience in their parallels and differences.

Thus, a crisis that already has its own debates can be a catalyst for new perspectives. In addition to a stronger integration of digital possibilities, it above all opens up a new and more focused view of what we have on the ground.

*Gerhard Lutz is the Robert P. Bergman Curator of Medieval Art at The Cleveland Museum of Art.*



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### Reflections on the Moment: The Met, the Pandemic and the New Imperatives

By Griff Mann

During late February 2020, my attention was focused on installing “Crossroads: Power and Piety” and on the annual TEFAF Art Fair in Maastricht, The Netherlands. Many dealers, curators, collectors and art enthusiasts were also preparing for the fair. Some were planning to see the Van Eyck exhibition in Ghent, Belgium, either before or after TEFAF. At the same moment, initial reports about the arrival of COVID-19 in Europe and the United States were beginning to appear in larger numbers (see the [Covid-19 Timeline](#) created by the New York Times). The Met, together with other museums across the U.S., followed events closely, seeking initially to understand the impact the virus might have on international travel. During the last week of February, The Met decided that no staff would

attend the fair. TEFAF proceeded as scheduled, opening for previews on March 5 with reduced attendance and a set of safety protocols in place. That same evening in New York, I gathered with others in The Met’s Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium to celebrate the opening of the Crossroads installations. COVID-19 remained a topic of conversation among attendees at both events. By that time, elbow bumps had replaced handshakes. How little did we know then how fast things would move, and what transformations would be wrought upon our institutions, our economy and our society in the ensuing weeks and months.

In Maastricht, positive tests for COVID-19 amongst exhibitors prompted [TEFAF to close 4 days ahead of schedule](#). In New York, The Met led New York cultural organizations in announcing a full closure effective March 12. The period from those early moments in mid-March to mid-June has presented unprecedented challenges. On May 25, the shocking video of the murder of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer provoked widespread reactions that continue to ripple across the country and the globe. What started as a global pandemic and related economic crisis has shifted into a widespread push for social justice and an end to systemic racism. As we now see more clearly, these events are closely inter-related and will have important and lasting consequences for both museums and our field.

Leaving the office on Friday, March 13, I expected the closure to last a few days or a couple of weeks. Given the events of the intervening months, it is astounding to imagine how I could have been that naive. Within weeks, New York became the U.S. epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak, which killed tens of thousands of state residents and left hundreds of thousands more infected with COVID-19. In those early days, museums and universities moved as quickly as possible to protect their staff, faculty and students, and to respond to the looming financial pressures that accompanied the realities of extended periods of closure. As with a ship suddenly overcome by a storm at sea, all hands focused on damage assessment and stabilization.

At the Met, initial messages about closing to ensure the safety of staff and visitors quickly shifted, and [the museum estimated that it would remain closed through early July](#), possibly longer. Because the situation was evolving so quickly in New York, The Met’s leadership established weekly meetings with heads of departments in order to keep staff abreast of their thinking and



*Crossroads: Power and Piety Installation, Medieval Sculpture Hall, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, March 5, 2020*

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## REFLECTIONS

(continued)



Degas, *Ballerina, "Making The Met,"* Collection Monitor Patrol, April 6, 2020

decisions. Financial projections suggested that the global pandemic would have grave financial consequences for the cultural sector, as it would for the whole of society. All available resources were re-allocated to establish an emergency Reserve Fund intended to address an anticipated deficit of \$100,000,000.

During the initial days of the shutdown, most museums implemented emergency plans to ensure that the buildings and collections were secure and staff protected. At The Met, collections staff in all three locations commenced a regular schedule of Collection Monitor Patrols. New safety protocols, including masks, gloves and physical distancing were put into place. At The Met Cloisters, [gardens staff were given special dispensation to visit to the museum.](#) Essential staff from custodial, buildings and security continued to report to the buildings but at reduced capacity. At the height of the pandemic, these colleagues managed risks posed by commutes, adjusted to new protocols onsite and adapted to a new normal. Their work, often invisible and unheralded, achieved new visibility and appreciation, and eventually greater attention as spring turned to summer.

The majority of staff adjusted to a new work-from-home routine, and [The Met, like so many museums, took its programs online.](#) Many museum social media channels and websites saw an unprecedented surge in visitation as people across the globe settled into new lock-down routines. In a before-COVID era, The Met's website hosted around 200,000 unique visits/day; post-COVID, traffic increased to between 350,000-400,000 unique visits/day. Visitors to the website spent around 10% more time exploring online offerings, and the collections pages saw a 78% increase in

traffic. As schools closed, the [#MetKids](#) section of the website saw a 1,646% jump in traffic. Smaller museums have entered into this space in ways both simple and creative, encouraging staff to engage directly with contemporary issues, rethink collections, and experiment with the strengths of the digital medium. Those with the basic building blocks of [digitized collections, solid collection information, and existing digital resources had a distinct advantage.](#) In this space, I have been especially impressed by the work of smaller organizations, like the [Frick Collection](#) and the [Barnes Foundation](#) in the United States, and the [Wellcome Collection](#) and the [Thyssen-Bornemisza](#) in Europe. More recently, museums not known for their social media leadership have suddenly emerged as trend-setters, like the [Uffizi's remarkable rise to the top of the TikTok.](#) Individual curators have also turned to [Instagram as a creative vehicle to engage audiences from afar.](#)

One of the immediate impacts of the closure was the fundamental reordering of the exhibition calendar. Across the country and the world, museums shuffled, postponed and cancelled projects long in the planning. Given that The Met was in early stages of its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations, with many related special exhibitions planned, this work has been especially challenging. "Making The Met," which was poised to open on March 23, remains in a state of partial installation. At The Met Breuer, the Gerhard Richter exhibition, which closed two weeks after opening, will not re-open and will not travel to its second venue in Los Angeles. At The Met Cloisters, we remained optimistic that "A Blessing of Unicorns," a long-anticipated project uniting The Cloisters' Unicorn tapestries with those from the Musée Cluny, would remain on the calendar for a fall opening pending further developments in New York and Paris.

As March turned into April, the museum initiated longer-term planning efforts, working to anticipate a radically altered landscape. One of the essential elements of a new reality for The Met was significantly reduced visitation, especially at The Met 5th, where tourism to New York represents a key source of income. While early efforts focused on establishing an emergency fund and trimming executive salaries, The Met also took staff actions to reduce costs. In mid-April, the [museum eliminated 81 positions](#) in the Visitor Experience and Retail departments. At The Met Cloisters, this meant that all five part-time Visitor Experience staff and one full-time Retail colleague lost their jobs. This action was the first of several phases of cost reduction steps planned for the institution.

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## REFLECTIONS

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*Trie Cloister Garden, The Met Cloisters, April 6, 2020*

Even as museums and universities settled into a new normal of closed campuses, virtual programming and teaching, the financial clouds co-mingled with the health crisis, and we all braced ourselves for continued disruptions. At that time, we were operating in a constantly changing landscape, especially as the scale and scope of the COVID-19 crisis and its broader implications for New York City gradually came into focus. At The Met Cloisters, the [gardens became a place of relief and reflection for many](#), and staff received regular images and updates from gardens staff working on site as April turned to May. Like our colleagues in academia, the curatorial staff of the museum turned to virtual learning and programming, and continued to advance what research we could while working remotely. Microsoft Teams, FaceTime, Zoom, Go-to-Meeting supported new modes of working. Homes and apartments became offices, schools and even recording studios as we generated short features for our members and broader audiences. It is now easy to imagine that the shift to virtual programming will have a profound and lasting impact on the ways in which we receive and share information. Many of the virtual talks I have attended far surpassed in audience those that they would have attracted had the same programs been offered in person. This mode of engagement, with its advantages and imperfections, will likely transform the ways in which we work, “travel” and gather for conferences well into the future.

By late May, The Met revised its initial estimated deficit of \$100,000,000 to a new working estimate of \$150,000,000. Some projections, factoring a slow return of visitors and a volatile economy, suggest that the impact could be greater than this amount. As I write this overview, The Met is completing the second stage of staff actions to ensure the

institution’s long-term financial viability, even as [we prepare to re-open at the end of August](#). As with the financial crisis of 2016, the museum launched a voluntary retirement program (VRP) in May. The impact of this program on the museum will no doubt be significant, as colleagues with years of experience and distinguished careers will transition into retirement. While this might be a timely move for some, for many it will come earlier than anticipated. Limitations on in-person gatherings make this an especially challenging moment to celebrate distinguished careers, preserve expertise that took years to develop, and thoughtfully plan for succession.

While we remained optimistic about COVID’s impact on “A Blessing of Unicorns,” the middle of May presented new challenges. After much deliberation, we made the painful decision to cancel the exhibition, a move prompted by rising shipping costs and the uncertainty of how many visitors might turn out for a fall show. Proceeding with the exhibition felt more emotional than responsible. Looking ahead, the museum still plans to publish the Fall 2020 Bulletin, in which Barbara Boehm explores both sets of tapestries, and which she reconceived to stand alone from the show. [One of the more moving COVID-inspired programs recently staged by the MetLiveArts was recorded](#)—following social distance protocols—during the week of June 15 in the Unicorn Galleries, and presented online on Sunday, June 21, the weekend of Juneteenth and World Music Day. The performance was even more moving for the social backdrop against which Thapelo Masita performed.



*Cellist Thapelo Masita performing in the Unicorn Gallery, The Met Cloisters, June 15, 2020*

Writing now from a June vantage point, how different things have become. In this sense, Peter Schjeldahl’s April observation seems especially prescient: “Once we are again free to wander museums, the objects won’t have altered, but we will have, and the casualties of the

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## REFLECTIONS

(continued)

coronavirus will accompany us spectrally.” How should we respond to the challenge for transformative changes in the wake of the shocking death of George Floyd? The ensuing movement for social justice and an end to systemic racism has broad implications for museums and for academia, and will require many of us to reflect deeply on our practice, and on the ways in which our fields of study and institutions support systems of white privilege centuries in the making. The cries for change are urgent, vital and timely. George Floyd’s murder followed a string of other high-profile killings of Black Americans over the past few months—like Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, and so many others whose names we will never know—all while the pandemic continues to ravage our country, disproportionately affecting people of color. Museums are only just beginning to come to terms with the indispensable contributions of essential workers (many of whom are from minority communities), and how their work connects to the rousing calls of the Black Lives Matter movement, which asks us to care for Black life as any other.

Many in our field, especially in the wake of the 2017 Charlottesville demonstrations and the Leeds International

Medieval Congress, have [engaged racism directly](#). There have been [insightful publications](#), and [a more global outlook on the field is emerging](#), but more work is clearly needed. The Met cannot stand apart. Museums, as we now see more clearly, are far from neutral players in these debates. In holding up the mirror, I reflect on how I can work along anti-racist and decolonized lines. For those who research and interpret collections, what do anti-racist curatorial practices look like, and how can our work on the objects of the past responsibly inform our understanding of the present? What stories have been marginalized? How can we make more visible the deeply rooted systems of belief that inform existing power structures? Does the Middle Ages, with its slavery, pogroms, pandemics and resilience offer lessons for the present? As painful as this conflagration of health, economic and social crises has been, I remain optimistic that needed changes will come, and I hold up James Baldwin’s words: “Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

*C. Griffith Mann is the Michel David-Weill Curator in Charge of The Metropolitan Museum’s Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters.*



## EXHIBITION REPORT

### **Amatrice in Focus Earthquakes and Photography—Recording the Past, Planning the Future**

An Online Exhibition by Francesco Gangemi,  
Rossana Torlontano and Valentina Valerio

<https://galerie.biblhertz.it/en/amatrice/>

By Francesco Gangemi

A powerful earthquake in August 2016 was a watershed in the history of Amatrice, a small town in Central Italy. It caused 299 casualties, and the damage was soon ranked as one of Italy's worst disasters of the century. The effect of this violent seismic swarm on a fragile-built environment was devastating, causing serious damage and loss to historic buildings, as well as to churches and monuments. Today the town is deserted. What remains of the variety and richness of its cultural

heritage? How to convey the gravity and extent of the damage through images? Furthermore, what role do images play in a post-catastrophic context? These are the questions behind the digital exhibition "Amatrice in Focus: Earthquakes and Photography—Recording the Past, Planning the Future," which is designed as an opportunity to reconnect the surviving artworks and monuments to their lacerated contexts, to question the fate of the debris—without lingering over the pathos—and to provide a means of considering the temporal dimension of the earthquake, its *longue durée*.

This research project began with a workshop hosted by the Bibliotheca Hertziana just a few months after the earthquake in the autumn of 2016. On that occasion the research group—consisting of Rossana Torlontano, Valentina Valerio and myself—was formed. The idea of channeling the results into a digital exhibition took shape during my fellowship at the Italian Academy of Columbia University. The team shared each member's expertise on Amatrice's cultural heritage and on cultural heritage conservation for earthquake-risk zones. Working at the Hertziana in Rome, we were familiar with local resources such as the historical



*View of Amatrice buried under the rubble (November 2016) (photo: Francesco Gangemi)*

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## EXHIBITION REPORT

(continued)

images held by the Photographic Collection of the institute. At the same time, we had our own repository of photographs, the result of several photographic campaigns executed during years of study of the territory. We thus began to reflect on the value of these images and to think how they might be useful after the disaster. The project soon took the path of a broader reflection on the potential of photography in post-catastrophic contexts.

With its historical center ravaged by the earthquake and—by now—erased nearly completely by the removal of rubble, Amatrice's memory is entrusted to photography. But photographic images also serve as a starting point for future measures of preservation and reconstruction; they are an instrument for documentation and knowledge. "Amatrice in Focus" aims to collect and organize historical photographs in juxtaposition with images made directly after the earthquake and during the periodic monitoring campaigns done by the Bibliotheca Hertziana. Given the current impossibility of reconstructing the face of Amatrice, the photographs collected in this exhibition replace (at least virtually) the lost cultural unity of the area and invite us to reflect on the forms, methods and purpose of the reconstruction that

will have to be done. In the end, it is a recognition of the role photography can play in post-catastrophic contexts: an extreme act of preservation of what has disappeared but also an indispensable tool for reconstruction.

The exhibition includes seven sections. It starts with the recognition of earthquakes as recurring natural events in a seismic territory such as that of Amatrice. A series of pictures of mountains open the first chapter, entitled "A seismic region." Marked by deep cracks and fractures, these photos bear witness to the age-old instability of this region that is hit cyclically by strong earthquakes. Some of them are recalled to remind us how historical seismology can also be used to dampen the impact of future earthquakes.

The biography of the territory continues in the second section, "As it was," where the artistic and monumental legacy of Amatrice is exposed. Built in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century over a regular plan, Amatrice was part of a series of new towns, founded (or re-founded) by the Angevin kings of Sicily to strengthen the mountainous area on the border between the southern part of their kingdom and the Papal States. Over the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, the economic well-being



*Amatrice, San Francesco, Nativity on the eastern wall, fresco attributed to the workshop of Maestro di Campi (1375-1400) (photo: Universitates e baronie. Arte e architettura in Abruzzo e nel Regno al tempo dei Durazzo, ed. by P. F. Pistilli, F. Manzari, G. Curzi [Pescara, 2008], 14.)*

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## EXHIBITION REPORT

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*Amatrice, San Francesco, the interior photographed by Max Hutzel in the 60s (photo: Bibliotheca Hertziana, Max Planck Institut for Art History, 147785\_147786)*

of Amatrice—based on the raising of livestock and other commercial activities—was reflected in the arts. New monumental complexes were erected and decorated not only within the walls of the town but also within a number of small satellite centers. The originality of many—now lost—Amatrician frescoes was due to the peculiar liminality of the city, situated at the crossroad of several cultural areas.

With “Photographs of the catastrophe,” the narration undergoes a deliberate hiatus. It includes an overview of the major Italian earthquakes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and highlights the role of photography in a seismic emergency as a tool for reconstruction and as documentary testimony.

“Amatrice in black and white” collects the research done in many photographic archives. In investigating the purposes for which these images were produced, we were able to distinguish different categories of documentary photography. The marginality of this region has in fact resulted in a limited historiography; a certain attention to the territory was

at first focused on nature rather than on cultural heritage and aimed to promote tourism in this mountainous area. It is only since the 1960s, with a raising awareness towards the so-called “minor heritage,” that a knowledge of Amatrice’s monuments is first conveyed. At the same time, the protection activities carried out by superintendencies produced exhaustive photographic campaigns that support the cataloguing of cultural heritage.

The last two sections of “Amatrice in Focus” go deeper in exploring the potential of photography in the new and ever-changing scenario of Amatrice. The juxtaposition of different photographic collections—both historical and current, before and after the earthquake, and made for study, documentation or preservation—proves to be essential as a record of the town’s vulnerability. The time sequence documented by these photographic collections serves as a gradual monitoring of the dynamics set in motion by the earthquake and contributes to the building of a visual chronicle of affected places and their transformations.

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## EXHIBITION REPORT

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Stone fragments from Amatrice in a warehouse provided by the Ministero per il Beni e le Attività Culturali e per il Turismo in Rieti (photo: Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per le province di Frosinone, Latina e Rieti)

In the accelerated reality of the post-catastrophic city, the images activate a reflection on the time: they make increasingly visible the *longue durée* of the earthquake, whose effect will last for years, if not decades. What is Amatrice today, and what will it be in the future? In addressing the difficult topic of the material dislocation of the city's remains, the "Amatrice in Focus" Exhibition offers a unique testimony to the operations of selecting and removing rubble. The torn, split and scattered substance that was Amatrice survives in parts, today in warehouses, and it will have to take on new forms of use and perception. Whatever measures are implemented for the new Amatrice, it will be necessary to make use of the photographic medium in its dual role: as a testimony of the town that no longer exists and, at the same time, as an instrument for documenting its scattered parts.

*Francesco Gangemi holds a PhD in Art History and is currently a Research Fellow at the Centro Tedesco di Studi Veneziani in Venice.*

*The online exhibition "Amatrice in Focus" was conceived and curated by Francesco Gangemi, Rossana Torlontano and Valentina Valerio. It was promoted by the Photographic Collection of the Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History in Rome, and realized in the framework of the International Observatory for Cultural Heritage at the Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America, Columbia University.*



View of Amatrice with the Torre Civica and the bell tower of Sant'Emidio (November 2018) (photo: Enrico Fontolan)

## EXHIBITION REVIEW

### The Work of Art in the Age of Digital Reproduction

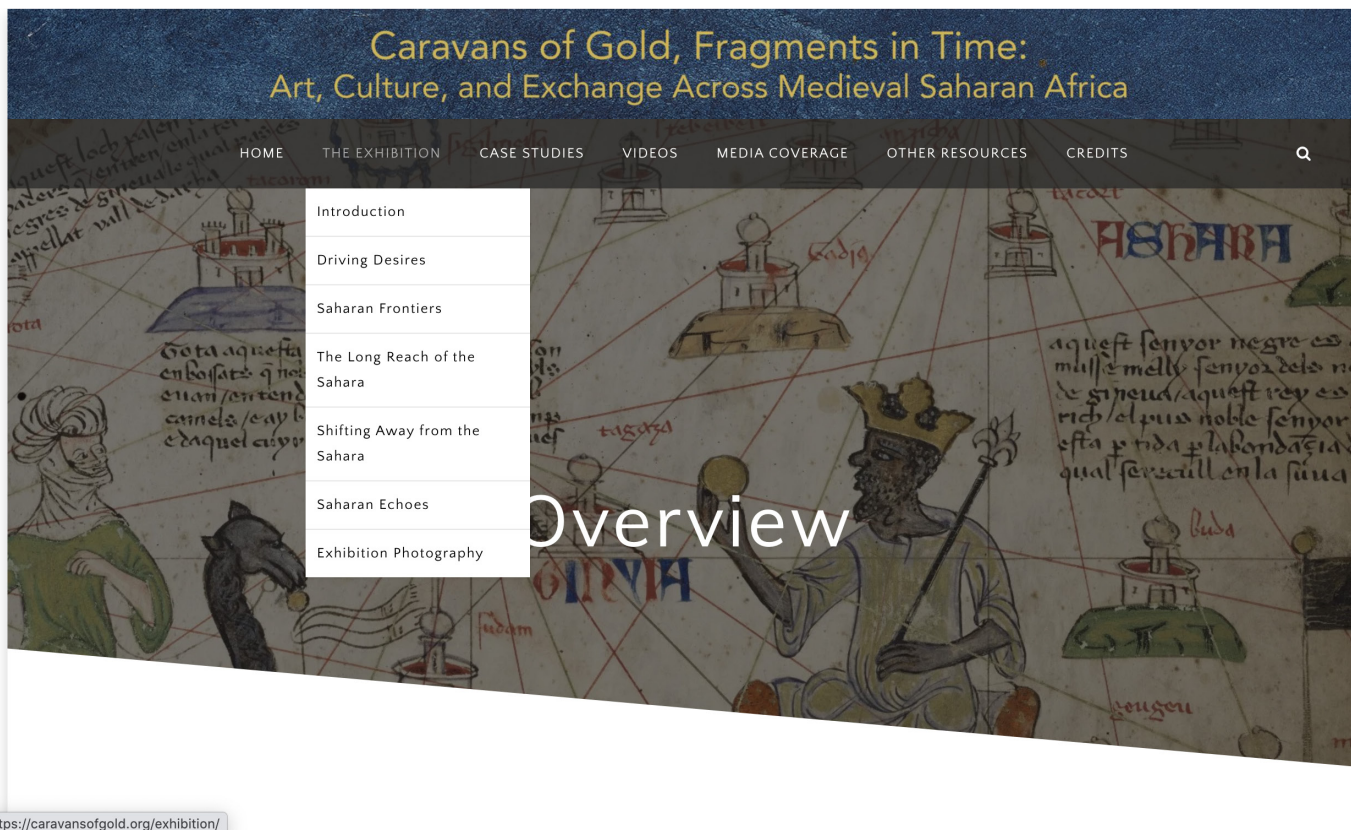
By Katherine Werwie

The Metropolitan Museum’s announcement of its indefinite closure on March 12<sup>th</sup> ushered in, almost overnight, a new phase in the long lifecycles of American institutions. With social distancing measures robbing museums of their principal currency—physical encounters with objects—they scramble to face questions that have loomed for decades but are now pressingly essential to their survival: how can institutions use digital platforms to share and present their collections, and what does the future of the physical museum look like? Some institutions have responded to their new lot nimbly by quickly launching online content, like the “Digital Decameron,” issued as a series of posts on the Uffizi’s [Facebook page](#). The most significant contributions to the landscape of online curation, however, have come from those institutions that had created digital

content before the exigencies of COVID-19 limited their time and resources.

*Caravans of Gold*, an exhibition examining the art and materials produced and traded across the medieval Sahara, was shown at the Block Museum at Northwestern University and the Aga Khan Museum between early 2019 and 2020. However, its passage to its last venue—the National Museum of African Art—earlier this year was thwarted by the closing of the Smithsonian. Fortunately, curator Kathleen Bickford Berzock and her team—including specialists in Mali, Morocco and Nigeria—had fashioned an [exhibition website](#) that serves as a model for the intellectual work an exhibition can achieve online.

Hovering on the website’s “The Exhibition” tab, we are guided to a series of pages rendered in the indigo and gold of the Blue Qur’an (a leaf of which is included in the exhibition) (Fig. 1). These pages correspond to the exhibition’s thematic sections, from “Driving Desires” on the roles of gold and salt in propelling trade from West Africa through the Sahara, to “Shifting Away from the Sahara” on changes



<https://caravansofgold.org/exhibition/>

Fig. 1 - Screenshot of “The Exhibition,” *Caravans in Gold, Fragments in Time: Art, Culture, and Exchange Across Medieval Saharan Africa*, <https://caravansofgold.org/exhibition/>, accessed June 14, 2020.

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## EXHIBITION REVIEW

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in the mechanisms, goods and centers of trade that marked the period's end. The "wall texts" of these sections are accompanied by a collage of images of objects from the exhibition and what appears to be the contents of their object labels (Fig. 2). "Case Studies" examine the show's material through the lenses of particular cities and materials. "Videos" share the insights of the show's advisors.

The format of the *Caravans of Gold* website is effective in conveying the synthetic work of the exhibition. It clearly communicates the show's important thesis: that West Africa was an important actor in and fundamentally connected to the rest of the medieval world. Moreover, the user's ability to view several works at once allows the objects to make something of a visual argument. However, the website's design as a complement to an exhibition rather than as a digital exhibition proper comes across in its treatment of images, which do not aspire to approximating the experience of physical viewership through high-resolution zooms, shots of multiple angles or video.

The Morgan's [online exhibitions](#), most of which were conceived to accompany shows within the museum's walls, illustrate how the digital presentation of objects can approach the experiential aspects of a physical exhibition and, indeed, bypass the limitations of encounters with works in galleries. The [Hours of Catherine of Cleves](#), a text that was divided and reshuffled to be sold as two tomes in the nineteenth century, provides ideal material for this type of display.

High-resolution photos of each sumptuously-illuminated opening allow the visitor to "flip" through the manuscript as it was originally composed (in anticipation of its physical rebinding and re-unification by The Morgan). A slideshow of images from the manuscript features an explanatory voiceover by curator Roger Wieck. Three of the manuscript's most spectacular pages (the first page of the Hours of the Virgin, the Office of the Dead, and the Saturday Mass of the Virgin) are singled out for deeper interpretation. A textual narrative of the images' meanings

The creation of new trading centers along the West African coast slowed but did not end trans-Saharan trade. As the gold trade shifted southward, it contributed to the creation of the Asante Empire (in today's nation of Ghana). There the legacy of the Saharan gold trading continued particularly in the systems of measure based on the mithqal (4.5 grams) that were used to weigh gold.



Bowl (kuduo) Asante. Offin River, Ghana, mid-late 19th century. Brass. The British Museum, Lon...

This bowl was discovered in 1909 while dredging for gold along the banks of the Offin River in sou...

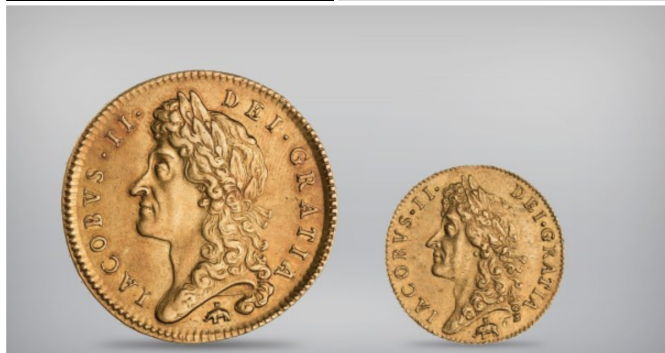


Fig. 2 - Screenshot of "Shifting Away from the Sahara," *Caravans in Gold, Fragments in Time: Art, Culture, and Exchange Across Medieval Saharan Africa*, <https://caravansofgold.org/exhibition/section-4-shifting-away/>, accessed June 14, 2020.

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- MS M.917/945, ff. 83v–84r
- MS M.917/945, ff. 84v–85r
- MS M.917/945, ff. 85v–86r
- MS M.917/945, ff. 86v–87r
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- MS M.917/945, f. 96v–p. 179
- MS M.917/945, p. 180–f. 97r
- MS M.917/945, ff. 97v–98r
- MS M.917/945, ff. 102v–103r
- MS M.917/945, ff. 99v–100r
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Download image: MS M.917/945, pp. 160–161

Listen: 0:00 / 0:42

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Fig. 3 - Screenshot of “Saturday Mass of the Virgin,” *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves*.  
<https://www.themorgan.org/collection/hours-of-catherine-of-cleves/231>, accessed June 14, 2020.

and significance accompanies a large photo of each opening (Fig. 3). Most spectacularly, audio files provide further description (a feature which has merits from an accessibility standpoint) followed by a reading of the page’s text in Latin and English. Taken together, these features strongly compel the viewer to pay close attention to the manuscript’s pages, a feat not always achieved even by texts in physical galleries.

By blending strategies employed by these two digital resources, museums might move closer to the realization

of true online exhibitions. Doing so poses major advantages, chief among them being a broader accessibility of exhibitions and collections to those who are unable to journey (or pay for access) to brick-and-mortar institutions. The advent of these exhibitions, however, raises a question that remains to be answered: will the aura of the object continue to entice the public to the museum or will these venerable institutions lose out to the allure of the screen?

*Katherine Wernie is a PhD candidate in medieval art history at Yale University.*

## EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Maggie Crosland, Assistant Editor for Events and Opportunities

### SPONSORED BY THE ICMA

#### ICMA Mentoring Initiative

In cooperation between the **Membership** and **Advocacy Committees**, the ICMA supports a program of **Mentorship events** designed to offer groups of students the opportunity to build familiarity with various sectors of the field and consult with colleagues practicing medieval art history in a range of ways. Groups have convened most often on the occasion of exhibitions to confer with curators and gallery designers, along with local scholars. Informal mentoring lunches at the International Congresses in Kalamazoo and Leeds create opportunities for discussion of students' and early-career scholars' questions and concerns. Look for announcements of both gatherings through ICMA eBlasts, social media postings and on the website.

We always welcome suggestions for Mentoring events from students and colleagues, e.g., convene a group to visit a site; invite students to a planning session for an upcoming symposium; facilitate a meeting with colleagues engaged in Public Humanities projects or exploring the medieval period in non-academic forums. Please contact **Martha Easton** ([martha.e.easton@gmail.com](mailto:martha.e.easton@gmail.com)) and **Beatrice Kitzinger** ([bkitzinger@princeton.edu](mailto:bkitzinger@princeton.edu)) to discuss proposals.

#### Resources for Teaching a Global Middle Ages

The ICMA has been compiling a list of resources that promote and assist in the teaching of a Global Middle Ages. To submit resources to this list, please contact [icma@medievalart.org](mailto:icma@medievalart.org).

To access the current list, which has been compiled by **Heidi Gearhart**, please visit: <https://www.medievalart.org/teaching-a-global-middle-ages>.

#### Resources for Online Teaching

Many of us are suddenly facing the challenges of online teaching. We recognize that this shift can be disorienting,

and we want to do what we can to offer support. To this end, we have compiled a list of resources in the hope that they help clarify the issues surrounding online teaching as well as provide useful information and guidance.

For the ICMA's list of online teaching resources, see: <https://www.medievalart.org/onlineteaching>.

#### ICMA Image Database

In an effort to give to our members increased access to images for teaching and research, we have created an image database that pools member images and allow others to use them free of charge and without restriction.

The images in the archive were taken by ICMA members. By placing them in the database, members agree that they can be used by other members without restriction. As all of the photographers responsible for these images are named, it is hoped that anyone who uses them for publication will credit the source (ICMA) as well as the photographer.

To access and submit to the database, please see: <https://www.medievalart.org/image-database>.

#### ICMA at the Courtauld Institute of Art

While this year's ICMA lecture at The Courtauld Institute of Art was unfortunately cancelled due to the COVID-19 crisis, recordings of past events can be found on the ICMA website: <https://www.medievalart.org/courtauld-lecture>.

#### ICMA at Kalamazoo and Leeds

Because the Kalamazoo and Leeds panels sponsored by the ICMA and the ICMA Student Committee for 2020 have been cancelled, we look forward to welcoming you back for our sponsored panels at these conferences in 2021.

**\*\*\*Do you have an idea for a conference panel? Consider submitting a proposal for an ICMA-sponsored session at one of the major scholarly meetings. Proposals for ICMS Kalamazoo and CAA are typically due in April, and IMC Leeds in late August/early September. Keep an eye out for calls for proposals from the ICMA via email and on Twitter, Facebook and at [www.medievalart.org](http://www.medievalart.org).**



## EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

(continued)

### FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ICMA MEMBERS

#### ICMA-Kress Research & Publication Grants

The Kress Foundation is again generously supporting five research and publication grants to be administered by the ICMA. The grants this year are \$3,500 each (an increase over prior years) and we have expanded the eligibility for applicants to include scholars who are ICMA members at any stage past the PhD.

**The deadline for the 2020 grant cycle is August 31, 2020.**

#### Eligibility:

The ICMA-Kress Research and Publication grants (\$3,500) are now available to scholars who are ICMA members at any stage past the PhD.

With the field of medieval art history expanding in exciting ways, it is crucial that the ICMA continue to encourage innovative research that will bring new investigations to broad audiences. These grants are open to scholars at all phases of their careers and priority will be given to proposals with a clear path toward publication.

If travel is a facet of your application, please include an itinerary and be specific about costs for all anticipated expenses (travel, lodging, per diem and other details). If you aim to inspect extremely rare materials or sites with restricted access, please be as clear as possible about prior experience or contacts already made with custodians.

If your application is for funds that will support the production of a book, please include a copy of the contract from your publisher, the publisher's request for a subvention, and/or specifics on costs for images and permissions.

Priority will be given to applicants who have not received an ICMA-Kress grant in the past.

For details about the application process, including how to submit application details, see: <https://www.medievalart.org/kress-research-grant>.

#### ICMA-Kress Exhibition Development Grant

Thanks to the generosity of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, ICMA members are eligible to apply for an ICMA-Kress Exhibition Development Grant of **\$5,000 to support research and/or interpretive programming** for a major exhibition at an institution that otherwise could not provide such financial support. Members from all geographic areas are welcome to apply.

As an organization, the ICMA encourages scholars to think expansively, exploring art and society in “every corner of the medieval world,” as characterized in our newly-updated mission statement. With this grant, we hope to encourage colleagues to develop innovative exhibition themes or bring little-known objects before new audiences. We also aim to enhance the impact of exhibitions by supporting related lectures or symposia.

ICMA-Kress Exhibition Development Grant **can be used to fund travel in the research and preparation stages of an exhibition and/or to underwrite public programming** once a show is installed. This grant is designed to assist with an exhibition already in the pipeline and scheduled by the host museum.

**The deadline for applications is 31 August 2020.**

For details about the application process, including how to submit application details, see: <https://www.medievalart.org/exhibition-grant>.

#### ICMA Kress Travel Grants

The International Center of Medieval Art, through the generosity of the **Samuel H. Kress Foundation**, is pleased to offer travel grants **to speakers at ICMA-sponsored sessions at scholarly conferences.**

Travel will be reimbursed up to US\$600. Transatlantic and Transpacific travel will be reimbursed up to US\$1200.

These funds are available **only to speakers and organizers delivering papers** as an integral part of the session (i.e., with a specific title listed in the program). Funds are payable on a reimbursement basis, via check to US bank account holders or via bank transfer to non-US bank account holders. Funds cannot be covered in advance of

*Continued on page 49*



## EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

(continued)

the session. The ICMA cannot guarantee this support but will make every effort to provide it based on the availability of funds.

### Reimbursable expenses include:

Airfare  
Train fare  
Rental car fees and gas  
Mileage at the IRS 2015 rate of 57.5 cents per mile (if you are using your own car)  
Lodging (two-night maximum)

### ICMA does not reimburse:

Meal expenses  
Conference registration fees  
Presentation supplies such as computer or camera equipment

**Session organizers:** Contact Ryan Frisinger ([icma@medievalart.org](mailto:icma@medievalart.org)) with a list of speakers, affiliations and departure locations as soon as the session is finalized. This will help us determine the availability of funds.

For details about the application process, including how to submit application details, see: <https://www.medievalart.org/kress-travel-grant>.

## OTHER EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

*If you would like your upcoming exhibition, conference or lecture series included in the newsletter, please email the information to [EventsExhibitions@medievalart.org](mailto:EventsExhibitions@medievalart.org). Submissions must be received by **October 15, 2020**, for publication in the November issue.*

### Publishing Opportunity

VISTAS (Virtual Images of Sculpture in Time and Space) fosters the publication of new scholarship on sculpture within the European tradition from 1200–1800. We are a non-profit organization that operates a publishing imprint through Brepols and offers grants for photographic campaigns. To learn more or to apply, visit: <https://vistasonline.org>.

*Submitted by Adam Harris Levine.*

### Symposium Travel Award for Students

Dumbarton Oaks is proud to offer the newly expanded Bliss Symposium Awards, designed to engage advanced undergraduates and graduate students in our three areas of specialization through supported attendance of Dumbarton Oaks annual symposia in Byzantine, Pre-Columbian, and Garden and Landscape Studies. Up to six awards will be made for each symposium. Up to three awards will be offered to students of Harvard University, with which Dumbarton Oaks is affiliated, and up to three awards will be offered to students from other US and international institutions. To learn more and apply, visit: <https://www.doaks.org/research/fellowships-and-awards/bliss-symposium-awards>.

### Publication Prize: Church Monuments Society Essay Competition 2020

The Council of the Church Monuments Society offers a biennial prize of £500 called the Church Monuments Essay Prize, to be awarded with a certificate for the best essay submitted in the relevant year. The aim of the competition is to stimulate people, particularly those who may be writing on church monuments for the first time, to submit material for the peer-reviewed international CMS journal *Church Monuments*. Therefore, the competition is open only to those who have not previously published an article in *Church Monuments*. To learn more and apply, visit: <https://churchmonumentsociety.org/get-involved/competitions/essay-competition>.

### Exhibitions / Online Exhibitions

#### *Setting the Bar: Arts of the Song Dynasty*

The Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington D.C.  
Ongoing

#### *Celebrating 800 Years of Spirit & Endeavour*

Salisbury Cathedral  
Online exhibition, accessible via the [Cathedral's website](#).

#### *Van Eyck: An Optical Revolution*

MSK Ghent  
Virtual tour, available through [YouTube](#).

#### *Van Eyck in Bruges*

Groeningemuseum, Bruges  
March 12–September 6, 2020

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## EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

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### *Power, Justice, and Tyranny in the Middle Age*

J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

June 23–September 13, 2020

Medieval power structures included royal courts, the church, city governments, and even universities. Although positions of authority were usually inherited, leaders were expected to embrace justice, a virtue associated with godly rule, and tyranny, a vice that ensured downfall and chaos. Social and legal hierarchies exposed in manuscript illumination underscore the tenuous place of women, the poor, and other “out-groups.” Examples of good and bad government reveal the constant struggle between base human instincts and loftier ideals.

### *Warriors and Martyrs: Christianity and Islam in the Birth of Portuguese Nationhood*

Museu nacional de arte antiga, Lisbon

September 24–December 6, 2020

### *Transcending Time: The Medieval Book of Hours*

J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

October 6, 2020–March 28, 2021

Manuscripts known as “books of hours” were among the most widely produced and used during the Middle Ages. These decorated prayer books not only structured time for their readers (over a day, a year, and a lifetime) but their creation reveals an increasing demand for private and personalized Christian devotion. Featuring masterpieces of medieval illumination from the permanent collection, this exhibition offers glimpses into the daily lives of their readers, the material features of luxury manuscripts, and the thriving late medieval book market.

### *Medieval Bologna: Art for a University City*

Frist Art Museum, Nashville

\*\*New dates\*\* November 5, 2021–January 30, 2022

### *Thomas Becket*

British Museum, London

Dates to be announced

## Conferences, Lectures, Symposia, etc.

### *Conference: Restoring the Past: Destruction, Restoration, and Preservation of Medieval Art and Architecture*

Sam Fogg and Luhring Augustine

\*\* Held January 25, 2020, available to watch online at the [Luhring Augustine website](#).

### *Virtual IMC 2020*

University of Leeds

July 6–10, 2020

For the full details of the Virtual IMC program, see the [conference website](#).

### *Iconophilia: Virtual IMC 2020 Fringe Event*

July 9, 2020 18:00–18:30 BST

To join the event, follow this zoom link: Join Zoom Meeting <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74434191695?pwd=YlhTQnQraVRwWVBCZ0dMVkxLdnR5UT09>  
Meeting ID: 744 3419 1695 Password: 3LtMbm

### *Call for Paper: British Archaeological Association Post-Graduate Conference*

British Archaeological Association

Due July 31, 2020

For details regarding the submission process, see the [call for papers announcement](#).

### *Lecture: The Fabric Accounts of St Stephen's Chapel, Westminster*

British Archaeological Association

7 October 2020

### *Conference: 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Byzantine Studies Conference*

Byzantine Studies Association of North America

October 23–24 2020

This conference will be held virtually, for more information see: <http://www.bsana.net/conference/index.html>.

### *Conference: The Year 1000 in Romanesque Art and Architecture*

British Archaeological Association Romanesque Conference

\*\*New date\*\* April 20–22, 2021

### *Conference: Between Figure and Ground: Seeing in Premodernity*

Basel, Switzerland

\*\*New date\*\* June 3–5, 2021

### *Conference: Ninth Annual Symposium on Medieval and Renaissance Studies*

Saint Louis University

June 21–23, 2021

## EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

(continued)

### **Conference: Medieval Chichester: Cathedral, City and Surrounding Area**

British Archaeological Association Annual Conference, Chichester

\*\*New date\*\* August 31–September 4, 2021

### **Symposium: Faces of Rulership in the Maya Region**

Dumbarton Oaks

October 9–19, 2020

For more information, see the [Dumbarton Oaks event page](#).

### **Conference: [In]materiality in Medieval Art**

Universidad Complutense de Madrid

\*\*New date\*\* November 11–12, 2021

For more information, see: <https://www.ucm.es/historiadelarte/14thjornadasmedieval>.

*More calls for non-ICMA sponsored papers, fellowship opportunities, exhibition and conference announcements are posted to the website and social media, where they are available to members in a format that is timelier than the triannual Newsletter. Visit our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/InternationalCenterofMedievalArt>), and follow ICMA on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/icmanews>). ICMA members can also share calls-for-papers, conferences, lectures, grants, employment opportunities and other news that benefits the medieval art community on the Community News page of the ICMA website: <http://www.medievalart.org/community-news/>.*

## CONTRIBUTORS

With many thanks to:

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