



Devotion Practice and Performative Expression in the Religious Art of Medieval Europe

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Message from the Guest Editors

European identity is deeply embedded in the production of religious art broadly conceived as any form of material expression of faith. The framework for this exploration is set by the two iconoclasms, the eighth-century Byzantine/Carolingian and the sixteenth-century Reformation. Considering recent research on the senses in the Middle Ages, materiality, and emotions, this Special Issue of *religions* examines the relation between performative devotions and art by considering the beholder as a faithful subject as well as an ordinary person whose real-life situations bring into contact with a spiritual need. One can consider the ‘museification’ of churches constructed as spaces in which artists’ (and architects’) works contributed to enhancing the encounter of the visitor with the divine in parallel with modern art spaces. Medieval images also conveyed the performative devotional experience of the congregation by memorializing through painting local feasts and special devotions, as well as miraculous events at the fringes of such experiences. What idea of religion transpired through art as witness to devotional performative practices?





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