

Medieval Art on the Move



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Now entombed in airless glass vitrines, medieval objects in museums appear static and immovable. But in the Middle Ages, artworks were active and mobile: they were manipulated in the hand, processed through towns, and traded or gifted across very large geographic areas. Viewers were also on the move: they carried artworks on their body or processed alongside them in religious ceremonies. Merchants, soldiers, and pilgrims travelled to new places and brought artworks home with them. This colloquium will explore medieval artworks as sites of sophisticated meaning-making through the theme of movement, on small and large scales. Medieval works of art were often moved during ritual, and many artworks also integrated moving parts, such as wings or other hinged elements. In a broader context, artworks could travel huge distances, acquiring new significances as they transgressed political, cultural and religious borders. The *Silk Roads* exhibition currently open at the British Museum speaks to such journeys, presenting the people and objects travelling along overlapping and expansive networks of trade, and asking how these movements shaped meanings and cultures both along the way and at their destinations. To that end, the colloquium looks to open new dialogues regarding the movement of medieval artworks, initiating discussions on how it affected an object's reception.

The colloquium will take place on Friday 28th March 2025 at The Courtauld Institute's Vernon Square campus, London. Lunch will be provided for speakers, and the event will be followed by drinks at the Courtauld Research Forum and dinner for speakers.

We invite submissions for 20-minute papers that investigate the impact of movement on objects and their audiences. Respondents might consider themes including but by no means limited to:

- The vehicles or mechanisms by which medieval objects moved across geographic and cultural boundaries, such as gifting, trade, theft, or war.
- Processions and ritual, versus more informal movements
- Distance and proximity.
- Motion and stillness.
- Intercultural exchanges and movement of ideas.

We invite PhD candidates to submit an up to 250-word paper proposal and title, a short CV, together with their complete contact details (full name, email, and institutional affiliation) by **27th January 2025**. Please send these to both Sophia Adams (sophia.adams@courtauld.ac.uk) and Natalia Muñoz-Rojas (natalia.munoz-rojas@courtauld.ac.uk). There may be some limited funding to support travel and accommodation costs for those without institutional support. If you would require funding support, please include a brief budget alongside your abstract.