

# THE ART OF VISION

EKPHRASIS IN MEDIEVAL LITERATURE AND CULTURE

Medieval culture was fascinated with the visual. In the Middle Ages visual art performed powerful cultural work in both the religious and the secular spheres and the vast middle ground where the two in fact become inseparable. Consequently, visual art was open to all kinds of discursive appropriations just as the visual in general was a highly contested ground on which some of the most volatile issues of medieval culture were debated.

Hence it comes as no surprise that the world of visual art is a constant presence in medieval literature. But that presence is anything but unproblematic since a long and complex tradition of ekphrasis claimed the privilege of mediating the visual experience in literary texts. With its manifold and frequently fictional depictions of visual art ekphrasis offers a site where the most arcane and the most mundane forms of medieval aesthetic and ideological experience come into contact with a highly sophisticated tradition of representation and narrative. And that tradition is all the more intriguing because it usually remains implicit – primarily expressed and critiqued in the practice of verbal representation itself.

This international workshop seeks to tease out some of the many facets that inform the discursive traditions of ekphrasis in the Middle Ages.



International Workshop of the Research Project  
Ekphrasis: Literariness and Tradition  
in Late Medieval and Early Modern Literature

Conference Venue:  
Tagungsstätte Harnackhaus  
Vogtsaal  
Inhnestraße 16-20  
14195 Berlin-Dahlem  
U Thielplatz, Line 3

This workshop is hosted by the research group  
*Topics and Tradition*, Freie Universität Berlin,  
and is funded by the German Research  
Foundation, **DFG**.

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[www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/  
en/v/ekphrasis/tagung](http://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/en/v/ekphrasis/tagung)

Guests are kindly asked to register  
by e-mail.



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25 – 28 February 2010

International Workshop of the Research Project  
Ekphrasis: Literariness and Tradition  
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## THURSDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2010

18.30-19.00 **Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann**  
(Freie Universität Berlin)  
**Russell West-Pavlov**  
(Freie Universität Berlin)  
Welcome Address

19.00-20.00 **Andrew James Johnston**  
(Freie Universität Berlin)  
'Lettres rede' - Visualizing the Textual in  
*Troilus and Criseyde*

20.00 *Reception*

## FRIDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2010

9.30-10.30 **Valerie Allen**  
(City University of New York)  
Metaphor, Ekphrasis, Object

10.30-11.30 **Larry Scanlon**  
(Rutgers University)  
Ekphrasis, Trope of the Real; or, What the  
*Pearl*-Dreamer Saw

11.30-12.00 *Coffee break*

12.00-13.00 **L.O. Aranye Fradenburg**  
(University of California Santa Barbara)  
Words, Things, and Affects

13.00-15.00 *Lunch*

15.00-16.00 **Claudia Olk**  
(University of Oxford/LMU Munich)  
The Love of Seeing: Vision and Ekphrasis in  
*Mary Magdalene*

16.00-17.00 **Suzanne Conklin Akbari**  
(University of Toronto)  
Ekphrasis and Stasis in the Allegories of  
Christine de Pizan

17.00 *Coffee*

## SATURDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2010

9.00-10.00 **Anke Bernau**  
(University of Manchester)  
'Art thou my perle that I haf playned'?  
Ekphrasis, Memory and Affect in *Pearl*

10.00-11.00 **Hans Jürgen Scheuer**  
(Universität Stuttgart)  
The Soul of Ekphrasis (Chaucer –  
Martian – Apuleius)

11.00-11.30 *Coffee break*

11.30-12.30 **John M. Bowers**  
(University of Nevada, Las Vegas)  
Speaking Images: Iconographic Criticism  
and Chaucerian Ekphrasis

12.30-14.30 *Lunch*

14.30-15.30 **Maggie Rouse**  
(Freie Universität Berlin)  
Facing the Mirror: Observations on  
Ekphrasis, Vision and Knowledge in Gavin  
Douglas's *Palice of Honour*

15.30-16.30 **Ethan Knapp**  
(Ohio State University, Columbus)  
Faces in the Crowd: Faciality and Ekphrasis  
in Late Medieval England

16.30-17.00 *Coffee break*

17.00-18.00 **Darryl Gless**  
(University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)  
Ekphrasis and Religious Ideology in  
*Spenser's Faerie Queene*

20.00 *Dinner*

## SUNDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2010

9.30-10.30 **Kathryn Starkey**  
(University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)  
Ekphrasis and Emotion in Gottfried's *Tristan*

10.30-11.00 *Coffee break*

11.00-12.00 **Mario Klarer**  
(Universität Innsbruck)  
Immaterial Images: Ekphrasis and Medieval  
Brain Anatomy

12.00-13.00 *Lunch*

13.00-14.00 **Sarah Stanbury**  
(College of the Holy Cross)  
Chaucer's Creole Things

14.00 **Lee Patterson**  
(Yale University)  
Response