

[CFP: International Workshop: Performing Gifts: Rituals, Symbolic Communication and Gift-Giving in Medieval and Early Modern Europe](#)

Announcement published by Gustavs Strenga on Thursday, March 14, 2019

Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

May 1, 2019

Location:

Estonia

Subject Fields:

Anthropology, Art, Art History & Visual Studies, Early Modern History and Period Studies, European History / Studies, Medieval and Byzantine History / Studies

Gift-giving as one of the fundamental cultural mechanisms of human societies has been in focus of the researchers of pre-modern Europe for several decades. This field of research has developed and surpassed Maussian discussions of reciprocal exchange, yet there are numerous aspects of the gift-giving that have remained undiscovered or not sufficiently discussed. In his influential book *Liquid Assets, Dangerous Gifts* Valentin Groebner stated that the late medieval gifts were media of communication and they, even if made in secret, strove for audience. Until now too little attention has been drawn to gifts as material objects in rituals, ceremonies, feasts, and performances and their role in the symbolic communication with different audiences: those present, those reading and listening to descriptions of gift-giving.

This workshop proposes to discuss medieval and early modern gifts as part of symbolical communication in rituals of power, as tools of self-representation, their role in political legitimation and self-fashioning, and relevance of the gift-giving in political and social communication. What was the role of the gifts as objects in rituals and ceremonies of power? In which occasions symbolical meaning of gifts was revealed? How were places and audiences of the gift-giving chosen? How was the gift-giving used for the purposes of symbolical communication? What can we learn from the gifts as material objects?

Possible topics for papers include, but are by no means limited to:

- gifts in rituals, ceremonies and performances
- audiences of gift-giving - reactions and emotions
- gifts and symbolical communication
- gifts and feasts
- gifts as messages
- materiality of gifts
- narratives of gifts and gift-giving
- visual representations of gifts and gift-giving.

The keynote speakers of the workshop will be professor Gadi Algazi (Tel Aviv University) and Dr Lars Kjaer (New College of the Humanities, London).

The organizers encourage scholars at various stages of career and from different fields of research - political, social, cultural and art history - to take part in the workshop. We welcome especially presentation proposals paying attention to various types of sources - textual, material, and visual. The final aim of this workshop is to prepare a special issue or edited volume focusing on the performative aspects of the gift-giving in medieval and early modern Europe.

Please send your abstract (max. 300 words) not later than May 1, 2019 to [gstrenga\[at\]tlu.ee](mailto:gstrenga@tlu.ee)

Citation: Gustavs Strenga. *CFP: International Workshop: Performing Gifts: Rituals, Symbolic Communication and Gift-Giving in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. H-Announce. 03-14-2019.

<https://networks.h-net.org/node/73374/announcements/3862793/cfp-international-workshop-performing-gifts-rituals-symbolic>

Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License.

Contact Info:

PhD Gustavs Strenga

Post-doctoral researcher

School of Humanites

Tallinn University

Contact Email:

gstrenga@tlu.ee