

[Conference: "Pilgrimage and the Senses" \(Oxford, 7 June 2019\)](#)

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Type:

Conference

Date:

June 7, 2019

Location:

United Kingdom

Subject Fields:

Art, Art History & Visual Studies, Humanities, Social Sciences, Religious Studies and Theology, European History / Studies

"Pilgrimage and the Senses"

7 June 2019

University of Oxford

Registration is now open for "Pilgrimage and the Senses" (7 June 2019). This one-day, interdisciplinary conference hosted at the University of Oxford is dedicated to exploring the sensory experience of pilgrimage throughout history and across cultures.

With the release of its inaugural issue in 2006, *The Senses and Society* journal proclaimed a "sensual revolution" in the humanities and social sciences. The ensuing decade has seen a boom in sensory studies, resulting in research networks, museum exhibitions, and a wealth of publications. This interdisciplinary conference hosted at the University of Oxford aims to shed light on how sensory perception shapes and is shaped by the experience of pilgrimage across cultures, faith traditions, and throughout history.

Pilgrimages present an intriguing paradox. Grounded in physical experiences—a journey (real or imagined), encounters with sites and/or relics, and commemorative tokens—they also simultaneously demand a devotional focus on the metaphysical. A ubiquitous and long-lasting devotional practice, pilgrimage is a useful lens through which to examine how humans encounter the sacred through the tools of perception available to us. Focusing on the ways in which pilgrimage engages the senses will contribute to our knowledge of how people have historically understood both religious experience and their bodies as vehicles of devotional participation. We call on speakers to grapple with the challenges of understanding the sensory experience of spiritual phenomena, while bearing in mind that understandings of the senses can vary according to specific cultural contexts.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: **Kathryn Rudy** (University of St. Andrews) | "Sensational Pilgrimage, Real and

Imagined"

PANEL 1: "Texts and Travellers"

Raphaela Rohrhofer (University of Oxford) | "Understanding the Senses: A Spiritual Pilgrimage's Salvific Sensorium"

Anthony Bale (Birkbeck, University of London) | "Beholding and crying: pilgrims and emotional vistas in the late medieval Holy Land"

Jacopo Gnisci (University of Oxford) | "Jerusalem through the pages: Experiencing the *loca sancta* in early Solomonic Ethiopia"

PANEL 2: "Sacred Soundscapes"

Bláithín Hurley (University College Cork) | "'The trumpets were sounded, the canon fired and the *galeotti* shouted': The Soundscape of a Fifteenth-century Pilgrimage"

Guangtian Ha (Haverford College) | "The Sacred Polyphony: Voicing Community in Jahriyya Pilgrimage"

Kathryn Barush (Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley) | "Singing is Believing: Rewilding Through Pilgrimage Song and Chant"

PANEL 3: "Perceiving in Proximity"

Adam Bursi (Utrecht University) | "Where and What to Touch on Hajj: Early Islamic Debates on Haptic Pilgrimage Rituals"

Junfu Wong (University of Cambridge) | "Fostering Spirituality through Pain: Chinese Buddhist Pilgrimage in Premodern China"

Fuchsia Hart (University of Oxford) | "Heavenly Scents in Ibn Qulawayh's *The Complete Pilgrimage*"

PANEL 4: "Embodying Pilgrimage"

Medardo Rosario (University of Chicago) | "Justina Dances El Camino: Uncovering the Pilgrimage of *The Spanish Jilt*"

Shruti Amar (King's College London) | "Body in Motion: Sensory Perception of Women Pilgrims at the famous *Shravan* Festival of Jharkhand"

Tatsuma Padoan (University College Cork / SOAS, University of London) | "'Listening with eyes and seeing with ears': Pilgrimage and spirit possession on Mt Kiso Ontake"

PANEL 5: "Objects and Memory"

Kristen Racaniello (CUNY Graduate Center, New York) | "Pilgrimage & Recall: the Shrine as Sensory Catharsis, the Flask as Memory Trigger"

Natalia Keller (Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago) & **Olaya Sanfuentes** (Pontificia Universidad Católica, Santiago) | "Back to Paradise: Sensual Experience of *Fanales* as a Tool of Virtual Pilgrimage"

Juliet Simpson (Coventry University) | "Interior Pilgrims and Uncanny Devotions: the Beguinage as

a Work of Art"

All are welcome but places are limited and registration is required: please visit www.pilgrimagesenses2019.com/register. Registration will be open until **24 May 2019**. All prices include coffee/tea throughout the day, lunch, and the post-conference drinks reception.

Contact Info:

Further information about the event, including the full programme, is available on the conference [website](#). Please direct any and all enquiries to pilgrimagesenses2019@gmail.com.

Contact Email:

pilgrimagesenses2019@gmail.com

URL:

<https://www.pilgrimagesenses2019.com/>