

workshop:

Audiovision: Image and Chant at Ste. Foy in Conques

Prof. Dr. Bissera V. Pentcheva, Stanford University

Dienstag, den 21. Juni von 10 - 13 Uhr
im KHI-Übungsraum

We view medieval art in the optical isolation of the clinical white halls of the modern museum. There these objects are opened in a full display for our pleasure, illuminated with even electric light, set up at eye-level, so as to reveal all their components and make them easily accessible, completely visible, parse-able and readable. The colors [hue] appear in all their intensity and clarity. And we do not need to strain either our eyes or our bodies to consume this richness of gold and gems; we stroll and look. Our process is not hindered by obstacles, distance, or the need to kneel, nor are we pushed to compunction or compelled to tear up. But despite all this easy enjoyment of looking, we are actually deprived of experiencing these objects in ways that can be deeper and transformative. One thing is certain, medieval art is now silent. It is neither displayed nor analytically considered within the envelope of sound, be it chant, prayer, or recitation. Excising this aural atmosphere in which these images once lived, has drained them of their energy to signify and to elicit affect. This project turns to and recuperates the sonic *Stimmung* of one particular, rather famous *imago*— the late ninth-century golden statue of Holy Faith or Sainte Foy at Conques in Auvergne, France. The music for the feast of the saint has survived in several different versions: one dates to the eleventh century and likely composed at Conques and a second practiced by the late twelfth century at a daughter monastery at Sélestat: a dependency of Conques. The eleventh-century music for the liturgy at Conques has never been recorded in modern notation or performed. With the collaboration of Laura Steenberge, I direct, *Enchanted Images*, now reunites the *imago* with its aural environment (<https://enchantedimages.stanford.edu>)

