

PRESS RELEASE

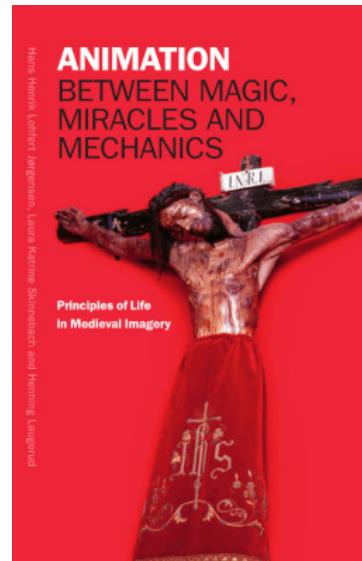
Image as life: animism revived in wonders of vivification

When it comes to images, we are all animists. This still applies today, when the image is as alive as ever. So, we need to study historical cultures of *animation* to get a deeper sense of living imagery, past and present.

"Animation" does indeed imply that an ensouled image or empowered object is alive, endowed with *anima*: a "soul", "spirit" or "vital principle." In the Middle Ages, holy (or emphatically unhol) imagery often possessed a treasured (or dreaded) ability to come to life, to act and do things, to move and gesticulate, to speak and exude.

This animist book is about the different modes and principles of animation that made medieval images perform their spectacular wonders of locomotion and physical transformation. It ranges from mechanical machinery to works of magic and motor miracles. We engage with talking and bleeding crucifixes; we listen to ventriloquized oracles, moving Madonnas, robot Redeemers and automated devils. Such self-propelled movers enacted their natural or supernatural animations in monasteries and churches, in demonic technologies and occult treatises, in marvels of magic, miracles and mechanics.

With its return to medieval animism, this book will enliven anyone with an interest in the agency of images, medieval art and art history, body and spirit, material culture and ideas, anthropology and religion, theology and philosophy.



ANIMATION BETWEEN MAGIC, MIRACLES AND MECHANICS

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