



Crown and Veil
The Art of Female Monasticism in the Middle Ages
19 March - 3 July 2005

*In cooperation with the Ruhrlandmuseum in Essen (Germany)
and the Kunststiftung NRW*

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Exhibition Dates

Duration	19.03.2005 – 03.07.2005
Director	Wenzel Jacob
Managing Director	Wilfried Gatzweiler
Curators	Lothar Altringer, Jan Gerchow, Jeffrey Hamburger, Carola Jaeggi Susan Marti, Hedwig Röckelein, Robert Suckale
Project Manager	Petra Marx Katharina Chrubasik
Press Officer	Maja Majer-Wallat
Catalogue	€32
Press Copy	€16
Opening hours	Monday 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. Thursday - Sunday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., 24 December 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. 31 December and 7 February closed
Admission	
Standard/Reduced rate/Family ticket	€7 / €3.50 / €10.50
Public transport	Underground lines 16, 63, 66 to Heussallee, Bus route 852 to Ollenhauerstraße, Routes 610 and 630 to Heussallee
Press information	www.bundeskunsthalle.de Press file (German/English)
Guided tours	Public, free of charge with entrance ticket, Tuesday and Wednesday 3.30 and 6.30 p.m. Thursday and Friday 3.30 p.m. Saturday 12.30 and 3.30 p.m. Sunday and Holidays 11.30 a.m. and 3.30 p.m.
Guided group tours	Information and registration: Telephone +49 (0)228-9171-247 Fax +49 (0)228-9171-244 E-mail: paedagogik@kah-bonn.de
General information	Telephone +49 (0)228-9171-200 www.bundeskunsthalle.de (German/English)



Information on the Exhibition

Crown and Veil The Art of Female Monasticism in the Middle Ages March 19th to July 3rd, 2005

*Art- and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bonn in cooperation with the
Ruhrlandmuseum in Essen (Germany) and the Kunststiftung NRW*

The exhibition »Crown and Veil« is dedicated to all forms of female religiosity from the early Middle Ages until the Reformation in the sixteenth century. At the centre stand »works« that were made by and for nuns and canonesses. How were their buildings decorated, what images did they venerate and which books did they read? Women's patronage contributed much more to the art of the Middle Ages than is generally supposed. The normative, political and economic conditions for the foundation and development of women's monasteries will be considered, as will be the religious, theological and cultural traditions that shaped their daily lives. Approximately six hundred outstanding objects from major international collections will be on exhibit for three months, among them many ensembles that will be reunited for the first time since the dissolution of the monasteries from which they originate.

The exhibition will take place simultaneously in two places: Essen and Bonn. In Essen – until 1803 site of one of the oldest and most important of all »Frauenstifte« – the emphasis will be on the medieval tradition of foundations for canonesses, above all, those Saxon institutions situated between the Rhine and the Elbe. In Bonn, the emphasis will be on the reform orders, new foundations and reform movements that shaped the diverse forms of female monasticism. Each part of the exhibition will focus on a different chronological period: Essen, on the early development of female communities from the sixth until the twelfth century. In Bonn, the religious movements led by the new monastic and mendicant Orders and the efflorescence of mysticism will form the focus of attention, as will the impact of these movements on new urban centres and the entire society of the High and later Middle Ages.

Publications and Accompanying Program

The exhibition will be documented by an extensive catalogue (632 pages and circa 500 illustrations) with essays and entries by leading specialists that will take into account the most recent research. An interdisciplinary colloquium, to be held during the exhibition, will comment on and expand its contributions. A program enabling visits to former female monastic communities in the North-Rhine and Westfalian regions will allow the exhibition to embrace and encompass the entire region.



Wall Texts

The Era of Religious Orders: 1200 - 1500

The twelfth century in Europe was a period of dramatic economic, social and religious upheaval. The relative freedom in which various forms of monastic life had previously coexisted made way for new, hierarchically organised orders. As a part of this change, the role played by women grew more prominent.

Taking their cue from the existing monastic communities for men, especially those of the Benedictines and the Cistercians, numerous convents were founded to meet the religious needs of women. In the cities, women were among the many followers who joined the mendicant orders, above all the Franciscans and the Dominicans, who lived a life of self-imposed poverty and active charity.

In the late Middle Ages, the spectrum of female religious communities included the Benedictines, Cistercians, Augustinians, Carmelites, Dominicans and Poor Clares, as well as a host of smaller orders such as the Penitents, who were also known as Magdalens after their patron saint or as White Ladies after their garb. The great mystic Bridget of Sweden (1302/03–1373) founded the order of the Brigidines and set up a double monastery for Brigidine monks and nuns.

In Italy, men and women who wished to lead a pious life devoted to works of charity without actually entering a monastery formed the so-called "Third Orders". In Northwest and Central Europe, these Tertiaries found their equivalent in the predominantly female lay movement of the Beguines, who took no vows and did not live in cloistered seclusion, but who led a life of active charity, tending the sick and the needy and burying the dead. In addition, there were numerous religious institutions and charitable foundations for women, many of them aristocratic, whose members were neither tied to a vow nor cloistered, but who were united in their wish to live a communal pious life.

In the late Middle Ages, entering a convent or joining a religious community offered women a certain degree of intellectual and spiritual freedom as well as opportunity for advancement, if they took on responsibility within the organisation. In the end, however, nuns shared the status of their lay sisters, who were generally subject to male custody and authority.

Convents, convent-like institutions and beguinages gave rise to a pictorial and material culture that differs in many ways from that developed by monks. Because the meaning and function of these objects are often most apparent in their original architectural setting, the order of the exhibition visit is based on the spaces of a medieval convent, with church, cloister, cells, nuns' choir and abbey buildings. In terms of chronology, the exhibition ends before the Reformation, which brought about the decline of the convents. The communities were dissolved, their buildings destroyed and their precious furnishings dispersed all over the world.

The "Outer Church" – Open to Laity

In monastic churches, one distinguishes between the "inner" church, for the cloistered monastic community, and the "outer" one for laity. The "outer" church housed the high altar and often a choir, in which the Divine Office was performed by the canons or monks who tended to the female community. In order to convey an idea of the nature and appearance of the "outer" church, this exhibition has, for the first time, reassembled a large part of the medieval furnishings of the former Cistercian convent of Fröndenberg (Westphalia).

The "outer" church housed numerous works of art, which had entered the church as donations by founders and benefactors, whose female relatives were often members of the convent. One way of achieving salvation in the Middle Ages was to donate altarpieces, vestments, liturgical instruments,



glass windows or votive reliefs. These gifts were not only public displays of piety and wealth, they also offered the donors an opportunity to include their likeness. In order to avoid accusations of hubris, donor figures were usually shown praying fervently, and were generally depicted on a notably smaller scale than the scene of which they are a part. Displayed in liturgically important places, these objects conveyed the message that pious laymen had a share in salvation and redemption, which share was further supported by the nuns' prayers on their behalf.

At Easter and Christmas, the church formed the backdrop for miracle plays. By means of props such as the Palm Sunday ass, statues of the Christ of the Holy Sepulchre or figures of the Christ of the Resurrection, the mysteries of the Christian faith were made tangible to nuns and laymen alike.

Sacristy and Treasury – Earthly and Heavenly Treasures

The Sacristy and the treasury contained the most valuable material possessions of a convent: the liturgical vessels for Mass, namely chalice, paten (dish for the host) and cruet; the vestments; and the numerous intricately decorated reliquaries containing relics of saints. The wealth and splendour of a monastic treasury often seem at odds with the professed ideals of poverty.

The abbesses and prioresses had a central role in furnishing their convents with liturgical equipment. The acquisition and handling of the sacred vessels (*vasa sacra*) was minutely recorded and regulated. The nuns would often insist that they, rather than the officiating male clergy, supervise the sacristy and treasury, which duty then fell to a female sacristan or a sexton. Because of this insistence, the sacristy in its function as a preparatory space for high Mass often lay within the cloistered part of the convent, whereas in male communities it did not.

The Nuns' Choir – The "Inner Church"

In all monastic churches, those serving male communities as well as those serving female ones, one part of the church was segregated for the celebration of the Divine Office by the monks or nuns themselves. Because nuns were excluded from Mass at the high altar, convent churches contained a cloistered nuns' choir that was accessible to the sisters alone. Even a priest was granted access only in exceptional circumstances. It was in the nuns' choir that the nuns sang and meditated, and it was there that they celebrated the Christmas and Easter liturgy as well as the festivals of the patron saints of their order and those of the church's altars. The nuns' choir was separated from the "outer church" by means of curtains, grilles or screens.

Because women were barred from high ecclesiastic service, the profession of a nun's vows upon entering the convent, as well as consecration, Communion, confession, processions and, of course, Last Rites, all required the offices of a male cleric. Due to these liturgical requirements, the architecture and furnishings of nuns' choirs were as complex as they were diverse. In the German-speaking countries in the late Middle Ages, the nuns' choir was often situated on a gallery on the western side of the nave. However, it could also be found in the eastern part of the church, the central nave or in an arm of the transept.

Much has survived of the remarkable medieval furnishings of the nuns' choir of the Dominican convent of St Katharinenthal in Switzerland, albeit dispersed to museums all over the world following the convent's dissolution in 1868. Some of these objects are reunited for the first time for this exhibition.

Enclosure – The Convent as a World unto itself

Medieval theologians held that women were more likely to succumb to carnal desire and idle curiosity than men. They were thus thought of as the "weaker sex", which for its own protection was best off living behind insurmountable convent walls. *Clausura*, the seclusion from the world, forms the



indispensable basis for the union with God in prayer. Strict adherence to the principle of enclosure characterised life in late medieval convents.

In the twelfth century the Cistercian order developed an architectural structure that was applied to most monasteries and, in its main features, to numerous convents as well. The convent buildings are grouped to the north or south of the church around an enclosed rectangular cloister with an inner courtyard. Connecting the church with the dormitory, the refectory and the chapter house, the cloister is the epitome of *clausura* and the heart of monastic life, forming the backdrop for processions, readings, commemorations and funerals. In the late Middle Ages the colonnades of the cloister were often decorated with extensive fresco cycles or stained glass, whose pictures invited meditation.

The works of art by and for nuns have to be seen against this background of strict *clausura*. Their cloistered life is reflected in numerous images of the *hortus conclusus*, the enclosed garden of paradise, in which the nun's spiritual encounter with God takes place.

The Cells – Mysticism, Devotion and Everyday Life

The cell is a late medieval innovation. Originally and ideally, monks as well as nuns were expected to use communal dormitories. A cell of one's own conflicted with the ideal of the monastic *vita communis*. However, by allowing a certain degree of privacy and a modicum of individual retreat, the cell granted the nuns moments of heightened contemplation and inner communion, and even visionary experiences.

The nuns would often keep private devotional images in their cells. These drawings, prints, figurines or paper reliefs were often small-scale reproductions of larger works that were accessible to the community as a whole, which the nuns wished to have with them even outside the periods of service and prayer. More often than not the nuns themselves produced these small images of highly variable appearance and quality, just as they decorated objects received as gifts. Figures of the Christ Child with clothes and mantles, some even with cradles, were highly cherished objects of private devotion.

Chapter House and Refectory – Instruction and Prayer

Usually situated in the east wing of the convent, the chapter house fulfilled a wide range of different important functions. It housed the daily meetings, during which readings from the monastic rules or from the lives of saints were held and the blessings for the day's labour were issued. In addition, it was here that the nuns elected their abbess.

Like the adjoining cloister, the chapter house was often used for burials. In this much-frequented space the deceased member of the congregation could rest in peace, sure of salvation through the countless prayers of her sisters.

Occasionally the chapter house was used as a classroom, in which grammar, singing and basic theological precepts were taught. If the room was heated, it could serve for all manner of paper- and needlework. Penitentiary rites were also performed in the chapter house, for example flagellations, which were supervised by the abbesses and the *circatrices* - literally, those who circulate in order to punish misbehaviour.

All of these activities could also take place in the refectory, the dining hall in the south wing of the cloister, which was usually heatable. The functions of the cloister, the chapter house and the refectory were closely related and to a certain degree interchangeable.

Guesthouse and Abbey – A Window on the World



Despite the strict seclusion of monastic life, there were many points of contact between the nuns and the outside world. These contacts occurred in specific spaces, including the “outer church”, the gatehouse, the abbey and the guesthouse, or on specific occasions such as festivals or during the course of administrative tasks. Works of art, too, were an important medium of exchange with the world beyond the convent walls. Situated to the west of the monastic complex, close to gatehouse and abbey, the guesthouses provided accommodation for secular and clerical visitors, who were received by the abbess. The guesthouses also housed the families of those nuns who, in spite of all rules to the contrary, were unwilling to break off contact with their female relations.

The entrance of a girl or a young woman into a convent was often accompanied by a celebration, the mystic marriage to Christ, the heavenly bridegroom, which the novice’s relatives attended. On these occasions, valuable carpets and textiles, objects made of precious materials such as alabaster, ivory or mother of pearl and gold, and even profane jewellery entered into the possession of the nuns. These objects served to decorate communal spaces or could be “rededicated” as private objects of devotion.

The Workshop – Nuns as Readers, Writers and Artists

Owning, using and producing books was of central importance in convents. The creation of precious manuscripts was a pious act integral to monastic life and involved a wide range of diverse financial, conceptual and manual activities.

All convents needed a basic supply of manuscripts to fulfil their liturgical duties and a small reference library of biblical and edifying texts, as well as Psalters and prayer books that were often the private property of individual nuns and entered the convent with them. Manuscripts might be donated to the convent, commissioned outside, produced in-house in the convent’s scriptorium or be the product of collaborative efforts with outside artists.

Textile production played an equally important role. White work, woven and embroidered tapestries, wall hangings and bench covers were produced for the convent’s own requirements and also for sale. Most textiles were produced in collaboration by several sisters.

The complex pictorial programmes of the textiles testify to the self-confidence and to the often very high educational level of the women. The role model for the nuns was Mary, Mother of God, who according to religious tradition was a temple virgin working the loom or the embroidery tambour, and who thus ideally combined intense piety with handicraft.



Preview 2005
subject to alteration

TUTANKHAMUN

4 November 2004 - 1 May 2005

The Golden Beyond. Treasures from the Valley of the Kings

The fascinating treasures from the tomb of the legendary Pharaoh Tutankhamun are part of the world's most important cultural historical heritage. They are once again on view in Europe after almost 20 years. For six months, from 4 November 2004 to 1 May 2005, the Federal Art and Exhibition Hall will present 50 major works of art from the Tutankhamun burial site. The exhibition will also show 70 additional finds found in royal and private tombs from the Valley of the Kings dating from the 18th Dynasty, the dynasty ruling Egypt from the 15th to 14th Century B.C. Gold was considered to be the color of the immortal sun in ancient Egypt and therefore became a symbol of rebirth in the afterworld. The exhibition's subtitle 'The Golden Beyond' refers to the religious meaning given to the 3300 to 3500 year-old gold or gold-plated burial treasures. A colored reconstruction of the burial chamber, the sensational discovery by Howard Carter November 1922, will enhance our understanding of the Pharaoh's 'Golden Beyond'. A event-packed computer animation will provide additional geographical information. It also gives a detailed view of early to late dynastic burial architecture. An exhibition organized by the Art and Exhibition Hall, the Supreme Council of Antiquities Cairo and the Egyptian Museum Cairo in Cooperation with the Antikenmuseum Basel and Sammlung Ludwig.

This special exhibition in Bonn is only possible as a result of the cooperation between Deutsche Telekom and the Federal Art and Exhibition Hall

17th Federal Competition

25 February – 28 March 2005

Art Students Display Their Works

For the sixth time the Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle offers young artists studying in the Federal Republic of Germany a forum. The exhibition is intended to create opportunities for comparison and to stimulate discussion, whilst providing an interested general public with an insight into work currently being done at art schools in Germany. The purpose of this competition, which the Federal Ministry for Education and Research holds every two years, is to promote young artists. At the same time, it sets out to display the quality and diversity of education in the fine arts and to draw attention to the importance of artistic activity in society.

50 students of the 23 colleges, represented in the Conference of the Deans and Rectors of Art Colleges, Academies and Universities, have submitted works which will be judged by a three-person jury.

10,000 Years of Art and Culture from Jordan

29 April - 21 August 2005

Faces of the Orient

Jordan lies at the meeting point of the oldest high cultures of the world. It is in this area that the three great religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam originated and the ancient incense and kings way trade routes crossed, and where the most fundamental developments in the history of civilization as well as the major roots of Western culture are to be found. Archaeological research of the past 15 years has radically changed our conception of this region's history. This exhibition presents aspects of daily life of the various cultures inhabiting this region from the early Neolithic (8th century B.C.) to the early Islamic period (8th century A.D.), a time spanning almost 10,000 years. More than 700 exceptional loans from Jordan's museums provide a view to the high cultures and their interaction with each other. Some of the high points of this exhibition are represented by monuments from the most important events in the history of humanity, such as the spectacular and earliest known life-size portrait sculptures from Ain Ghazal (8th century B.C.) as well as exhibits from the legendary



Nabataean city of Petra. An exhibition organized by the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany in cooperation with the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Genghis Khan and his Heirs

16 June – 25 September 2005

The year 2006 will commemorate the 800th year of the foundation of the Mongolian Empire. With the kingship of Genghis Khan, extending from the shores of the Pacific Ocean well into the middle of Europe, a long tradition of nomadic nation-building in the Eurasian Steppes reached an incomparable climax. The exhibition focuses on this Mongolian Empire at the height of its power, and sheds some light on its predecessors and followers, too.

The Mongolians were not just highly successful conquerors, they were also able to maintain secure control over the vast areas they dominated. An effective system of administration, modern means of communication and logistics, paper money as well as a high degree of cultural and religious tolerance formed the basis of the so-called Pax Mongolica: Well into the 16th century, the exchange between Europa and Asia flourished to an hitherto unseen degree, trade routes transmitted not only commercial goods, but also ideas and achievements of civilization from one part of the Empire to the other. The cultural achievements of the Great Mongolian Empire will be presented to the public through archaeological finds, precious examples of material culture and Buddhist art, manuscripts and historical maps, mostly from museum collections in Mongolia and abroad.

From van Gogh to Beuys...

12 August - 6 November 2005

CROSSART: Masterpieces of modern art from ten German and Dutch museums

This cross-border exhibition presents around 150 late nineteenth and twentieth-century masterpieces selected from the collections of six German and four Dutch museums.

Crossart refers to the unique collaboration of ten “MOMAs,” that is, museums of modern and contemporary art, in the border region between the Lower Rhine and the Netherlands. “Van Gogh to Beuys” promises a fireworks display of names and creative works by the most significant artists of the twentieth century. Exciting new relationships will emerge when curator Jean-Christophe Amman displays this selection of masterpieces from ten different museums in the exhibition in Bonn. Participating museums: Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem, Museum Het Valkhof, Nijmegen, Museum Kurhaus Kleve, Museum Schloss Moyland, Bedburg-Hau, Museum van Bommel van Dam, Venlo, Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Stiftung Insel Hombroich, Neuss, Krefeld art museums, Stiftung Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg.

National Treasures in Germany

3 October 2005 - 8 January 2006

From Luther to the Bauhaus

An exhibition of the Konferenz Nationaler Kultureinrichtungen (KNK) in cooperation with the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bonn.

Fifteen years after the reunification of Germany, twenty-three nationally prominent institutions in the new German federal states and Berlin are showcasing the most precious cultural treasures in their collections. On an unprecedented scale, this fascinating exhibition will display around 400 remarkable art objects and highlights on 2000 m² in the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany. This historical exhibit will retrace the origins and vicissitudes of the more than 500-year history of various European museums and collections. At the same time it will showcase the most noteworthy exhibits in East German museums. Major impulses in the history of museums and collections originated from East Germany, as many historic sites and artifacts of German culture are located here. Martin Luther and the Reformation played a significant role in the early sixteenth century, and thus form the prelude to the exhibition. Paintings, sculpture, drawings, literary and musical works, valuables, curios, as well as natural artifacts and models map the genesis of a **national** legacy in its European context. Visitors are introduced to collectors and their passions in a most impressive setting, and are sure to be enthralled by world-class masterpieces.

The exhibition spans more than 500 years of museum history and ends with art works from the Bauhaus era. A media snapshot of the institutions at the beginning of the twenty-first century rounds



out the impressive picture.

The Baroque in the Vatican

25 November 2005 - 19 March 2006

Art and Culture in Papal Rome II

Since the first successful exhibition 'High Renaissance in the Vatican', staged in 1999, was dedicated to the Vatican palaces, this second exhibition will focus on the Cathedral of St. Peter. Bernini and his most important projects for the Cathedral - such as the Cathedral square grounds, papal tombs and baldachin - will be introduced. Other exceptional artists of the era were commissioned to work on impressive altar paintings for Christianity's mother church. Later mosaic copies, which replaced the originals, were given little notice and may now be 'rediscovered' in Bonn. Around 1600 a new wave of theological and spiritual reflection took place, leading to a revolution in all areas of culture, art and religious life. This exhibition therefore takes a look at the entire cultural diversity existing in Papal Rome during the Baroque. It will present Rome, which at that time was the major city of art, not only by means of its great buildings and pictorial masterpieces, which to a great extent served to glorify the popes and cardinals, but it will also present unique examples from the human sciences, liturgy, music and literature. The incredible developments taking place in the modern sciences will also be focused upon.

French Paintings from the 17th and 18th centuries in German collections

3 February – 30 April 2006

With 180 representative paintings, this exhibition offers a richly diverse view of French painting from the followers of Caravaggio to the neoclassicists around 1800. At the same time it reflects the origins and history of many important German painting collections and the reception of French art in Germany. German museums have extensive holdings in French art. This circumstance is the starting point of this German-French exhibition project, which pursues several objectives.

Arranged chronologically and organized according to subject matter such as landscape portraits, still lifes, and historical paintings, this assembled collection of paintings and oil sketches traces the major developments in seventeenth and eighteenth-century French art. Famous masterpieces by Watteau, Chardin, Lorrain, Poussin, and Fragonard are displayed next to lesser known works by de la Hyre, Valentin, Bourdon, and Dughet. Thanks to the many German museums willing to part from outstanding masterpieces, the public can now be shown the complex image of French art as it flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and spread out to numerous imperial towns and cultural centers.

An exhibition of the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn, Bavarian State Painting Collections, Munich, Stiftung Haus der Kunst, Munich, and Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris.

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