

## Dahlem Humanities Center (DHC)

### DHC Lecture with Barbara Baert

Jan 11, 2024 | 06:15 PM



Barbara Baert

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Advanced Study

Dahlem Humanities Center Lecture (DHCL) by Barbara Baert  
(KU Leuven).

*Dance - Head - Blood*

*Salome and Narrative Space in Medieval and Renaissance Art*

The lecture revisits the iconography of the death of John the Baptist according to Mark 6:14-29 and Matthew 14:1-12. The gospels demonstrate an intense temporal plot and a complex spatial structure with Salome as the ambivalent protagonist. The head is demanded, the head is decapitated, the head is posed on a platter, and the head is handed over on the platter. During this swift sequence of actions (*cum festinatione*) the text suggests convoluted situations both indoors and outdoors. Medieval and renaissance artists translated this narrative labyrinth with consideration of the visual clarity of the story, the emotional expression or *Pathosformeln* of the *dramatis personae*, and the moral message of the *Prodromos'* martyrdom.

In my lecture I will discuss and compare the different visual strategies of 'framing' in medieval and early modern *affreschi* and *predellae*, such as contamination, overlap, inversion, corner, leverage, cut, *mise-en-abîme* and dripping. I will show how the pictorial solutions unfold, sustain, suppress, and emphasise symbolic archetypes regarding, among others, the female court dance, mimetic violence, incest, and the sacrificial blood taboo. By integrating the hermeneutics of exegesis and semiotics, of anthropology and iconology, my exposé aims to pay tribute to the versatility of the Humanities and the resilience of the *Bildwissenschaften*, both celebrated so generously by the Dahlem Humanities Center.

*The lecture will be held in English.*

Please register by January 10th.

### Time & Location

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Freie Universität Berlin  
Seminarzentrum, Raum L 116  
Otto-von-Simson-Straße 26  
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