

Welcome to *Different Visions: A Journal of New Perspectives on Medieval Art*

Rachel Dressler

Welcome to the first issue of the on-line, open-access journal, *Different Visions: A Journal of New Perspectives on Medieval Art*. We are excited to provide this new publishing venue designed for authors and readers interested in the intersection of critical theory and medieval visual culture. We hope that this journal will energize the field of medieval studies by presenting progressive scholarship in an equally progressive, image-rich electronic form, available on the web without charge.

This issue is devoted to a selection of papers first presented in 2006 at the 41st International Congress on Medieval Studies. Corine Schleif, this issue's guest editor, and Alyce Jordan organized five sessions centered on Madeline Caviness's method of "triangulation," a way of negotiating the overlap and dissonance created when medieval objects are placed under the lens of critical theory. The resulting essays examine a variety of medieval objects ranging from manuscripts to paintings, stained glass, and tomb effigies, and engage diverse methodologies including cultural studies, gender analysis, and post-colonialism.¹ The second issue of *Different Visions* will present selected papers from sessions on Monstrosity at the 2008 International Medieval Congress, Leeds, co-organized by Debra Strickland and Asa Mittman. Future issues will vary between collections of essays originating in conferences, and stand alone articles written specifically for publication.

No journal is launched without the support and help of numerous colleagues and collaborators. *Different Visions* owes a major debt to Sarah Blick and Rita Tekippe for their pioneering on-line journal *Peregrinations*, devoted to articles and material about pilgrimage visual culture. It is always easier to do something once someone else has shown the way; the presence of *Peregrinations* on the web gave me the courage to launch my own on-line journal on medieval art. Deep gratitude also goes to Corine Schleif and Alyce Jordan, for co-organizing and co-chairing the sessions from which the essays in this first issue derive.

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In addition to her work co-organizing the original sessions, Corine is due special appreciation as she willingly took on the arduous task of Guest Editor for this issue. In this capacity, she provided a close reading of all the articles, making many cogent comments and suggestions, and working closely with the authors to produce the best possible essays. She also contributed a number of valuable ideas for the journal's appearance.

The other individuals who provided me both intellectual and moral support, and technical facility also warrant enthusiastic acknowledgment. Foremost among these is Caitlain Devereaux Lewis, the designer of the *Different Visions* website. Caitlain not only created the journal's look, she offered technical training and, as a professional librarian, also fielded many of the copyright questions that arose in conjunction with the reproduction of visual images. Charles Duncan also employed his considerable expertise in web design to see this first issue through to completion. Finally, recognition is due to the members of the Editorial Board who have provided enthusiastic support for this venture. Without their continuing interest, *Different Visions* would never have come into being.

Rachel Dressler, editor-in-chief of Different Visions, is Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University at Albany, State University of New York where she is also Associate Professor of Art History. She earned her Ph.D. in Art History from Columbia University in 1994, with a dissertation on medieval visual narrative at Chartres Cathedral. Dressler's recent publications include a book, Of Armor and Men in Medieval England: the Chivalric Rhetoric of Three English Knights' Effigies, and two articles, "Cross-Legged Knights and Signification in English Medieval Tomb Sculpture" in Studies in Iconography and "Steel Corpse: Imaging the Knight in Death" in Jacqueline Murray, ed., Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West.

Notes

¹ Sadly, as this issue was in the final stages of preparation, one of the conference participants and authors, Charles Nelson, died after a lengthy illness. I feel honored that he agreed to publish his essay in this issue and hope that its presence will serve as something of a memorial to this great medieval scholar.