

The Medieval Choir Screen in Sacred Space: The Dynamic Interiors of Vezzolano and Breisach

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Sound and Vision in the Hereford Screen

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The Medieval Choir Screen in Sacred Space: The Dynamic Interiors of Vezzolano and Breisach

One object by **Jacqueline E. Jung**



Abstract

In their later medieval heyday, choir screens were pivotal centerpieces and focalisers of their sacred environments. Embellished with figural imagery; outfitted with platforms, pulpits, and altars; and rendered visually porous by the presence of large doors and windows, screens at once defined liturgical zones and provided a unifying bridge between them. This presentation offers an analysis of two extant screens: the early thirteenth-century structure in the abbey church of St Maria in Vezzolano, and the late fifteenth-century example in the church of St Stephen in Breisach. Though very different in format and decoration, both screens act as mediators – physical, visual, and conceptual – between the functional spaces and pictorial programmes in the apses (eastern ends) and exterior thresholds (western ends) of their respective churches. This presentation seeks to reveal the dynamic, mutually reinforcing relations among choir screens, the spaces they inhabited, and the liturgical objects that animated those zones.



Figure 1

Jacqueline E. Jung, *The Medieval Choir Screen in Sacred Space: The Dynamic Interiors of Vezzolano and Breisach*, video essay, 2017. Recorded and produced by Jude Breidenbach / Yale Broadcast Studios.

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About the author

Jacqueline E. Jung is Associate Professor in the Department of History of Art at Yale University, where she teaches on medieval sculpture, architecture, and images in various media. Her book *The Gothic Screen: Space, Sculpture, and Community in the Cathedrals of France and Germany, ca. 1200-1400* (Cambridge University Press, 2013) won the PROSE Award for Art History and Criticism from the Association of American Publishers and the John Nicholas Brown Prize from the Medieval Academy of America. Her current book project, *Eloquent Bodies: Movement*,

Expression, and the Human Figure in Gothic Sculpture, will be published by Yale University Press.

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