

The image features a complex, symmetrical paper cut design. At the center is a large, dark circular void. Surrounding this central void are four circular motifs, each containing a multi-pointed starburst or sunburst design. These starbursts are arranged in a cross pattern. The starbursts are connected to a larger, textured circular band that also surrounds the central void. This band has a series of small, raised dots along its inner edge. The entire design is embellished with delicate, swirling lines and stylized floral or leaf-like shapes that radiate outwards. The overall aesthetic is reminiscent of traditional paper art or decorative bookbinding elements.

British Art Studies  
Spring 2017



*British Art Studies*

Issue 5, published 17 April 2017

Cover image: Francis Skidmore, Hereford screen, spandrel, photograph. Victoria & Albert Museum (E.430:4-2006) . Digital image courtesy of Victoria & Albert Museum

PDF generated on 31 October 2017

Note: *British Art Studies* is a digital publication and intended to be experienced online and referenced digitally. PDFs are provided for ease of reading offline. Please do not reference the PDF in academic citations: we recommend the use of DOIs (digital object identifiers) provided within the online article. These unique alphanumeric strings identify content and provide a persistent link to a location on the internet. A DOI is guaranteed never to change, so you can use it to link permanently to electronic documents with confidence.

Published by:

Paul Mellon Centre  
16 Bedford Square  
London, WC1B 3JA  
<http://www.paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk>

In partnership with:

Yale Center for British Art  
1080 Chapel Street  
New Haven, Connecticut  
<http://britishart.yale.edu>

ISSN: 2058-5462

DOI: 10.17658/issn.2058-5462

URL: <http://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk>

Editorial team: <http://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk/about/editorial-team>

Advisory board: <http://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk/about/advisory-board>

Produced in the United Kingdom.

*A joint publication by*



**YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART**

# Contents

The Medieval Choir Screen in Sacred Space:

The Dynamic Interiors of Vezzolano and Breisach, Jacqueline E. Jung



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

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.*

## Authors

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.

## Acknowledgements

Travel to the sites discussed here was made possible with grants from the Griswold Fellowship Fund at Yale University. An early version of this presentation was given at a workshop of the Bild/Evidenz research group at the Freie Universität in Berlin in summer 2015, and thanks go above all to Reindert Falkenburg for the kind invitation and many helpful remarks at (and

beyond) that event. The author is also grateful to Gregory Bryda for helping her think through issues of materiality and vision with regard to altarpieces, and to Mitchell Merback for the great travel adventure that brought us to Vezzolano in the summer of 2013. Additional thanks go to the editorial staff at *British Art Studies* for helping this piece take shape, and above all to Jude Breidenbach of Yale Broadcast Studios for his patient and expert fine-tuning of the multimedia presentation.

### **Cite as**

Jacqueline E. Jung, "The Medieval Choir Screen in Sacred Space: The Dynamic Interiors of Vezzolano and Breisach", *British Art Studies*, Issue 5, <http://dx.doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-05/jjung>



### [Watch Video](#)

#### **Figure 1.**

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

## **Bibliography**

Baker, Audrey. *English Panel Paintings 1400-1558: A Survey of Figure Paintings on East Anglian Rood Screens*. London: Archetype, 2011.

Barrett, Philip. "From Victorian to Modern Times, 1832-1982." In *Hereford Cathedral: A History*, ed. Gerald Aylmer and John Tiller. London: Hambledon Press, 2000, 179.

Bond, Francis. *Screens and Galleries in English Churches*. London: Henry Frowde, 1908.

Bryda, Gregory. "Tree, Vine, Herb: Vegetal Themes and Media in Late Gothic Germany." Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2016.

Carruthers, Mary. *The Experience of Beauty in the Middle Ages*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

German, Kinga. *Sakramentsnischen und Sakramentshäuser in Siebenbürgen: Die Verehrung des Corpus Christi*. Petersberg: Imhof, 2014.

Gombert, Hermann, and Hermann Metz. *St. Stephansmünster zu Breisach*, 21st edn. Regensburg: Schnell and Steiner, 2000.

Jung, Jacqueline E. "Moving Pictures on the Gothic Screen." In *The Art and Science of the Church Screen in Medieval Europe: Making, Meaning, Preserving*, ed. Spike Bucklow, Richard Marks, and Lucy Wrapson. Woodbridge: Boydell, forthcoming, June 2017.

Kahsnitz, Rainer. *Carved Splendor: Late Gothic Altarpieces in Southern Germany, Austria, and South Tirol*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2006.

Kessel, Verena. "The High Gothic Liturgical Furnishings of the Church of Our Lady (*Liebfrauenkirche*) in Oberwesel." In *Mainz and the Middle Rhine Valley: Medieval Art, Architecture, and Archaeology*, ed. Ute Engel and Alexandra Gajewski. London: British Archaeological Association, 2007, 193-203.

Rava, Antonio. "Le jubé de Vezzolano et les reliefs antélamiques du portail de Saint-André à Vercelli." In *La couleur et la pierre: Polychromie des portails gothiques. Actes du colloque Amiens, 12-14 octobre 2000*, ed. Denis Verret and Delphine Steyaert. Amiens: Picard, 2002, 163-74.

Salerno, Paola, ed. *Santa Maria di Vezzolano: Il Pontile. Ricerche e restauri*. Turin: Umberto Allemandi, 1997.

Schwarz, Michael Viktor. "Retelling the Passion at Naumburg: The West-Screen and its Audience." *Artibus et Historiae* 51 (2005): 59-72.

Timmermann, Achim. *Real Presence: Sacrament Houses and the Body of Christ, c. 1250–1600*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2009.

# Licensing

The Publishers of *British Art Studies* are committed to supporting scholarship on British art and architecture of all periods. This publication is made available free of charge at <http://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk>. We ask users to identify the use of materials made available through this website and to provide an appropriate credit to the author and the publication, so that others may find and use our resources.

Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 2.0 UK: England & Wales Licence (CC BY-NC 2.0 UK). To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.0/uk/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

The Publishers fully support the protection of intellectual property and are committed to complying with, and strictly adhering to, all applicable copyright law. In many cases, copyright or other proprietary rights may be held by individuals or entities other than, or in addition to, the Publishers. If a work or a photographic image is still protected by copyright, you must cite the relevant copyright information when using the image and comply with all other terms or restrictions that may be applicable to that material.

In some cases, exceptions to copyright that permit limited use of protected works without the permission of the copyright owner may have been applied. We are confident that we have carried out due diligence in our use of copyrighted material as required, but we apologise for any inadvertent infringement of rights.

Digital copies of resources are made accessible for research for one of the following reasons:

- they are in the public domain;
- the rights are owned by the Publishers;
- we make them accessible under an exception or limitation to UK copyright law, as outlined in the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended);
- we have permission to make them accessible;
- or, there are no known restrictions on use.

If you believe that we have made a mistake and wish for your material to be removed from our site, please contact us at [copyright@paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk](mailto:copyright@paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk).

Please include the following information with your request:

- Name and contact information, including email address and phone number.
- Identification of the resource for consideration of removal. Providing URLs in your communication will help us locate content quickly.
- The reason for the request.

The Publishers respond promptly, normally within 21 business days. We may remove the resource from our site while we assess the validity of the request. Upon completion of the assessment, we will take appropriate action and communicate that action to you.