
CALL FOR PAPERS

9th International Conference on Arts and Humanities

The Art of Mediation: agents, practices and afterimages of intercultural dialogue

24th and 25th September 2026

Marietta-Blau Saal, University of Vienna, Universitätsring 1, 1010, Vienna, Austria

This year's ICSAH meeting approaches *the Art of Mediation* as a framework for understanding cross-cultural interaction in history. Throughout time, individuals, institutions, communities, and cultural forms—ranging from language and performance to visual and material culture—have acted as mediators between societies. In negotiating religious difference, political conflict, economic rivalry, and artistic exchange, they shaped the shared spaces where civilisations met, interacted, and coexisted.

We invite scholars and practitioners to explore the many forms and functions of intercultural mediation in the past and present. From royal marriages and diplomatic missions to multilingual performances and artistic hybridities, we aim to shed light on the human and cultural mechanisms that enabled communication, negotiation, and coexistence across boundaries. We particularly welcome contributions that analyse how contact across languages, belief systems, and political structures was facilitated and made meaningful through a mediating agent - individual, institutional, or material - and how the legacies of such encounters continue to shape our world today. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

-Diplomacy and politics: the dynamic role of envoys, governors, merchants, legal practitioners, or local intermediaries in navigating intercultural conflicts and negotiations.

-Mobility, migration, and exile: individuals as cultural bridges within diasporas, exile communities, port cities, frontier zones, or trade hubs.

-Religion and religious practices: the intermediary role of actors, experiences, texts, and beliefs in encounters across confessional or doctrinal boundaries.

-Gender studies: women as mediators in processes of negotiation, reconciliation, or cultural translation.

-Art and cultural production: the role of artistic creation in bridging cultures; literary reinterpretations and visual media as mediating forces; the translation and transformation of myths, symbols, and values.

-Historiography and perception: how mediators have been remembered, forgotten, or re-imagined and how acts of mediation are portrayed in literature, film, philosophy, or media.

Submission rules: To submit a proposal for a paper of approximately 20 minutes or a poster, please send an abstract of 350 words or less **by April 30th, 2026** to icsahcy1@gmail.com or francesca.cecchi@comune.roma.it. The proposed contributions should not have been previously published or accepted for publication elsewhere. Abstracts should include a title, a summary of the presentation, name of the author/s, institutional affiliation and email.

Publication. Accepted papers will be published in the conference proceedings, which follow an editorial (but not a peer-review) process.

Conference languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish.

Conference fee: 50€

Conference fee exemption: Students and staff of the University of Vienna will not be required to pay the conference fee.

Please address any further inquiries to:

Prof. Umberto Mondini, icsahcy1@gmail.com,

Dr. Francesca Ceci, francesca.cecchi@comune.roma.it, or

Dr. Alina Dimitrova, alina.dimitrova@univie.ac.at

Additional details about the conference are available at www.icsah.eu/

About ICSAH. The International Centre for Studies of Arts and Humanities is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the multidisciplinary research in the field Arts and Humanities. Its scope is to offer a novel, all-round perspective to the study of fundamental historical and cultural issues related to human life that reflect the endeavours, achievements, and religions of humanity, and to show how these are expressed by art. Our annual events are designed to connect scholars, cultural experts and artists by providing a platform for a fruitful dialogue. The mission of the organisation is to:

1. Promote the worldwide understanding, study and teaching across a range of discipline of the Arts and Humanities, including, but not limited to, Ancient, Medieval, Modern and Contemporary History; Ancient and modern languages, linguistics and literature; Classics, Philosophy; Theology; History of Religions; Anthropology and ethnic studies; Archaeology; Cultural heritage; Visual arts; Performing arts, including theatre, dance, music, and those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods
2. Provide additional forums for the exchange of ideas regarding Arts and Humanities in schools, Universities, libraries, museums and other contexts
3. Support the interchange of research and the scholarships of knowledge, teaching and service in the Humanities through conferences, publications and relative activities.