

Musikgeschichte in Bildern 2.0

The IMS Study Group “Musical Iconography” at its 20th anniversary

Austrian Academy of Sciences, Austrian Centre for Digital Humanities,
Department of Musicology

Vienna, December 2–4, 2026

Twenty years ago, the IMS Study Group “Musical Iconography” was founded at the landmark congress *Musical Iconography in the XXI Century: Mapping European Art for Context and Meaning* (Ravenna, 2006). The meeting brought together scholars from a wide range of disciplines and academic traditions, united by a shared interest in musical iconography—explored in diverse fields of research such as musical archaeology, Renaissance iconology, oral traditions, twentieth-century synaesthetics, text-image studies, performing arts iconography, and many more. To celebrate its twentieth anniversary, the Study Group invites colleagues to Vienna for a three-day international conference.

Like the 2006 gathering, this meeting will map the current state of our field. Alongside European perspectives, we explicitly encourage global viewpoints. Equally welcome is a critical dialogue with Digital Humanities (DH) and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Revisiting the visionary—if now dated—multi-volume book project initiated by Heinrich Bessler and Max Schneider, later on edited by Werner Bachmann, we ask:

- What might a “Musikgeschichte in Bildern 2.0” (or even “3.0”) look like today?
- How did earlier generations of scholars interpret images of music, and how do we “read” them now, employing the diverse methodologies of musical iconography?
- Can AI offer new heuristics, or does it risk flattening hermeneutic depth?
- How do large datasets, authority files, and machine-learning techniques transform the way we view, interpret, and contextualise images of music?

The programme committee calls for proposals for

- papers (20 minutes with 10 minutes discussion) or
- lightning talks presenting project showcases (7 minutes)

Unpublished research on any period or region is welcome, especially contributions that address (but are not limited to) the following themes:

- Reassessing the legacy of “Musikgeschichte in Bildern” and other “canonical” projects
- Redefining the manifold relationships among music, text(s), and image(s) across genres
- Exploring the intersections between musical iconography and DH applications, including virtual tours, 3D models, and “sonic” reconstructions of pictorial programmes and performance contexts
- Visualising soundscapes—from archaeological evidence to contemporary urban settings
- Evaluating the potential of data-driven and/or AI-assisted approaches in musical iconography

Conference languages:

English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish

Programme committee:

Nicoletta GUIDOBALDI, Dipartimento di Beni Culturali | Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna, Ravenna Campus, Italy

Luzia Aurora ROCHA, ESART | Instituto Politécnico de Castelo Branco, TECHN&ART | Instituto Politécnico de Tomar, Portugal

Björn R. TAMMEN, ACDH | Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, Austria

Please submit your abstract (in English, max. 300 words, up to 8 keywords) plus a short bio (max. 150 words) to bjoern.tammen@oeaw.ac.at. Deadline for submissions: 10 July 2026. Notification of acceptance: 10 September 2026.

The conference will be held as an in-person event at the ÖAW Campus, 1010 Vienna, Bäckerstraße 13, Seminarraum 1 + 2. There is no conference fee. A peer-reviewed edited volume (open access) is planned.