



Setting the Scene **European Painted Cloths from 1400-2000**

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The conference papers in this volume explore the use of painted cloths in religious ceremony, pageantry, domestic interiors and scenic art, focussing on their change of context and significance from the fourteenth to the twenty-first centuries and examining their different function, materials, and method of creation.

The potential for large sizes, portability, and versatility for religious objects including banners, hangings, altarpieces, and palls was the impetus for the emergence of fabrics as a painting support in Western art in the Middle Ages. The functionality of the works explains the survival of relatively few examples.

One of the most common forms of interior decoration for centuries, painted cloths have received less attention from art historians and historians than they deserve in part due to their poor survival. Scenic backcloths were once commissioned for court functions, part of an elaborate display of royal power and magnificence. The same methods and materials continued to be used for theatrical cloths.