

Call for Papers

Spiritualities and Healing in Global and Transhistorical Perspectives



Giuseppe Arcimboldo, *Summer*, 1563, oil on panel. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, 10-11-12 June 2025

This conference interrogates the intersection of folk, vernacular, complementary, alternative, indigenous, and bio medicines in critical dialogue with analytical categories in the study of religion, including (folk) religions, magic, and spiritualities. The geographical parameters of the conference focus on Europe (though other regions will also be represented). This conference also takes a broad transhistorical perspective, which cuts across contemporary and pre-modern practices, beliefs, and historicities. Moreover, this conference also explores the relationship between alternative spiritualities and the pandemic, focusing on how movements rooted in religious and spiritual practices have supported or challenged scientific approaches to pandemic management across diverse temporal boundaries. These movements have not only sometimes questioned public health strategies but have also had far-reaching political consequences, fueling nationalisms, populisms, and fundamentalisms, and reshaping debates on health, spirituality, and governance. We invite anthropologists, ethnographers, sociologists, folklorists, religious studies scholars, historians, historians of science, and all those whose work explores the connections and complexities of the relationships between medicines and spiritualities, in Europe and/or beyond, to submit a paper proposal.

Some possible topics of research include, but are not limited to,

- the work of bonesetters,
- energy healers,
- herbalists,
- apothecaries,
- spirit possession,
- plant medicine,
- CAM,
- dance, music and rituals,
- psychedelics,
- magic,
- (neo)shamanism,
- pandemic and spirituality.

Organizers

The conference is organized jointly by the [Centre for Comparative Studies of Civilisations and Spiritualities](#) (Cini Foundation), the [Center for the Study of World Religions](#) (Harvard

Divinity School) the [Center for the Study of Lived Religion](#) (Ca' Foscari University), and the [HEAL Network for the Ethnography of Healing](#).

Abstracts and Texts

Abstracts up to 300 words, accompanied by a short CV, should be submitted in English by the 20th of February to civilta.comparate@cini.it. A notification of acceptance will be forwarded by the 15th of March.

Timetable

1. The call for papers is open – 25th of January 2025.
2. Abstracts (300 words maximum) and CVs to be received by 28th of February 2025.
3. Notifications of acceptance will be given by 15th of March 2025.
4. The conference will be held 10-11-12 June 2025.

Practicalities and Funding

The organizers will provide accommodation on San Giorgio Island, coffee breaks and lunches for all participants. Participants will arrange and pay for their own transportation. Extra funding may be available to cover the travel expenses of a limited number of scholars who cannot obtain funding from their own institutions. If extra funding is needed, please indicate this in the email with which you submit your abstract. The Library of the Centre for Comparative Studies of Civilizations and Spiritualities will appreciate it if participants can bring and donate one book they authored or in which they have participated.

CONTACT: civilta.comparate@cini.it