

Press Release

PRAYMOBIL. Medieval Art in Motion

November 29, 2025 – March 15, 2026

Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum, Aachen, Germany

www.suermondt-ludwig-museum.de

The Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum in Aachen presents *PRAYMOBIL. Medieval Art in Motion* — the world's first comprehensive exhibition devoted to movable sculptures from the Middle Ages. Bringing together around **80 extraordinary works from eight countries**, the show reveals how medieval artists and craftsmen brought sacred figures to life through ingenious mechanisms long before robotics or animation existed.

From Christ riding a wheeled Palm Donkey to crucifixes with jointed arms and a Christ Child that could "emerge" from the Virgin's body, these objects once animated medieval worship, processions, and plays. Combining art, faith, and mechanics, they created astonishing illusions of movement and vitality that deeply touched audiences of all social classes.

Curated by **Michael Rief** (Deputy Director and Head of Collections), with **Dr. Dagmar Preising** and **Maria Geuchen**, the exhibition explores the performative and emotional power of these works, while also revealing how some so-called "miracles" — such as weeping or bleeding statues — were carefully staged.

"These figures were far more than curiosities," says Rief. "They were powerful spiritual and emotional tools that brought belief to life."

Director **Till-Holger Borchert** adds:

"The title PRAYMOBIL plays on the dual meaning of pray and mobile, reflecting how these figures were active participants in sacred performance."

The exhibition also highlights living traditions — including Aachen's "*Streuengelchen*" festival — that preserve echoes of this medieval fascination with motion and animation.

PRAYMOBIL appeals to both experts and general audiences, offering an engaging, sensory gateway into medieval culture.

A rich public program of **tours, talks, workshops, and performances** accompanies the exhibition.

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