



THE POLYMATH IN QUESTION  
**HILDEGARD OF BINGEN**

WEDNESDAY 14 JANUARY OR THURSDAY 19 FEBRUARY

Called by her admirers, "one of the most important figures in the history of the Middle Ages," and "the greatest woman of her time," Hildegard of Bingen was born in 1098 in the final years of the century of Eleanor of Aquitaine, of Peter Abelard and Bernard of Clairvaux, of the rise of the great universities and the building of Chartres cathedral. Daughter of a knight, educated from age 8 in a Benedictine monastery, she became a nun at eighteen. Twenty years later, she was made the head of the female community at the monastery. Soon after moving her nuns to Bingen she had a series of visions, and devoted ten years from 1140 to 1150 to writing them down, describing them, drawing pictures of what she had seen, and commenting on their interpretation and significance. Hildegard's works include three great volumes of visionary theology; a variety of musical compositions for use in liturgy, as well as the musical morality play *Ordo Virtutum*; one of the largest bodies of letters (nearly 400) to survive from the Middle Ages, addressed to correspondents ranging from Popes to Emperors to abbots and abbesses, and including records of many of the sermons she preached in the 1160s and 1170s; two volumes of material on natural medicine and cures; an invented language called the *Lingua ignota* ("unknown language"); and various minor works, including a gospel commentary and two works of hagiography.

MEET	10:30 am coffee for 11 am lecture at the Art Workers' Guild
ENDS	3:30 Art Workers' Guild
COST	£85 members, £95 non-members, including coffee, light lunch with wine