

Material Culture, Art History and Archaeology

Sektionsleitung / Section Supervision: Stefan Weber

Raum / Room: Bangkok (JK 27/106)

Organised Panels

New Perspectives on Graffiti in the Near East and North Africa in Ancient and Medieval Times

Panel conveners: Ilaria Bucci, Marco Moriggi

The increasing interest in graffiti in the past two decades has caused a significant shift of perspective, with new approaches unanimously stressing the importance of materiality and context as fundamental aspects of their interpretation. Academic events and publications have been attempting to solve the overarching issue of terminology, questioning the suitability of the term “graffiti”, originated in the Classical world and later applied ambiguously to expressions of vandalism or dissent of street writers as well as to works of celebrated urban artists, to define a wide variety of ancient and modern artefacts. But if graffiti seem to escape a universal definition, the research in the field is steadily expanding, including new areas and evidence and benefiting from interdisciplinary discourses.

The goal of this panel is therefore to bring together experts researching graffiti practices in a large array of cultures and places, to emphasise the richness and diversity of texts and images that we call “graffiti”. Being the first such event dedicated to the broad area of the Near East and North Africa, the panel will offer the opportunity for the participants to share the results and challenges of their ongoing projects, and to discuss how different scholarly traditions and modern categorisations affect the way we engage with the material. It will also have the purpose to summarise the current situation of these studies and encourage the creation of a network promoting productive exchanges on definition, theoretical approach, and methodology across disciplinary boundaries.

Modern and Contemporary Art: Cultural Infrastructures in Lebanon's Art World

Panel convener: Nadia von Maltzahn

Lebanon is regularly portrayed as a country with weak public institutions but a vibrant cultural sector. This panel explores some of the cultural infrastructures that have contributed to the making of Lebanon's art world in the twentieth century, focusing in particular on the period between early independence and the end of the civil war. It looks at the forces that have shaped the emergence of a professional field of art in Lebanon by analysing a range of formal and informal spaces that have played a role in the evolution of art in Lebanon. These spaces often served as places of encounter and exchange, beyond their primary functions of exhibiting or teaching art. As such, they were active catalysts within the intellectual milieus of their time, contributing to the shaping of identity in a young nation. This panel also examines how cultural infrastructures developed and evolved during the civil war (1975-1990). Far from being a grey slab in Lebanon's art history, the time span of the war saw some new art practices emerge. This panel proposes to rethink the impact of the political, social and economic environment on the art world and its protagonists, and how artists and cultural players in fact shaped their environments.

Aktuelle Forschungen aus dem Museum für Islamische Kunst

Panel convener: Miriam Kühn

Museen sind heute bestrebt, sich mit ihrer Forschungs- und Sammlungsgeschichte kritisch auseinander zu setzen. Stand bis Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts die Erforschung der Herstellungs- und primären Nutzungskontexte der Objekte im Vordergrund, liegt der Fokus nun auf ihren Erwerbungskontexten.

Die Verdienste der Persönlichkeiten, die die Sammlung des Museums für Islamische Kunst wesentlich geprägt haben, beschäftigen Mitarbeiter:innen des Museums schon lange. Besonders zu erwähnen sind dabei Julia Gonnella und Jens Kröger, die grundlegende Beiträge zu Friedrich Sarre, dem ersten Direktor des Museums, beigesteuert haben. Jens Kröger legte zudem eine Chronik der Ausgrabungen in Samarra (Irak) vor, die unter der Leitung von Friedrich Sarre und Ernst Herzfeld 1911-13 stattfanden und deren Funde Großteils nach Berlin gelangten. Gisela Helmecke wiederum widmete sich auch weniger prominenten, aber nicht minder aktiven Sammlern, u.a. Alexandre Merle de Massonneau.

Es lohnt sich jedoch immer ein frischer Blick auf die Sammlungsbestände, der zu neuen Fragestellungen führt. In diesem Panel werden daher neue Perspektiven auf die Erwerbungskontexte vorgestellt. Der engere Fokus auf die von Sarre erworbene Holzsammlung erlaubt dabei tiefergehende Einblicke in seine Erwerbungspraktiken im Ausland. Am Beispiel der von Massonneau erworbenen Objekte zeigt sich, dass die Sammler nicht zwingend nur islamische Kunst sammelten, was die Betrachtung von Sammleraktivitäten über Museumsgrenzen hinweg lohnenswert macht. Anhand der durch verschiedenste Sammler in Raghes/Rayy (Iran) erworbenen Keramik lassen sich wiederum Aussagen über internationale Händlernetzwerke treffen. Eine erweiterte Aufarbeitung der Grabungsdokumentation zu Samarra bindet schließlich die Museumsarchive in den aktuellen Kontext der Provenienzforschung ein und erlaubt gleichzeitig Rückschlüsse über die historischen Umstände der Ausgrabung.

Religion, Heritage and the 'Post-Secular Age': Insights from Asia and the Middle East

Panel conveners: Rebecca Sauer, Vera Lazzaretti

Scholars in the fields of religious studies and heritage studies have extensively shown that heritage and religion respectively are crucial identity makers and markers. As distinct systems of adherence they appear to be always potentially in conflict. However, as Birgit Meyer and Marleen de Witte have formulated, heritage and religion are as well *similar* constituents of identity. Heritage-making resembles a kind of sacralization, because it selects 'fragments of culture' and places them *beyond the ordinary* (Bendix). Like religious objects or sites, then, heritage 'things' are made to stand as icons of nations or minority communities: they signal in the present and bequeath to the future specific crafted historical narratives. Numerous examples pertaining to the sphere of heritage formation in national(ist) contexts testify to this similarity (museums as "secular temples"; Atatürk's Mausoleum, etc.). This panel, however, takes the discussion a step further by raising critical questions about the similarities and frictions between heritage and religion in/and the so-called 'post-secular age'. What do the interactions of the two tell us about the 'post-secular' (as analytical category and/or the apparent reemergence of religion in our times)? The panel gathers material from Asia and the Middle East in an attempt to widen the discussion beyond Europe and primarily will discuss:

- ways in which religious actors in these regions negotiate the significance of religious heritage within and beyond diverse (post) secular frameworks; and
- the extent to which, from these regions, the religious transforms and/or inform (post) secular heritage discourses and vice versa.

Keynote

Artists, Monarchs, and Mercenaries: On Connecting Histories of Art

Kishwar Rizvi (Yale Department of the History of Art)

The early modern period is considered one of movement – of people, ideas, and commodities. The motivations were equally varied, from proselytism and conversion to the competition for raw material and the sale of weapons. Cultural and political exchanges were taking place across huge distances and against the backdrop of rampant disease and population displacement by climate disasters. In such circumstances, scholars and artists – from Florence to Isfahan – found ways to express the precarity of their world, even as they were called upon to celebrate the greatest achievements of empire. This paper focusses on two such men, different in many ways but representing together the spirit of a time not unlike the one we find ourselves in today.

Presentations

Verlorenes sichtbar machen: Digitale Rekonstruktion der Lüsterfliesenausstattung des Grabbaus des Imamzadeh Yahya in Varamin

Sophia Abplanalp (Universität Wien, Österreich)

Der Grabbau des Imamzadeh Yahya in Varamin (Iran) stammt aus seldschukischer Zeit und wurde in der zweiten Hälfte des 13. Jahrhunderts mit Lüsterfliesen im Inneren ausgekleidet. Zum Ausstattungsprogramm gehörten ein Lüster-Mihrab, eine Grabplatte aus Lüsterfliesen für den Kenotaphen, sowie Stern- und Kreuzlüsterfliesen, welche die untere Zone des Innenraums schmückten. Alle diese Ausstattungselemente wurden zwischen dem 19. und 20. Jahrhundert aus dem Bau entwendet und dem Kunstmarkt zugeführt.

Die gesamte Lüsterfliesenausstattung ist heute auf mehr als 30 Sammlungen weltweit verteilt. Aufgrund der Verbringung dieser Objekte in den Westen existieren der Bau und die Lüsterfliesen heutzutage getrennt voneinander, was zur Folge hat, dass ihr ursprünglicher Verwendungs- und Entstehungskontext verloren gingen. Durch diesen Umstand können die Lüsterfliesen aktuell nicht mehr in ihrer Gänze wahrgenommen und verstanden werden.

In meinem Vortrag möchte ich daher präsentieren, wie es durch eine digitale Rekonstruktion möglich ist die Objekte ihrem verlorengegangenen Kontext wieder zuzuführen und was das für das Verständnis über die Lüsterfliesen bedeutet. Das 3D-Modell basiert auf historischen Informationen, die sich aus historischen Reiseberichten, Analysen der Lüsterfliesen selbst und Vergleichen mit anderen schiitischen Grabbauten, die ebenfalls mit ilkhanidischen Lüsterfliesen ausgestattet waren, ableiten lassen. Ebenfalls sollen der Nutzen, die Schwierigkeiten, sowie Grenzen solcher Rekonstruktionen im Allgemeinen diskutiert werden.

Das digitale Modell soll auch dazu dienen den verlorengegangenen architektonischen Kontext auf visuell ansprechende Weise einem breiten Publikum zugänglich zu machen – was im Hinblick auf die zahlreichen Sammlungen, in denen diese Lüsterfliesen aufbewahrt werden, einen bedeutsamen Nutzen haben kann. Zudem hat das Projekt eine aktuelle Relevanz, da am Grabbau momentan Restaurierungsarbeiten vorgenommen werden.

The Syrian Heritage Archive Project at the Museum for Islamic Art, Berlin

Issam Al HAJJAR (Syrian Heritage Archive Project, Germany)

The Syrian Heritage Archive Project (SHAP) is the largest (growing) independent open multilingual online archive on Syria, focusing on cultural and natural heritage. It emerged in 2013 as a digitization initiative of the Museum for Islamic Art in Berlin and the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) to respond from afar to scenes of destruction in Syria.

SHAP is a structured database (5000 geolocalized sites, 300.000 items, 125.000 completely processed of 93 unique collections) with an in-depth cataloguing system in three languages (German, English and Arabic), intended for scientific research and to assist any future rehabilitation efforts in the country.

Since a few years, neighboring countries as Iraq and Lebanon are also included.

The outcomes are:

- the Database stores all these processed materials.
- the website (syrian-heritage.org) represents the frontend of the project, displaying a gallery, stories and an interactive map.
- Facebook and Instagram pages are interacting with the audience.

40.000 records are on the city of Aleppo. They are the basis of an Aleppo-focused research, which branched of the SHAP, documenting and analyzing the cultural heritage of the city and set it in context to history, changes through time and recent destructions.

The mosques of Fās al-Ŷadīd, a Muslim Royal City for the Marinid dynasty

Inigo Almela (Museum für Islamische Kunst, Germany)

After ensuring his authority over the whole of al-Maghrib al-Aqṣà and undertaking military campaigns in al-Andalus, Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb (1259-1286) founded in 1276, in front of Fez, a city that was called al-Madīna al-Bayḍā' (the White City), also known since then as New Fes (Fās al-Ŷadīd). This sovereign was not the founder of the dynasty, but he was the one who consolidated it, thereby he ordered the erection of a royal city where the new government apparatus and contingents were set.

This new urban creation became the symbol of the dynasty and its triumphal scene, however, simultaneously, it hosted a traditional madīna consisting of all basic elements of an Islamic city such as congregational mosque, government house and main commercial street, as well as walls and residential areas. Regarding its general layout, it is divided into several sectors: inhabited medina, palatine area, assembly and meeting area, market, Jewry and private orchards.

Despite the vanishing of many historical structures, Fās al-Ŷadīd was equipped with some outstanding mosques that still stand. Among them, the most relevant one is the Great Mosque, which was built as the congregational mosque of the city and the contact point between the sultan and the people. Besides, other secondary mosques were built in the neighbourhoods, some of which are masterpieces of Marinid architecture. Nevertheless, a notable aspect to highlight is the display of great socio-religious complexes around some of these mosques.

Lebaneseness and Private Capital at the National Museum of Beirut

Asli Altinisik (Freie Universität Berlin, Germany)

This paper studies manifestations of national identity at the National Museum of Beirut (NMB), with a particular focus on the interplay between private capital and identity. How does the museum narrate, portray, and convey a Lebanese identity and how is money involved in these processes? Aiming to tackle this question constructively and without fetishizing or normalizing any prejudices, the paper opts for the word *Lebaneseness* instead of “the Lebanese nation.” This preference, which also reflects the research’s mode of analysis, is geared towards cultivating a more encompassing and less assuming understanding of a group of people, a territory, and the relationship between these two elements.

The research builds on a combination of archival sources and observations from the museum. A close examination of NMB reveals that the institution’s history pivots around individual influences; furthermore, written accounts on the museum contradict one another. An investigation of the object labels and plaques reveals further contradictory information, and exposes a trail of private capital. Against this backdrop, this paper accounts for the possibilities of nationhood engendered at and by the NMB. In other words, this study identifies manifestations of private capital and references to national identity at the National Museum of Beirut through an investigative and eclectic analysis of the museum.

Hagia Sophia: Symbol of Dominance in Domestic Politics of Turkey
Evren Altinkas (University of Guelph, Canada)

Hagia Sophia was built as a Christian cathedral by Emperor Justinian. After the capture of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453, Hagia Sophia was converted into a mosque. The complex remained a mosque until 1931. In 1931, it was closed to the public and was re-opened in 1935 as a museum by the secular government of Republic of Turkey. In early July 2020, with the application and pressure of Islamist ruling party and its leader Erdogan, Turkish Supreme Court annulled the decision of 1934 Cabinet to establish a museum. Finally, Erdogan issued a decree as the President of Turkey and Hagia Sophia is classified as a mosque again.

In this paper, I will focus on the Turkish newspapers in 1930s and in 2020 regarding the Hagia Sophia's transformation into a museum and revoking of its status, respectively. The articles and news on the decision to transform Hagia Sophia into a museum published in the Turkish newspapers in 1930s reflect both the secular and anti-secular views of the era. Given the dominance of "secular" thinking in 1930s Turkey, majority of the newspapers were used as a tool to justify this decision and the newspapers opposing this transformation were either silenced or banned from publication for other reasons. Then, I will focus on the newspapers in 2020 and try to show that although the context has changed, the policies and shaping of public opinion did not differ at all.

Art Galleries in Beirut during the 1960s and 1970s: Shaping identity

Monique Bellan (Orient-Institut Beirut/Max Weber Stiftung, Germany)

When Gallery One (1963-1976) opened in Beirut, private art galleries were still rare and exhibitions mostly taking place in hotel lobbies, cultural centres, or university art departments. Gallery One, contrary to what the name suggests, was not the first gallery in Beirut, but rather the “first of its kind”. Founded by Helen and Yusuf al-Khal, the gallery focused on Lebanese and Arab artists who were part of a rising art movement. The gallery’s mission was to provide a frame for the increasing artistic production and to introduce artists of various backgrounds and styles to a public that was getting more interested in acquiring artworks. At the same time, the gallery wanted to connect to other art capitals worldwide. As such its identity was clearly rooted in the local and regional artistic production but with an international outreach. The gallery was not only a space for art but for various cultural activities and exchange. Another gallery operating in a similar spirit was Contact Gallery (1972-1975, 1977), founded and run by Waddah Faris, César Nammour, and Mireille Tabet. The featured artists were mainly Lebanese and Arab, who often also exhibited at Gallery One. Contact Gallery was a platform for exchange among artists, writers, and intellectuals. While Gallery One demarcates the beginning of a new era of galleries in Lebanon, Contact Gallery continues these efforts by highlighting “contact” as its driving force. This contribution focuses on galleries as spaces for artistic and intellectual exchange and their role in shaping an avant-gardist Lebanese-Arab identity.

Living traditions of Shuiji Town, Fujian. Pottery making and Tea in cultural perspective.

Giacomo Caruso (Xiamen University, China)

Pottery making, the traditional Jian Yao ware, and the much appreciated Wuyishan tea from the nearby mountain region, shape and determine deeply the living habits of the inhabitants of Shuiji town and surroundings. In this isolated region, albeit it is only a short distance from major commercial and urban hubs, Jian ware making was reintroduced in the late 1970s from Japan, thanks to a few individuals' courage and government's contribution. My research focuses on the rigorous technique and discipline and great dexterity that make possible the high quality tea vessels of Master Xiong Zhonggui's workshop. A discourse on value in craftsmanship will be explored here, with a stress on formal and informal tea rituals of appreciation that are still much common in this cultural niche.

Sammeln an den Fundstätten – Funde aus dem Nordwestkaukasus im Berliner Museum für Islamische Kunst

Sujatha Chandrasekaran (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Germany)

Als die Kaiserlichen Museen zu Berlin im frühen 20. Jahrhundert große Ankäufe von Kunstgegenständen aus Südrussland betätigten, kamen auch einige Objekte aus dieser Region in die Islamische Abteilung. Zu diesen zählen wunderschöne Gefäße aus Glas sowie Goldschmuck, Zierrat, Keramikgefäße und Kupfergegenstände. Der sehr gute oder gar hervorragende Zustand der Objekte ist den Fundumständen zu verdanken.

Obwohl die Erwerbung der Kunstobjekte über Privatsammler erfolgte, die ihre Sammlungen selber vor Ort zusammentrugen, wird in der Berliner Präsentation dieser Funde wenig auf ihre nähere Provenienz eingegangen. Dennoch ist diese bei näherer Recherche zumindest teilweise zu ermitteln. Es handelt sich fast ausschließlich um Grabfunde aus Grabhügeln, die in dem Nordwestkaukasus lokalisiert werden. Diese wurden um die Jahrhundertwende ausgegraben und waren den jeweiligen Sammlern bzw. Verkäufern gut bekannt.

In diesem Beitrag werde ich die nordkaukasischen Stücke der Islamischen Sammlung vorstellen und auf ihre näheren Fund- und Erwerbungsstände eingehen. Es folgt eine Vorstellung der Kulturen, die diese Gräber anlegten und deren materieller Kultur in unterschiedlichen Phasen des Mittelalters. Eine nähere Betrachtung des kulturellen Austausches der Kaukasusvölker zu dieser Zeit sowie Vergleiche der Funde mit ähnlichen Stücken aus anderen Sammlungen, gibt Auskunft über Kontakte und Begegnungen innerhalb des Kaukasus sowie über den Kaukasus hinaus bis sogar nach Mesopotamien.

A Study of The Illustrations of Tuhfat Al-Mawazine Liman Araad Al-Riyasa Min Ahl Al-Qawanin's Manuscript at The Egyptian National Library

Dr. Rehab Ibrahim Ahmed ElSiedy (Cairo University, Egypt)

The Egyptian National Library "Dar Al-Kottob Al-Masryyia", located at Bab al-Khalq in Cairo, it has a special copy of a military manuscript, titled: "Tuhfat Al-Mawazine Liman Araad Al-Riyasa Min Ahl Al-Qawanin", composed by Muhamed AlTaher binHasan AlShatby AlHanfy AlTunsi during the reign of the prince of Tunisia Muhammed Sadiq in 1854/1275 according to the details in the library, its registration number is 98 Furūssiya. It contains 460 papers with 50 illustrations, which were done by Muhammed Sadeq Basha shahīyr.

This study aims to suggest another date for this manuscript as it is noticed another date on its first papers, additionally, it aims to highlight the historical and artistic importance of this manuscript, and how the paintings fit with the text. Furthermore, it is important to refer to the condition of this manuscript before and after the pomp explosion in front of the main police station of Cairo and effected on both the Islamic art museum and Dar Al-Kottob Al-Masryyia -at Bab al-Khalq, as it caused the damage and harm of some papyrus and manuscripts which Tuhfat Al-Mawazine was one of them.

Responding to Climate: Study of Some Badqiir examples in Persian architecture through Qajar paintings

Rehab ElSiedy (Cairo University, Egypt)

The climate considers one of the important aspects which effect on the design and chosen elements at any building. Badqiir is an example of the architecture responding of climate condition, this element widespread in the regions which distinguished of hot weather and high temperature during summer, like Iran and gulf regions. It is known also as wind catcher and wind tower.

Badqiir is noticed as important architectural element through some Qajar paintings on many media (manuscripts, oil paintings, lacquer, and etc...). As a result of that, the paper aims to highlight the reasons of the increase of depicting the Badqiir in the Qajar painting and its different types, additionally, the paper aims to study its construction and the way it works within the different types of buildings.

Ilkhanid Tiles from Takht-e Soleyman - A Fresh Look on Types, Materials and Techniques

Ute Franke (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Deutschland; Institut für Vorderasiatische Archäologie, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany; Department of Objects Conservation and Archaeometry, Art University of Isfahan, Iran; Institute of Oriental Studies, University of Bamberg, Germany; Rathgen-Forschungslabor, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Germany)

Takht-e Soleyman is located in a spectacular landscape on a remote mountain plateau in north-western Iran. Excavations by the German Archaeological Institute uncovered, among other occupations, an Ilkhanid summer palace, built most likely between 1265 and 1274. To this day, the wall tiles from the palace constitute a unique collection from a secular Ilkhanid building in terms of numbers and diversity.

The paper provides an overview of tile types found at the site and summarizes the results of archaeometric analyses on bodies, glazes, colourants and adhesives, focussing on lajvardina and the hitherto little-noted underglaze-painted tiles. These analyses provide information about applied materials and techniques, and the production processes, supplementing macroscopic technological and stylistic classifications. In a longer perspective, comparisons with vessels from Takht-e Soleyman and other sites offer the opportunity to investigate continuity and change in ceramic manufacturing and design from a scientific and art historical perspective.

The Tidal Gods: religious and secular social imaginaries in Sundarbans' Loukik debotas

Titas Ganguly (Freie Universität Berlin, Germany; Jadavpur University Kolkata, India)

The secularisation debate since the early nineties have often been traced to the rise of anthropocentric social policy, science and technology in the industrial West (Lyon and Taylor, 2010). Similarly, discussion about post-secular futures, while founded on delicate “social imaginaries”, can hardly deny the undergrowing logic of anthropocentric social organization (Taylor, 2007). With the foundation and consolidation of modern nation-states, such anthropocentric imaginaries have informed ‘development’ imperatives across the world, more remarkably so in postcolonial states like India. In this paper, we focus on the region of Sundarbans and the northern margins of the Bay of Bengal. Our examination is based on the case of *Bonbibi* and *DokkhinRai*, relatively ‘modern’ deities or “*loukik debotas*” worshipped as protectors of the world’s largest mangrove vegetation and all its inhabitants. This duo serves as an instance of multiple liminalities; between animist narratives and modern religious rituals; Hindu and Islamic cultural synergies since medieval ages and negotiations between the anthropocentric arenas of ‘religious’ and ‘secular’ on the one hand and anthropogenic climate change on the other. Working with primary and secondary data sources, our research would also dwell on the twin phenomenon of communalization and sanskritization of southern West Bengal’s electoral politics and comment on the posthumanist moment in Sundarban’s religious ecology. That the twin deities represent important religious markers and the reserve itself is its secular, significant counterpart (a UNESCO World heritage site) lead us to the concluding commentary on parallels between religious, secular and post-secular “heritage-making” in the Global South (Basak, 2018).

From Representation to Presence: Heritage, Performing Arts, and the Polyphonic Islamic Art Museum

Philip Geisler (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz - Max-Planck-Institut)

Since the early 2000s, Islamic art museums across the globe have reorganized their permanent displays or have been newly constructed. Many of them have extended their activities of possessing, conserving, and displaying objects to present immaterial forms of culture. The objective of this paper is to trace the genealogy of how dance, music, performance art, and spoken word have become a part of Islamic art museum programs in Europe and North America and to suggest some interpretive approaches of how this has begun to transform museum institutions. I first suggest that the shift towards performing arts has been entangled with the decentralization of art historical epistemologies, the debates on the institutionalization of immaterial heritage in the 1990s, and the increased presence of Islamic music and Sufi dance in events organized in the United States in the aftermaths of 9/11. The paper then presents performing arts programs, particularly music formats, which institutions including the Aga Khan Museum (Toronto), the Metropolitan Museum (New York), the Museo de la Alhambra (Granada), and the Berlin-based Museum für Islamische Kunst have recently developed. Considering this departure from object-based representationalism, I discuss the extent to which these multi-sensory displays of human-centered and embodied practices can help to reconstitute museum narratives through the navigation between humanization and discourses of art, material culture, and heritage. I conclude by arguing that these shifts are indicative of how museums as social and political spaces can function outside of the modern, ocular-centric paradigms controlled by the origins of the institution.

Photography and Cultural Heritage: Ernst Herzfeld's Blueprint Collection at the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin

Elahe Helbig (Universität Zürich, Switzerland)

This paper examines the photographic collection of the German archaeologist Ernst Herzfeld at the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin. It focusses on a set of blueprints reproduction with motifs from Persepolis, Pasargade and Persian rock tombs taken in between 1904 and 1934 during Herzfeld's archaeological expeditions. As a leading figure in ancient Near Eastern and Iranian studies during the first half of the twentieth century Ernst Herzfeld produced these images for purposes of further studies, research and publications. Just like most of the 3850 glass negatives that constitute the centrepiece of Herzfeld's photographic collection these images have been reprinted and replicated using the blueprint method. The discovery of cyanotype (blueprint) in 1842 commenced the third practical means of lasting image production after daguerreotype in 1839 and calotype in 1840. The increasing commodification and commercialisation of light-sensitive papers for blueprints during the 1870s advanced cyanotype to a method of replicating photographs over the course of the coming decades. For its simplicity and low material costs the cyanotype printing process was also Herzfeld's reproductive choice for his extensive glass negatives and cut films that documented prehistoric artefacts, monuments and archaeological sites of the Near East, including Iran. Elaborating on the historical framework and distinctive particularities of the cyanotype process this paper discusses how Herzfeld use blueprints for the purpose of further research and how his photographic collection enabled, promoted and disseminated awareness of Persian cultural heritage in the early twentieth century.

The Integration of the Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin into the International Research Landscape 1945–1990

Christopher Hölzel (Freie Universität Berlin, Germany)

The Vorderasiatisches Museum Berlin has one of the largest collections from ancient Mesopotamia worldwide. Nearly 500.000 objects and over 30.000 clay tablets from excavations in Zincirli, Babylon, Assur and Uruk, as well as the famous architectural reconstructions of the Ishtar Gate and the Processional Way in the Pergamonmuseum form the collection.

Since its foundation in 1899, the history of the museum also reflects a piece of German history. As one of the few collections of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, the Vorderasiatisches Museum was not affected by the relocations related to WWII. As a museum without a "twin" institution in West-Berlin, the building and the whole collection remained in the territory of the SBZ and GDR.

This lecture asks about the scientific structures and networks in which the Vorderasiatisches Museum was involved from 1945–1990. How were archaeological excavations in Iraq and Syria, loans to non-socialist countries, international research cooperations and scientific exchange organized under the conditions of the socialist state?

Based on analyses of the museum's activities, the individual agency of the staff and the role of the Vorderasiatisches Museum in the GDR, questions are raised about the role of Marxist-Leninist ideology and its influence on the interpretation of Mesopotamian societies and on the possibilities of museum work in the GDR.

Between Cultural Activism and Commerce: The Cultural Infrastructure of Beirut During The Lebanese Civil War

Cigdem Ivren (Otto-Friedrich Universität Bamberg, Germany)

Beirut became known as the “Paris of the Middle East” in the 1960s as cultural activities were on the rise, leading to a series of new openings of galleries and other exhibition platforms. Labelled as the cultural capital of the Arab World, the city experienced the flourishing of Lebanese art and art criticism throughout the 1960s, its so-called “Golden Age”. Despite a growing body of literature on Lebanese art, however, surveys evoke the impression that cultural production came to a halt with the beginning of the civil war in 1975 that had not recovered up to the post-war period of the 1990s.

In this paper, I analyse how the Lebanese civil war restricted, re-shaped and nurtured art production in the divided city of Beirut. The main topic of this paper is the reconstruction of the cultural and institutional infrastructure in view of demographic changes during this understudied period. I argue that the relocation and loss of some of the prominent galleries shifted art discourses from the mainly bourgeois commercial spaces to non-commercial and informal spaces. This shift led to the emergence of new media such as installation art and paved the way for conceptualist art practices and public art. This analysis thus forms the foundation for an evaluation of cultural actors and institutions and to what extent they influenced market structures and trajectories in Lebanese art. It is also expected that these insights serve as a basis for further research and reconsideration of post-war art in and from Lebanon.

Modern and contemporary 'Islamic' art at the British Museum: a paradoxical curatorial choice

Constance Lucienne Jame (University of Heidelberg, Germany)

Since the 1980s, the British Museum has been a pioneer in acquiring works by modern and contemporary artists from the Middle East and North Africa and their diaspora. Following these acquisitions, from 1991 the artworks began to be exhibited within the Islamic art gallery until the creation of an entire section dedicated to it in the 2018 refurbished gallery.

The aim of this paper is to present the policies and politics of collecting and displaying these artworks and to interrogate their belonging to the field of Islamic art history. In the context of globalization, post-colonial, and post-secular societies, displaying modern and contemporary artists under the label Islamic is giving them an 'Islamic identity' and as such defining the 'Islamic essence' of modern and contemporary art. First, through the analysis of the artworks and artists presented I will interrogate the label and definition given to it and confront it to the changing approach of Islamic art historians. Are these artworks part of Middle Eastern, Islamic, Arab, or global art? Then, I will demonstrate that this curatorial choice not only challenges the 19th century Orientalist Islamic art definition, but also contests the assumption that modern 'Islamic' art was born ex nihilo.

However, I conclude by arguing that the museum is creating an 'Islamic essence', and as such defining which artworks and regions from the Islamic world are allowed to be categorized as 'Islamic'. This label becomes a 'burden of representation' for the artists, despite of the recognition of a global art history.

Die Objekte aus Raghes/Rayy und ihre Wege in die Islamische Abteilung der Berliner Museen

Stefanie Janke (keine, Deutschland)

Ungefähr 15 km südlich der iranischen Hauptstadt Teheran liegt Rayy, auch bekannt als Raghes. Die von dort zumeist aus „Grabungen“ ans Tageslicht gekommenen Objekte, darunter vor allem die sehr begehrten Keramiken, die größtenteils aus dem 10. bis 13. Jahrhundert stammen, gelangten auf unterschiedlichsten Wegen in die Islamische Abteilung der Berliner Museen. Der größte Teil der Erwerbungen erfolgte in der Zeit während des französischen Grabungsmonopols in Persien von 1895 bis 1927. In diesem Zeitraum versuchten aber auch andere Mächte Fuß in dem Land und der Region zu fassen, wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen auszuführen und sich prestigeträchtige iranische Kunstobjekte zu sichern. Durch ein internationales Netzwerk von Akteur:innen, welches sich aus einem komplexen Geflecht von Sammler:innen, Diplomat:innen, Museumsmitarbeiter:innen, internationalen Kunsthändler:innen sowie der lokalen Bevölkerung vor Ort zusammensetzte, gelangten die Objekte in öffentliche Museen und private Sammlungen im Ausland.

Laut den Erwerbungsunterlagen der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin ist bei dieser Gruppe von Keramiken und Artefakten, die sich heute im Museum für Islamischen Kunst befinden, die Herkunftsangabe Raghes/Rayy vermerkt. Gelegentlich sind diese jedoch auch mit einem Fragezeichen versehen. Lässt sich hier die Provenienz immer eindeutig verifizieren? Welche unterschiedlichen Erwerbungsarten gab es? Wie war das Netzwerk der Akteur:innen organisiert? Wer waren die involvierten Personen und welche Funktion führten sie aus? Welchen Zweck verfolgten sie für sich? Lassen sich diese Erkenntnisse auch in den aktuellen Diskurs zu „kolonialen Kontexten“ einbetten?

Aktuelle Forschungen zu Erwerbungen der Islamische Kunstabteilung der Staatlichen Museen in Berlin (heute: Museum für Islamische Kunst)

Wanda Lehmann (1: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Deutschland; unabhängige Forschende; Technische Universität Berlin)

Museen sind heute bestrebt, sich mit ihrer Forschungs- und Sammlungsgeschichte kritisch auseinander zu setzen. Stand bis Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts die Erforschung der Herstellungs- und primären Nutzungskontexte der Objekte im Vordergrund, liegt der Fokus nun auf ihren Erwerbungskontexten.

Die Verdienste der Persönlichkeiten, die die Sammlung des Museums für Islamische Kunst wesentlich geprägt haben, beschäftigen Mitarbeiter:innen des Museums schon lange. Besonders zu erwähnen sind dabei Julia Gonnella und Jens Kröger, die grundlegende Beiträge zu Friedrich Sarre, dem begeisterten Sammler islamischer Kunst und erstem Direktor des Museums, beigesteuert haben. Gisela Helmecke wiederum widmete sich auch weniger prominenten, aber nicht minder aktiven Sammlern, u.a. Alexandre Merle de Massonneau.

Es lohnt sich jedoch immer ein frischer Blick auf die Sammlungsbestände, der zu neuen Fragestellungen führt. In diesem Panel werden daher neue Perspektiven auf die Erwerbungskontexte vorgestellt. Der engere Fokus auf die von Sarre erworbene Holzsammlung erlaubt dabei tiefergehende Einblicke in seine Erwerbungspraktiken im Ausland. Am Beispiel der von Massonneau erworbenen Objekte zeigt sich, dass die Sammler:innen nicht zwingend nur islamische Kunst sammelten, was die Betrachtung von Sammlungsaktivitäten über Museumsgrenzen hinweg lohnenswert macht. Anhand der durch verschiedenste Sammler in Raghes/Rayy (Iran) erworbenen Keramik lassen sich wiederum Aussagen über internationale Händlernetzwerke treffen. Insgesamt zeigt sich, dass auch ein frischer Blick auf altbekannte Archivalien lohnt.

A Mini Fire Walking Ritual in Singapore: Hindu Religious Heritage and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Natalie Lang (Max Weber Centre for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies, University of Erfurt, Germany)

"This year, I am not going to participate in the fire walking". The reason for Rama to not participate in a Hindu festival that has been of utmost importance to him over the past decades lies in his dissatisfaction with how the festival is organized under the pandemic circumstances in Singapore in 2020, wherein a ritual cycle that would usually take three months is condensed into one month with 50 instead of around 4000 participants. His deep sadness about not being able to worship the goddess as usual is combined with fear that once the festival is organized in such a micro version, the state authorities might take it as a precedent to reduce the festival to a similar size in the following years. Rama's perspective, which is shared by others, stands in contrast to those who see an urgent need to conduct the festival at least in condensed form. This paper, which is based on anthropological fieldwork from 2019-2021, takes concerns about a festival being conducted under Covid-related safety measures as a starting point to address questions about Hindu religious heritage and claims of recognition in Singapore. The pandemic is not the first circumstance that brought changes to the Singaporean Hindu fire walking ritual. As an important part of Singapore's Hindu religious heritage, featuring, for example, in the Chinatown Heritage Centre, the Hindu fire walking festival has seen continuous adaptations to the urban-national context of Singapore.

Performing Activism: Whiskey Chow (b. 1989) and the Queer Potential of Performance Art
Maximilian Langefeld (University of Oxford, United Kingdom)

Over the course of the last 40 years, Chinese performance art, in its various nuances and manifestations, has gained cultural currency in China and beyond. Whiskey Chow (b. 1989), a London-based Chinese performance artist, queer activist, and drag king is emblematic of a young generation of emerging artists who push the boundaries of established media and discourses in new directions. In her interdisciplinary body of works, Whiskey Chow critically reflects on failed and hierarchised masculinities in capitalist societies, addresses the desires, hopes and despairs of queer individuals, and complicates the understanding of identity discourses from a diasporic perspective.

While scholarly debates have often focused on the role of the male body in Chinese performance art, spectatorship dynamics or site-specificity, this paper is concerned with the possibilities and limitations of performance art as an effective yet ephemeral tool for queer activism. It examines the ways in which various identity categories such as ethnicity, class, and gender intersect in the artist's work and how the performance of a female/queer masculinity gains subversive potential. Based on a critical analysis of three of Whiskey Chow's recent performances, *Unhomeliness* (2018), *M.A.C.H.O* (2019), and *The Moon is Warmer than the Sun* (2019-2020), this paper aims to expand the current scholarship and provide new insights into Chinese performance art at the intersection of art history, queer studies, and cultural activism.

Sarres Erwerbungsnetzwerke im Ausland

Wanda Lou Lehmann (Museum für Islamische Kunst Berlin, Deutschland)

Erwerbungen vor Ort waren für die europäischen Museen von großer Bedeutung. Teilweise begaben sich die Museumsadministratoren und -angestellte selbst auf Forschungsreisen, auch um Erwerbungen zu tätigen; Kosten, Zeit und Aufwand sparerer war es jedoch, stetige Erwerbungen durch ein zuverlässiges Netzwerk vor Ort zu sichern. Diese Kontakte hatten außerdem den großen Vorteil, dass sie durch ihren ständigen Wohnsitz vor Ort den Kunstmarkt und das sonstige Geschehen sehr viel intensiver und konstanter beobachten konnten als Reisenden dies möglich gewesen wäre. Erhielt man Kenntnis von einer vielversprechenden Raubgrabung oder tauchten besonders seltene Stücke auf dem Kunstmarkt auf, so wurde dem Museum umgehend berichtet und es konnte sofort reagiert werden. Eine wichtige Rolle spielten hierfür die Botschaftsangehörigen in den jeweiligen Ländern. Die durch ihren diplomatischen Dienst garantierte Immunität ausnutzend, waren darüber hinaus einige Konsularagenten europäischer und amerikanischer Botschaften selbst im Kunsthandel und der nicht immer ganz legalen Objektakquirierung aktiv.

Die europäischen Museen und damit auch die Berliner Sammlung für Islamische Kunst profitierten jedoch nicht nur von Kontakten, die vermeintlich zufällig vor Ort lebten. Auffällig ist, dass viele der Sammler vor Ort in diplomatischer, wirtschaftlicher oder wissenschaftlicher Mission – im Kontext quasi-kolonialer Vereinnahmungs- und Aneignungsbestrebungen – die nationalen Interessen ihres Landes vor Ort zu vertreten suchten.

Der Beitrag widmet sich eben diesen Personen welche als Europäer im damaligen Osmanischen Reich lebend den Sammlungsaufbau der Berliner Holzsammlung Islamischer Kunst unter Friedrich Sarre unterstützten und ermöglichten. Namentlich sind dies Bernhard Moritz, Martha Koch, Julius Löytved sowie Max Herz Bey und das Comité de Conservaton des Monumets de l'Art Arabe.

Portuguese Hindus' religious heritage between tradition and innovation

Inês Lourenço (CRIA Centre for Research in Anthropology, Portugal)

Hindus established in Portugal more than 40 years ago. Along this period the practiced Hinduism revealed conservatism as well as innovation. The long term ethnographic research among Hindu communities in Portugal for the last 20 years acknowledges the complexity from the connection between religion, gender and migration.

Based on an ongoing research project on cultural heritage of the Portuguese Hindus, this paper explores the connection between religion and heritage, central to the identity process of this community. The collection of objects and cultural and religious practices, in the context of a museum exhibition, reveals the centrality of Hinduism as an identity marker. At the same time, it shows that migration experience also originated new ways of practicing the faith, from the contact with the Portuguese religious context, as exemplified by the devotion of Portuguese Hindus to Our Lady of Fatima.

Moreover, the analysis of this ethnographic and museological project on Portuguese Hindus' cultural heritage also discloses proximity and tensions between two different cultural and religious backgrounds, and allows us to inquire how they position themselves between the religious pluralism experienced in Portugal and the ideology of contemporary Hindu fundamentalism.

The Riverine Landscape of the Tigris in Samarra and Baghdad from the Eighth to Eleventh Centuries
Safa Mahmoudian (Institut für Iranistik | Institute of Iranian Studies, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften | Austrian Academy of Sciences)

The rivers of Mesopotamia were intimately related to the lives of the local population, their architecture, urban structure, economy, and agriculture. In the Abbasid capital cities of Baghdad and Samarra, this strong relationship to the rivers, especially the Tigris, is also evident in the daily life of the royal court, as well as in the layout and orientation of the palaces. Although the vital role that the Tigris in Baghdad and Samarra played has never been denied, it has been primarily viewed as a main source of water and a transportation artery that gave access to the major water carriers in the region. However, the river and its riverfront as an animated urban landscape, and the ways that it was related to the land, have been largely neglected in scholarship on the topography and architecture of these two cities.

By utilising contemporary textual and archaeological evidence, this paper will shed light on this under-examined aspect of medieval Mesopotamia. It will particularly focus on the relationship between the Abbasid court and the Tigris, and will investigate the different ways in which the riverside palaces and gardens related to the river, the land, and those who populated both. By comparing the riverfronts of Samarra and Baghdad, it will also examine how and to what extent the topographical difference at these two cities led to variations in palace and garden design in terms of their relation to the river.

Artist Studios as Places of Encounter: Georges Cyr and Guvder's studios in pre-war Beirut

Nadia von Maltzahn (Orient-Institut Beirut)

Painting in Lebanon started to evolve from portraiture and icon painting to include more diverse genres in the early twentieth century. However, Lebanese society did not yet consider being an artist a profession. The Académie libanaise des Beaux-Arts was only founded in 1937, there were still few public exhibitions and art criticism was largely nascent. It was into this environment that artist Georges Cyr (1881-1964) arrived in Beirut in 1934. His studio became a central meeting place for artists and intellectuals, and is regarded to have played an important role in Lebanon's early art world. Who decided to take up painting and how did the painters end up in Cyr's studio? In the 1950s, the American University of Beirut set up an art department, the number of exhibitions increased and Beirut was slowly turning into a regional hub for the arts and intellectual life. Between 1963 and 1973, the Armenian painter Guvder (1923-2016) opened an academy of painting in his studio, that served as an important place of learning and encounter. This paper will explore the significance of Cyr and Guvder's studios in Lebanon's artistic landscape by looking at the trajectories of a selection of artists who frequented it. Locating the role of the two studios in the artists' careers enables us to understand in what way the artistic and intellectual exchange that took place in an informal place formed the art world and contributed to the shaping of a profession.

The role of Dar el Fan in the making of Lebanon's art world

Flavia Elena Malusardi (Università Cà Foscari, Italy, Orient-Institut Beirut)

The paper explores the cultural panorama in pre-war Lebanon. In particular, it focuses on Dar al-Fann wa al-Adab (House of Art and Literature), a space active in Beirut between 1967 and 1976. Initiated by art advocate Janine Rubeiz with the aim of bringing art closer to the public, Dar el Fan was a hub for creativity and an avant-garde catalyst for artists and intellectuals. Throughout its lifespan, it held around 240 events ranging from music to exhibitions and book presentations. Founded by private initiative, it was unattached to any official body and provided a space for open discussion and creativity.

Through the analysis of archival material, interviews with cultural practitioners who collaborated with the space, and the reconstruction of a wider net of linkages between cultural institutions, the paper investigates the understudied role of Dar el Fan in the shaping of Lebanon's art world. It is argued that the relevance of Dar el Fan extends beyond exhibiting art and supporting culture; it constitutes an arena for understanding the social and historical landscape where a new Lebanese identity was negotiated in the aftermath of colonial rule. Contributing to the writing of the largely unwritten region's art history, the study indicates a more comprehensive conception of the activity of Dar el Fan.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE THREAD- NARRATIVE TALES OF A LAMENTING CRAFT

Rishab Manocha (Pearl Academy, India)

A community's identity is also formed through the practise of craft which becomes its linguistic medium of communication. 'Suf' needlework, a type of embroidery unique to refugees from low-caste families of Kutch, became a way for them to identify themselves as a community of craftspeople. As a means of survival, 'Suf' needlework was initially not a commercial activity, but the requirement of commerce and a sense of self-identity made it possible. After the devastating Covid-19 Pandemic, the embroiders of Sumrasar went above and beyond the call of duty to tell their narratives of survival using appliqué and embroidery-based textiles. There were narratives about the disaster, death and dearth . Applique and embroidery are used to document the craftsmen' journeys toward self-determination both as a group and individually in this paper which also attempts to ascertain how artisan communities in India's Kutch district have developed self-innovative solutions to the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. While examining the negative impact on their lives, the paper also aims at providing some optimism for future innovation. As a result of the epidemic, artisans have been forced to take a number of steps to preserve their craft's cultural heritage while at the same time keeping a somewhat metaphorical approach to masterpieces created by them in isolation and solitude. The "New Normal" of the current day is a life experience in which a collapse is followed by a rise. Artisan communities have been affected by the epidemic, but each has had a particular influence on their livelihood.

The Discourse of Religious Cultural Heritage in Syria: Historical Developments of the Legal Discourse

Mohamad Meqdad (Erasmus University Rotterdam - Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication, Netherlands)

This study aims to analyse the historical developments and the discourse of inclusion and restriction of Religious Cultural Heritage (RCH) in the Antiquities Laws that were issued or implemented in the land of the current Syrian Arab Republic, from the mid of the eighteenth century onwards. It will examine the developments of the Ottoman antiquities laws, from the 1869 decree to the 'antiquitisation' of RCH in the laws of 1906.

Under the French mandate of Syria and Lebanon, RCH was subjugated to the newly developed antiquities laws in 1926 and 1933. The state striped individuals and religious communities of 'their' ownership of RCH. The normative state-ownership was allowed to be contested legally, however, before the common law courts instead of the private law. Furthermore, any legal challenge to the state's expropriation had to be based on 'convincing' documentations that had to be provided by the original owners, individuals and religious communities. The state motivated participation in RCH protection by encouraging religious communities to subsidise these works.

The post-independent Syrian state expanded the antiquities laws further by including the historical mosques, churches, and any other places of worships under their jurisdictions in 1947 and 1963. RCH buildings were allowed to carry on conducting their original functionalities, without any changes, under their managing administrations, which were responsible for any limited minimal maintenance and under the close supervision of the antiquities authorities. The antiquities authorities has always had the final say and the upper hand in handling any preservation works of such buildings.

Frontispieces of Islamic Cosmographies, 14th-16th century

Bilha Moor (University of Denver, United States of America)

This paper discusses continuity and change in frontispieces of Islamic illustrated cosmographies produced in the 14th-16th century, mainly in Iran and the Ottoman Empire. Islamic frontispieces of different texts from botany and astronomy to history and romantic poetry were discussed in scholarly literature. Certain topoi were identified, most commonly, the author portrait and the princely patron. In this study, I examine the relationship between the subject of the frontispieces and the content of the cosmographies. First, I argue that in certain cases the frontispieces reveal that these manuscripts were used as books of popular medicine. Second, I show the relationship between frontispieces of Islamic cosmographies and European natural histories.

A Tale of Two Plants: Jumana Manna's Foragers (2021) and the artistic representation of contrasting narratives in Israel/Palestine

Giacomo Paci (Universität zu Köln, Germany)

Contrasting narratives in Israel/Palestine set the rhythm of collective life. On the one side, the system of laws and state-sanctioned lifestyles. On the other, Palestinian contestation. Against this conflictual background, visual artists are in a unique position to imagine alternative scenarios and propose potential counternarratives for the territory. What are their representational strategies and how do they deal with the central issue of biased perspectives?

In Jumana Manna's video-art project *Foragers* (2021), two plants are tasked with embodying conflicting narratives. Israeli officials claim that 'akkoub and za'atar are going extinct and outlaw foraging them. Palestinians denounce this as a strategy to appropriate the land and force them to rely on Kibbutz plantations. The movie juxtaposes interviews with Israeli farmers and Palestinian foragers. Oral history thus becomes an artistic strategy of representation, engaging with the long-standing academic debate on its validity as source of historical truth. In parallel segments, the artist employs archival footage challenging its supposed neutrality and revealing its political nature.

Contextualizing Manna's work in a landscape of similar Palestinian artists, this paper emphasizes the trends of archival and oral-history research to generate counternarratives: from Alexandra Sophia Handal's collections of displacement stories to Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme's future-oriented investigations to Taysir Batniji's sentimental assemblages of house portraits. Taken together with this growing artistic body, Manna's project reveals the role of the twin tools of interviews and archives as necessary though biased sources.

Rezeption Iranischer konstitutionellen Revolution in der amerikanischen Presse.

Elika Palenzona (Universität Bern, Switzerland)

Die Konstitutionelle Revolution 1906 in Iran wurde weit über die Landesgrenzen hinaus wahrgenommen. Die liberale US-amerikanische Zeitung New York Tribune berichtet von 1906 bis 1911 in mehr als 200 Beiträgen über die politische Entwicklung des Landes und der absoluten Monarchie des Muzaffar al-Din Schah (1853-1907) bis zur Revolution und kommentiert den normalen Alltag bis zu den politischen Geschehnissen. Vielen Berichten waren Bilder von Photographen beigegeben, die zu den ersten professionellen Photographen des Iran gehören. Welcher Aussagegehalt den Photographien in der New York Tribune zukommt und wie die Fotos interpretiert werden können, ist der Gegenstand dieses Referats. Die Berichterstattung und die Kommentare sagen viel über die politische Situation der Länder in der MENA-Region Anfangs des 20. Jahrhunderts aus aber auch über die Haltung der USA dem Iran jener Zeit gegenüber.

Patrolling the Hidden Land: an Exploration of the Baba Harbhajan Singh Oral Tradition in the Sikkimese Borderland

Sneha Roychoudhury (Ambedkar University Delhi, India)

Historical enquiries on shrines have revealed complex relationships of communities and sacred geographies around them. Recent historiography has aimed to look at the sacred beyond binaries of secular and religious. It interrogates social enquiries that deny the agency of divinity in historical processes beyond the framework of politicisation. The limiting methodology of alienating the religious from the public sphere to perform a commitment to secular histories has been criticised in the works of those like Neeladri Bhattacharya and Dipesh Chakravarty while studying the postcolonial unit. Yogesh Snehi, in his work on sufi shrines in Punjab, refers to them as the “archive of the everyday”. A shrine such as the Baba Harbhajan Singh Mandir which straddles the East Sikkimese borderland, roughly eight kilometres from the highly contested Nathu La, is a study, therefore, in intersecting roles along a porous and dynamic borderland. An army shrine that acts both as a visual and social archive of sacral practices and oral traditions, the Baba Mandir has emerged in the public consciousness, more at the centre of the nation and partly on the periphery, as a symbol of protection in a frontier with a legacy of conflict. A shrine space such as this draws from existing pools of oral cultural tropes to construct the “warrior-saint” whose legend then takes ingenious forms in the borderland space. The Baba Mandir’s oral tradition may be placed and studied for how the state may inject itself into the psyche of the frontier and the centre and how many different forms such constructions may take to serve a multiplicity of interests.

Introduction: Religion, heritage and the 'post-secular age': Insights from Asia and the Middle East

Rebecca Sauer (Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Germany; Centro em Rede de Investigação em Antropologia (CRIA) ISCTE-IUL, Lisbon, Portugal)

Scholars in the fields of religious/heritage studies have demonstrated that heritage and religion respectively, are crucial identity makers and markers. As distinct systems of adherence they appear to be always potentially in conflict. However, heritage and religion are as well similar constituents of identity (see Meyer and de Witte 2013). Heritage-making resembles a kind of sacralization, because it selects fragments of culture and places them beyond the ordinary (Bendix 2009). Like religious objects/sites, then, heritage things are made to stand as icons of nations or minority communities: they signal in the present and bequeath to the future specific crafted historical narratives. In the introduction to the panel "Religion, heritage and the post-secular age" we pinpoint the debate about similarities and frictions between heritage and religion. Drawing on specific case-studies from Asia and the Middle East we try to illuminate

- ways in which religious actors negotiate the significance of religious heritage within and beyond diverse (post) secular frameworks; and
- the extent to which, from these regions, the religious transforms and/or informs (post) secular heritage discourses and vice versa.

The debate around religion and heritage and the insights gathered from our case-studies will be then linked to a wider question about the notion of a post-secular age and related concepts, such as multiple secularities. What do the interactions of religion and heritage tell us about the post-secular (as analytical category and/or the apparent reemergence of religion in our times)?

Representation of Death in Iranian Constitutional Revolution Postcards

Saeedeh Setayesh (University of Zurich, Switzerland)

Some photographs and postcards that have remained from the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911) show executed people or severed heads. During the revolution, the medium of photography was a stimulating factor inviting people to participate in the movement, and in some cases, it was used by both sides, the constitutionalists and the government, as a functional tool. The government published the photographs of the executed liberals to stop the people from absorbing revolutionary ideas, while the constitutionalists used them to convince people to join their cause. Some postcards from this era are particularly famous. Colonel Pissyān's (1892-1921) photograph is one of them: He was a patriot and a constitutionalist who played an important role in the reformation of the Coup d'état of 1921 as well as in World War I before he was killed during Khorāsān Battle. A photograph of his severed head was taken by the Kurdish fighter who had killed him and wanted to send a copy of it to the court in order to show his servitude. A'rif Qazvīnī wrote an elegy for Colonel Pissyān. The photograph, together with the poem, were then turned into a revolutionary postcard by the constitutionalists in order to convey the Colonel's message to the people and present him as a homeland's martyr and a hero rather than as a criminal. Thus, photographs of the severed heads of famous leaders were used by both sides as propaganda during this revolution.

The Material Religious Heritage of the Camellia Sinesis plant (Tea) in China and Taiwan

Kai Shmushko (Tel Aviv University - School of Historical Studies; Leiden University Institute of Area Studies (LIAS))

The paper explores tea as a religious commodity and its role in promoting Buddhism in contemporary China, as the heritage of material Buddhist culture in a Communist atheist state. It presents case studies of the Buddhist Tea Industry; Buddhist communities and monasteries engaging in tea-related activities and entrepreneurship.

Tea has been a significant cultural, and ritualistic element in China since the Tang dynasty, with a close relation to Buddhism; monks saw it as a potential self-cultivation tool. Furthermore, through monasteries networks tea drinking spread from the south to the north of China. Tea culture in monasteries is also present today. Some Buddhist monasteries in China and Taiwan still include tea as a tool for self-cultivation and employ it to attract lay believers. Partially due to the restricting religious policy in China; one of the most common venues for lay Buddhists to create private practice spaces is teahouses.

Another element in this dynamic is the attitude towards Buddhism by the Chinese state. In recent years we are witnessing a dynamic of support and suppression of Buddhism. In terms of support, China promotes some cultural aspects and activities of the Buddhist religion, emphasizing "Buddhism as Culture." The state is stressing Buddhist cultural activities and consumption, rendering Buddhism a tradition instead of religion. Therefore, the paper argues that Buddhist heritage is capsuled in the cultural and material phenomenon of tea. Tea is a resilient, active player in the religious landscape, carrying a two-thousand-year-old heritage to 21st-century Chinese society.

Sikh Museums in India

Kanika Singh (Ashoka University, Sonapat, India, India)

A large number of Sikh museums have been built in independent India. They are unusual, being made up of modern history paintings narrating the stories from the Sikh past (rather than historical artefacts). These stories are well-known in the Sikh community and the paintings are widely available in popular culture and as religious pictures. Moreover, there is a perceptible overlap of the secular and the sacred in Sikh museums: in the religious nature of the display, in the location of the museum (often as part of a sacred landscape), in their sponsorship by religious and government bodies, and in the visitor behaviour (who approach the museum space and the display with great reverence).

This paper examines Sikh museums in India for: (a) the use of the museum form, as distinct from the shrine and popular cultural expressions of Sikh heritage, (b) the uneven relationship of Sikh heritage with Indian heritage. On the one hand, the Sikhs see themselves as proud contributors to the Indian nation, on the other hand, there is a defiance of the Indian/Hindu-majority version of the past and resentment for a lack of recognition of the Sikh contribution to the nation, and (c) their role in contemporary Indian society.

Personified Domes and Sites of Salutation: Embodied Meaning and Sight Territory in the Urban Landscape of the 19th century Iran

Zeinab Tamassoki (Shahid Beheshti University, Iran, Islamic Republic of)

In nineteenth-century-Iran, particular spots were being nominated sites of salutation (Salamgah) for their sights. These were places whence the dome of a shrine became visible either for the first time in the main road toward the city or adjacent to the bast territory in the urban fabric. Travellers could stop and say hello where they first encountered the dome outside of the city, turning that point to a distinct territory called the hill of salutation. Peculiar sequences in the urban fabric framing the dome were also called sites of salutation and consolidated the ritual, too. It is argued that this tradition resulted from a cultural mentality. Iranians regarded the dome as the embodiment of the saint in the city and his alive representation. Taking advantage of the primary sources of Persian travelogues, memoirs, historical photographs and maps of three pilgrimage cities in Iran, I will highlight a hypothesis that this ritual can be linked to the function of bast (refuge), as a site of resolving social conflicts. Basts as distinctive and publicly defined territories were formed according to the visibility of the domes and minarets of these pilgrimage sites. Wherever they started to become visible, the spatial territory of bast could be defined through physical demarcation. A boundary formation that can support the primary argument of this paper, showcasing the personification of the domes turning bast to a sanctum.

The result of this article sheds light on one of the hitherto unstudied Intangible aspects forming the urban landscapes in modern Iran.

A Newly Found Hephthalite Silver Cup

Tadashi Tanabe (Kyoto University, Japan)

The art of the so called Hephthalites or Alkhan Huns is known to be eclectic being composed of Sasanian, Kushano-Sasanian, Gupta-Indian, Kidarite, Greco-Roman and Byzantine artistic elements. Recently a unique, hitherto unknown gilt silver cup was brought to Japan. It is 15.5cm high and weighs 471g. The figures are executed in low relief by repousse work. Although so-called Hephthalite silver bowls and ewers were already known, but not Hephthalite silver cup at all to the best of my knowledge. Therefore, this newly found object is very important to clarify some hitherto-unknown aspects of Hephthalite silverware.

On the body surface are depicted three Hephthalite men struggling with bare hands with wild fierce animals: lion, boar and bull. These figures show Sasanian, Greco-Roman and Byzantine influences. The fighters wear so-called apron shirt worn by Sasanian kings from Shahpur II to Peroz (4th to the late 5th century CE). Their faces remind us of those depicted on several Hephthalite seals.

The most important element of the iconography of this cup is three animals. They are related to the animals killed or captured by Hercules, that are mentioned in the Twelve Labors of this Greek mythological hero. The provenance of this struggling scenes deriving from Hercules Myth might be either Greco-Bactrian Kingdom or Late Roman/Byzantine Empire.

It can be concluded that this gilt silver cup was produced in Afghanistan or adjacent regions under the rule of the Hephthalites or the Alkhan Huns from the 5th to the first half of the 6th century CE.

Faith as intangible heritage: navigating Japanese secularism

Mark Teeuwen (University of Oslo, Norway)

Japan is among the most active players within the field of both domestic and global heritage; the country is known especially as a pioneer of “intangible heritage”, a category that was incorporated in Japanese law as early as 1950. Many of Japan's "cultural properties", both tangible and intangible, contain religious elements; in fact, Japan's first step in heritage policy was an 1897 law for the preservation of shrines and temples. This complicates public heritage management because of the strict separation of state and religion in the 1947 Constitution. Can religious elements receive public support in a manner that does not breach article 89 of that Constitution, which expressly prohibits the use of public money “for the use, benefit, or maintenance of a religious institution or association”?

In this paper, I explore the different ways in which this constitutional limitation is managed in the fields of tangible and intangible heritage. In particular, I describe the methods used to exclude religious elements from intangible cultural properties such as shrine and temple festivals. What are the effects of this exclusion, and how have religious actors reacted to it? How has the place of “faith” or “beliefs” (*shinkō*) changed in the discourse used in heritage applications and descriptions in recent years? Can faith be presented as a “non-religious” cultural tradition that is worthy of preservation as a public intangible cultural property?

Das Mihrab-Mosaik der Großen Moschee von Córdoba und seine Bedeutung

Fernando Valdés Fernández (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain)

Seit ihrem Bau durch al-Hakam al-Mustansir, den zweiten Umayyaden-Kalifen des Westens, beeindruckt die Mihrab-Fassade der Großen Moschee von Córdoba immer wieder durch ihre künstlerische Qualität. In Wirklichkeit handelt es sich jedoch um ein unvollständiges Werk mit einem sehr komplexen und schwer verständlichen ornamentalen Programm. Diese Arbeit ist eine Annäherung an seine Interpretation im Rahmen des archäologischen Projekts, das an dem Denkmal durchgeführt wird.

Monks Touching the Buddha's Feet in Pictorial Narratives of Kuchan Paintings

Fang Wang (Universität Leipzig, Deutschland; Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig)

The article draws attention to a series of narrative pictures centering on the interaction of the Buddha's greatest disciples with the Buddha's feet. These paintings are preserved in the mural decoration of cave monasteries in Kucha, the production of which was flourishing between ca. the 5th and the 9th centuries. The paper discusses the meaning of five stories represented in Kuchan murals, which display individual monks in connection with the Buddha's feet: Kāśyapa healing the Buddha's injured foot, Ānanda weeping for the Buddha's injured foot, Rāhula washing the Buddha's feet, and Kāśyapa or Ānanda respectively touching both feet of the Buddha in the parinirvāṇa scene. The first two motifs have been newly identified by the current author.

The fact that, of the three monks, two are eminent personalities (Kāśyapa and Ānanda, the most important disciples of the Buddha) while Rāhula is the Buddha's biological son, helps to trace the pictorial symbolism of these scenes. They are related to the lineage and legitimation of the Buddha's heirs; the touching of the Buddha's feet is the way to establish and visualize this legitimacy. The worship of the Buddha's feet (Buddhapāda) as an embodiment of the Buddha's and the Dharma's existence is conceived in Kucha by means of narrative scenes; it complements the imagery of the Buddha's footprints (Buddhapāda) prevalent in other centres of the Buddhist world.

Museum-Temple of Buddhism: A Two-Way Heritage Process and China's Buddhism Diplomacy
Shuchen Wang (Turku University, Finland; Jyväskylä University, Finland)

The argument of (de)colonially has little covered the globalisation of museum culture from the West to East Asia. With its white-cube being a symbol of modernity and a public space for civilising rituals, museum is interpreted as a modern temple for secular arts and science. In displaying the authorised heritage discourses for intended identity politics or collective memory, it also serves as a structured platform for the systematic work of cultural (re)engineering or modernisation—which is often identified to target at aboriginal or indigenous cultures and to be endeavoured by local actor-agents compliant with international heritage preservation and management agencies, on the pretext of development and economic growth. Emerged in the post-conflict era, the Buddhist museum-temples in Taiwan provide an alternative example, which in actuality embodies a two-way heritage process: collections and museums of Buddhist art and artefacts are built by leading Buddhist temples or monasteries to operate alongside their religious missions. These institutes help communicating Buddhism both on the island and overseas in China, Southeast Asia or the West. Applying the approach of phenomenological analysis and case studies, from the perspectives of postcolonialism, museology and heritage studies, I argue that (1) decoloniality does not necessarily mean delinking, (2) museumification contributes to rejuvenating, in addition to preserving, a disappearing tradition or belief, and (3) the model of museum-temple is seemingly being appropriated by China for a new heritage diplomacy, where (Han) Buddhism rather than Confucianism is used to represent China's cultural identity while promoting BRI and the Chinese Dream.

Conquest, Conflict, Compromise and Coexistence: Revisiting the 14th century in India

Michael Willis (Royal Asiatic Society, United Kingdom; Ghent University, Belgium; Social Sciences University of Ankara, Turkey; University of Parma, Italy)

The conquest of Anatolia, Persia, Afghanistan and north India by Turkic peoples from the 11th century was a pivotal moment in world history, setting in motion a sequence of events with reverberations to the present day. The establishment and expansion of the Delhi Sultanate, most notably in the 14th century, generated social, religious and political encounters that have been an enduring leitmotif in the history of India and its historiography. To better understand this period, and move away from reductive explanations, the authors of this paper have formed an interdisciplinary team to develop a methodology that will embrace history, archaeology, religious studies, philology, sociology, epidemiology, climatology, seismology and visual culture in all its forms. Our paper will present a sample of the evidence collected to date and explain how a qualitative and quantitative analysis of data from across disciplines can initiate a step-change in our understanding of Indian society shaped by the diversity of complex communities and the environment over the *longue durée*. Interdisciplinary and expanded datasets hold the promise that difficult problems can be tackled from fresh perspectives, notably the collapse of India's *ancien régime* in the 14th century, a turning point in history and India's modern sense of identity.

Plant reliefs in the capital of al-Andalus

Ana María Zamorano Arenas (Universidad de Sevilla, Spanien)

The opulent and refined lifestyle of the Umayyad court of 10th-century al-Andalus was reflected in a new language that was gradually incorporated into the manifestations of the caliphate. The production of luxury items (textiles, metals, ivory, tableware and glassware), coins and the decoration of its most emblematic buildings reached a technical level and refinement on a par with that of the Abbasid court. A new decorative innovation burst onto the walls of the buildings, covering them like a skin, with a new plant language: the large panels carved from stone slabs. The Salon Rico at Medina Azahara, the spaces in which the caliph lived and the maqsurah of the Great Mosque of Córdoba are covered with this decoration organised by means of arborescent schemes inspired by nature, which we will analyse from a compositional, stylistic and symbolic point of view.

The aim of this talk will be to present the results of the study carried out on the structure, composition and meaning of these large panels that decorate the most emblematic spaces of the court in 10th-century al-Andalus.

Islamische Kunst und die ›Erneuerin der arabischen Keramik‹ in den 1920er Jahren. Narrative und Paradoxien der kulturellen Nahḍa im Umfeld der ägyptischen Feministin und Nationalistin Hudā Šaʿrāwī (1879–1947)

Philipp Zobel (Universität Regensburg, Deutschland)

1924 gründete die Intellektuelle und politische Aktivistin Hudā Šaʿrāwī (1879–1947) eine Keramikschule und -fabrik in Kairo, die sie der Wiederbelebung der »arabischen Tradition« verschrieb. Von dem aus Frankreich stammenden Professor dekorativer Künste James-Alfred Coulon geleitet, sollten dort »reine« Ägypter*innen »authentische« Waren produzieren. Die Objekte wurden in Kairo, folgend auch in Istanbul, Paris bis nach New York ausgestellt und sorgten so für eine internationale Aufmerksamkeit, befördert durch Šaʿrāwī Position als Präsidentin der Feministischen Union Ägyptens mit Auftritten im In- und Ausland.

Im Aufgriff ausgewählter historischer Formensprachen bringen die Keramiken eine ägyptische Perspektive zwischen dem Feld der islamischen Kunstgeschichte, der Geschichte »moderner Künste« und Konzepten der Erneuerungsbewegung Nahḍa zum Ausdruck. Als künstlerische Beiträge im Salon du Caire sollten sie dazu beitragen, den Status von Objektkunst bzw. der »wiederbelebten Tradition« dem der schönen Künste gleichzusetzen. Als international zum Kauf angebotene Kunstsouvenirs verbreiteten sie das durch sie vergegenwärtigte Geschichtsnarrativ weit über die Grenzen Ägyptens hinaus.

Zusammen mit weiteren Aufträgen, Förderungen sowie Projekten Šaʿrāwīs und Ideen zu den Künsten, wie sie in der von ihr gegründeten frankophonen Monatsschrift »L'Égyptienne. Féminisme, sociologie, arts« zirkuliert wurden, stellen die Keramiken der »wiederbelebten Tradition« kulturelle Positionierungen dar: Sie geben einen Einblick in das Feld der Kunsthistoriografie und das Kunstverständnis Ägyptens, das seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts grundlegende Veränderungen erfuhr. Letztlich verdeutlichen sie das komplexe Spannungsfeld von Zuschreibungen wie ägyptisch, arabisch, europäisch, islamisch, modern, national oder traditionell und deren jeweilige kulturpolitische Konnotationen am Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts in Kairo.