

Objects, Commodities,  
and Societies in  
Historical Perspective  
June 23–25, 2011

# Making Things Speak

# Making Things Speak

## Objects, Commodities, and Societies in Historical Perspective

### Venues:

Theodor-Wiegand-Saal, Pergamonmuseum (Conference)  
Mschatta-Saal, Pergamonmuseum (Keynote)

### Convenors:

TOUFOUL ABOU-HODEIB (Fellow of EUME 2010/11) and  
STEFAN WEBER (Director, Museum für Islamische Kunst)

Please register at [eume@wiko-berlin.de](mailto:eume@wiko-berlin.de)

The “Making Things Speak” workshop investigates objects and their agency—how they are transformed (or not) by their uses and contexts and how they impact human lives. The past twenty-five years have seen a proliferation of writings tracing social practices of exchange and consumption through the objects of material culture. This has added to an already existing body of literature in museology and art history focusing on the objects themselves, their production, and their exhibition.

Following objects across the boundaries of Europe and the Middle East, the workshop brings together perspectives from museology, art and architectural history, and social history. By combining object-based and social-based approaches, the aim of this workshop is not only to explore the tension between objects as exhibited and as everyday pieces, but also to discuss how the line separating the two is constituted, crossed, and conceived of.

## Thu 23 June 2011

Mschatta-Saal, Pergamonmuseum

### Keynote Lecture

19:00 ERNST J. GRUBE  
Professor Emeritus, Università degli Studi, Venezia  
**From the Fatimid Treasuries of Cairo:  
A Thousand-Year-Old Rock Crystal Ewer  
from the Edmund de Unger Collection**

## Fri 24 June 2011

Theodor-Wiegand-Saal, Pergamonmuseum

### Biographies of Things

- 10:00—10:30 Welcome  
by STEFAN WEBER and TOUFOUL ABOU-HODEIB
- 10:30—11:00 GERHARD WOLF  
Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz  
**Talking Boxes and Singing Vessels:  
Towards a Poetics of Receptacles**
- 11:00—11:30 GISELA HELMECKE  
Museum für Islamische Kunst  
**Some Remarks about a Biography of Objects  
in Museums**
- 11:30—12:00 AVINOAM SHALEM  
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München  
**For Your Eyes Only: The Objective Condition**
- 12:00—12:15 Coffee Break
- 12:15—13:15 **Discussion**  
Moderator: BIRGIT MEYER  
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam / Fellow of the  
Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin 2010/11
- 13:15—14:45 Lunch Break

### Consuming Things

- 14:45—15:15 TOUFOUL ABOU-HODEIB  
Fellow of EUME 2010/11  
**A Tale of a Phonograph:  
Foreign Objects in a Late Ottoman City**
- 15:15—15:45 HESTER DIBBITS  
Meertens Institute (KNAW) /  
Netherlands Open Air Museum  
**Exotic Commodities in a Dutch Fishing  
Village, 1650–1800**
- 15:45—16:15 AMANDA PHILLIPS  
Max Planck Fellow, Kunsthistorisches Institut  
in Florenz / Museum für Islamische Kunst  
**Ottoman Goods in Ottoman Houses:  
Theme and Variation**
- 16:15—16:30 Coffee Break
- 16:30—17:30 **Discussion**  
Moderator: TAMER EL-LEITHY  
New York University / Fellow of EUME 2010/11

## Sat 25 June 2011

Theodor-Wiegand-Saal, Pergamonmuseum

### Museums and Collecting

- 10:30—11:00 STEFAN WEBER  
Museum für Islamische Kunst /  
Member of EUME  
**The Biography of Things—Things of  
Biographies: The Trajectories of Objects in  
Time, Space, and Society**
- 11:00—11:30 EVA TROELENBERG  
Max Planck Fellow, Kunsthistorisches Institut  
in Florenz / Museum für Islamische Kunst  
**Museum Narratives and the Eloquence of the  
Aesthetic: The Case of the Mshatta Façade**
- 11:30—12:00 NABILA OULEBSIR  
Université de Poitiers, CRIHAM / CRIA-EHESS  
**Museums and Collections in European  
and Non-European Contexts:  
Transcultural Transfers in the Mediterranean**
- 12:00—12:15 Coffee Break
- 12:15—13:15 **Discussion**  
Moderator: FADI BARDAWIL  
Fellow of EUME 2010/11
- 13:15—14:45 Lunch Break

### Architectural Things and Things in Architecture

- 14:45—15:15 MARGARET GRAVES  
University of Edinburgh  
**Model and Microcosm:  
Architecture and the Miniature**
- 15:15—15:45 CHRISTIAN SASSMANNSHAUSEN  
Freie Universität Berlin  
**Les mauvais sujets de Tripolis:  
Social Things and the Display of  
Conflicting Identities**
- 15:45—16:15 HANNAH BAADER  
Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz  
**The Votive Object:  
Making Things Speak and Act**
- 16:15—16:30 Coffee Break
- 16:30—17:30 **Final Discussion**  
Moderator: MANAN AHMED  
Freie Universität Berlin



**Europe in the Middle East—The Middle East in Europe is a five-year research program of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung and the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin.** This research program seeks to rethink key concepts and premises that link and divide Europe and the Middle East. It draws on the expertise of scholars in and outside of Germany and is embedded in university and extra-university research institutions in Berlin. The program builds upon the previous work of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin's Working Group Modernity and Islam and is funded by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung.

Contact: Georges Khalil  
Europa im Nahen Osten –  
Der Nahe Osten in Europa  
c/o Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin  
Wallotstrasse 19  
14193 Berlin  
Tel. +49 (0)30 89001-258  
Fax +49 (0)30 890 01-200  
E-Mail [khalil@wiko-berlin.de](mailto:khalil@wiko-berlin.de)  
[www.eume-berlin.de](http://www.eume-berlin.de)