

## **Creating the Global: Islamic and Asian Art History at Liberal Arts Colleges**

The workshop will bring together tenure-track faculty at AALAC member institutions who work on Islamic and/ or Asian arts. These fields have, for the most part, been introduced to art history departments at SLACs only recently, leaving a great need for curricular development and professional networking opportunities. We all negotiate highly specialized research with broad curricula covering multiple fields of art history, survey courses, and methodology seminars for majors. The curriculum of a specialist in Islamic art in India might include Islamic art from Spain to the Indian subcontinent, and Buddhist and Hindu art in South Asia. A scholar whose research focuses on medieval Islamic architecture in the eastern Mediterranean might be responsible for teaching Islamic art from late antiquity to the present, including contemporary urbanism and politics, in addition to courses on medieval Europe. A Chinese art specialist may teach all of East Asia (China, Japan, Korea) along with Central and West Asia, from ancient to modern. Many of us also teach introductory art history surveys with an aspiration towards a global scope.

In this context, a wide range of topics that touch upon the intersections of teaching and research emerge. At the level of course design, issues to address include crafting topic-driven or thematic syllabi that have substantial coverage, but that are not traditional field surveys; teaching with college collections that often have depth in surprising places, but not comprehensive coverage; and teaching postcolonial theory. Further, partnerships with STEM fields could be developed that include architectural studies, conservation sciences, archaeology, and computer science. A session on digital humanities will be a venue to discuss some of these points; several of us have begun to integrate these into their research and teaching, and everyone is working towards such projects.

The workshop will discuss balancing research productivity and publications with innovative teaching that keeps up with scholarly trends, such as how the “sensory turn” and “material turn” in art history are deployed in our respective fields. We plan to invite a successful mid-career colleague as a guest speaker to workshop possible avenues. Further, we will use time with the guest speaker to address the question of student research and student participation in faculty research. These practices are increasingly encouraged in many of our institutions, but often hard to establish when our research requires overseas travel and languages that most students do not acquire at the undergraduate level.

Follow up will take several forms. First, the group will create a website with teaching resources that include syllabi, course assignments, and collections-based activities for teaching our fields within the small-size class settings of liberal arts colleges. Second, we envision meetings at college museums to address how to use specific collections. Third, virtual collaborations can be established, including shared course websites and platforms, and venues for intellectual exchanges among members of the group. Overall, the workshop aims at creating a long-term intellectual community of scholars.

### **Workshop organizers:**

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