

## Seeking Transparency (Florence, 19–20 May 17)

Florence, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz - Max-Planck-Institut, Palazzo Grifoni  
Budini Gattai, Via dei Servi 51, May 19–20, 2017

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut

Seeking Transparency: The Medieval Rock Crystals  
International Conference

organized by Avinoam Shalem (Riggio Professor, Arts of Islam, Department of art history and Archaeology, Columbia University, NYC) and Cynthia Hahn (Professor of Art History, Department of Art and Art History, Hunter College, NYC)

Like the sea, the history of the production of carved rock crystals during the Middle Ages has its ebb and flow. From Late Antiquity to the age of the great Portuguese expansion, centers of productions of rock crystal rose and fell, and yet the specific knowledge of carving the hard material was kept a closely guarded secret. Royal courts and wealthy churches were eager patrons for the luxurious objects produced by these centers because rock crystal was valued as one of the most desirable and precious of all materials, ascribed mysterious origins and powers, and renowned for both rarity and clarity. The conference Seeking Transparency: The Medieval Rock Crystals to be held on May 19-20 at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz aims at revealing the global and cross-cultural histories of rock-crystal production in and beyond the lands of the Mediterranean Sea. It investigates varied aspects such as the physical nature of the material, its manufacturing techniques, affiliations to other modus operandi of luxurious objects, like cut glasses and carved precious stones, legends and traditions associated with its aesthetic qualities, as well as issues concerning the historiography of rock crystal.

### PROGRAM

Friday, May 19

09.00 - 09.15

Cynthia Hahn and Avinoam Shalem

Opening Remarks

09.15 - 10.00

Jens Kröger

The State of Research on Rock Crystals from the Islamic Lands in the 20th century

10.00 - 10.30

Elise Moreno

Relief-Carving on Medieval Islamic Glass and Rock Crystal: a Comparative Approach to Techniques of Manufacture

10.30 - 11.00

Jeremy Johns

The Medieval Islamic Rock Crystal 'Industry': Problems and Approaches

Coffee Break

11.30 - 12.00

Marcus Pilz

Beyond 'Fatimid' - The Iconography of Medieval Islamic Rock Crystal Vessels and the Question of Dating

12.00 - 12.30

Isabelle Bardiès-Fronty

As Beautiful as Mysterious: Updating the State of Research on the Lionheads at the Musée de Cluny

12.30 - 13.00

Stéphane Pradines

Madagascar, the Source of the Abbasid and Fatimid Rock Crystals. New Evidence from Archaeological Investigations in the Comoros Islands

Lunch Break

14.30 - 15.00

Venetia Porter

Amulets of Rock Crystal

15.00 - 15.30 Genevra Kornbluth

Transparent, Translucent, and Opaque: Merovingian and Anglo-Saxon Crystal Amulets

Coffee Break

16.00 - 16.30

Gia Tousaint

Rock Crystals in Church Treasuries. A Survey of Form and Function

16.30 - 17.00

Beate Fricke

Traveling Treasures - from Leo Insidiabatur to Agnus Dei

Saturday, May 20

10.00 - 10.30

Ingeborg Krueger

Man-Made Crystal: Crystal like Glass in the Middle Ages

10.30 - 11.00

Patrick Crowley

Rock Crystal and the Alchemical Sublime in Ancient Rome

Coffee Break

11.30 -12.00

Stefania Gerevini

Paradoxes of Material Implication. Medieval Rock Crystal between Clarity, Poverty and Splendor

12.00 - 12.30

Bissera Pentcheva

Shimmering Dualities: Crystal and the Poetics of the Resurrected Body

12.30 - 13.00

Hannah Baader

Transparency and the Landscapes of Quartz

Lunch Break

14.30 - 15.00

Brigitte Buettner

Solidly Transparent: Rock Crystal in Lapidary Knowledge

15.00 - 15.30

Farid Benfeghou

Through Islamic Lenses: Rock Crystal and other Gems as Visual Aids

Coffee Break

16.00 - 16.30

Concluding Remarks

Gerhard Wolf's 'Reflexions'

## CONTACT

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## FURTHER INFORMATION

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Reference:

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