

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Summerschool (9–17 May 10)

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Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence, Max-Planck-Institute supported
by The Getty Foundation - Summer School - May 9-17, 2010 -
Interactions in the Mediterranean Basin: The Case of Late Classical,
Aghlabid and Fatimid Tunisia (Tunis/Mahdiyya/Qayrawan)

The art of Ifriqiya is one of the most fascinating areas of medieval Islam. It presents visually the process by which Roman, Late Antique, and Byzantine cultures were integrated to create a new aesthetic language for a region under a muslim rulership and demonstrates innovative methods of shaping holy spaces in early medieval Islam, be it Sunni (Qayrawan) or Shiite-Fatimid (Mahdiyya). The city of Qayrawan, with its mosques, is one of the most holy places in Islam after Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem, and Mahdiyya is the first official city build by the Fatimid dynasty. By shifting the direction of the scholarly gaze to this specific space which is located in the heart of the Mediterranean basin, the Summer School in Tunisia will consider the art, architecture and urbanism of Ifriqiya and its relationships to neighboring cultures in a different and broader light. The proximity between Africa and Europe in this particular geographical space; the active medieval naval trade routes linking Ifriqiya to South Italy, Sicily, Al-Andalus and to the eastern ports of the Mediterranean Sea; the land routes of the sub-Saharan trade that cross this region; the constant links with other Muslim centers like Abassid Misr (Egypt), Baghdad, Samarra, Mecca and Medina; and the interactions, in peaceful or violent times, involving the movements of people, ideas and artifacts, made it a symbiotic region of land and water with cities which became for a certain period centers of the medieval world. Studying the art and architecture of Ifriqiya through a magnifying glass, from this particular perspective and within Ifriqiya's "global" Mediterranean context will contribute to the understanding of the emergence of a new multi-faceted, aesthetic and visual language in the medieval Mediterranean sphere.

A specific emphasis will be given to innovative military architecture (ribat and Qal`a) and the interaction of its aesthetic language with palatial and religious architecture. Moreover, the colonial historiographies of Tunisia and the construction of Tunisi's visual-cultural narrative will be considered critically, especially

through study of the history of museums and the display of archaeological objects.

The Summer school is part of the research program "Art, Space and Mobility in the Early History of Globalization. The Mediterranean, Central Asia and the Indian Subcontinent 400-1650" directed by Gerhard Wolf, Hannah Baader and Avinoam Shalem, KHI Florence with the Getty Foundation. It welcomes students and younger scholars working in Art History, Islamic, Asian or Byzantine Art or in Archeology, including graduate students, doctoral candidates and scholars who are embarking on post-doctoral research. The number of participants is restricted. Each participant is expected to contribute to the success of the course not only by presenting a paper but also by actively participating in discussions, which will be held in English. Accommodation and travel costs will be covered. Applications should include a letter of interest, a curriculum vitae and a letter of recommendation. Graduate students not yet involved in dissertation research should attach a summary of their course work. For pre- and post-doctoral applicants, a brief summary of their research project (250-300 words) is requested. Topic suggestions will be provided but all participants are encouraged to include their own proposal (250-300 words), which we will try to include in the program.

Applications should be sent to
Prof. Dr. Gerhard Wolf,
Director, Kunsthistorisches Institut - Max-Planck-Institut
Via Giuseppe
Giusti 44
I-50121 Firenze, Italy
before January 30th.

The envelope should be marked with "Summer school 2010", applications by e-mail are also welcome to the address: dirwolf@khi.fi.it.
Notifications of acceptance will be sent by February 15th.

Reference:

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