

## Towards a Cross-Cultural Research on Graffiti (online, 26 Feb–12 Mar 21)

Online / Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, Universität Hamburg, Feb  
26–Mar 12, 2021

Malena Ratzke, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena

Online workshop series on global graffitiing practices from Antiquity to the present day.

Scratched, Scrawled, Sprayed: Towards a Cross-Cultural Research on Graffiti  
Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC), Universität Hamburg

From the deserts of Egypt to the forests of Mesoamerica to contemporary metropolises: Graffiti are everywhere, and it has been that way for quite some time. Indeed, the human urge to claim their voice in the visual landscape surrounding them seems to be one of the universals of literate societies. Both as a solo creation on a pristine wall and yet another addition to a chain of scribbles, graffiti are socially creative acts that have been imbued with a variety of meanings by their creators. With their designs, they shape the perception of spaces and objects. Modern scholarship endeavours to place these written acts in context and do justice to their significance as important sources of cultural history. Yet the word 'graffiti' is a fluid term that has been imbued with specific connotations within distinct scholarly traditions that study diverse graffitiing communities in different times and spaces. Even within these traditions, its use often reflects personal experience and assumptions of individual scholars rather than a general consensus. This poses a challenge to a real cross-cultural approach to the study of graffiti in different writing cultures.

In three sessions, this workshop brings together experts on graffiti scratched, scrawled, or sprayed on surfaces around the globe. By exploring the extent of graffitiing practices from antiquity to the present day and the diversity of scholarly traditions dealing with them, the workshop aims at opening up an interdisciplinary dialogue on the prospects of a cross-cultural study of written artefacts known as 'graffiti'.

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### PROGRAMME

Friday 26 February 2021, 02:00-05:30 pm CET

#### SESSION 1:

Graffitiing in Ancient Cultures

Chairs: Leah Mascia & Lauren Osthof (Hamburg)

02:00-02:10 Alessandro Bausi (Hamburg): Opening Remarks

02:10-02:55 Charlotte Roueché (London): 'Graffiti' in an Inscribed Environment

02:55-03:40 Michael C. A. Macdonald (Oxford): 'Crying in the Wilderness': The Enigma of Graffiti in a Non-literate Society

03:40-03:50 Break

03:50-04:35 Jitse H. F. Dijkstra (Ottawa): 'Rien que la marque d'un pied!': Egyptian Graffiti in Context

04:35-05:20 Ingo Strauch (Lausanne): Indian Graffiti along the Silk Road

05:20-05:30 Chairs: General discussion and closing remarks

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Friday 5 March 2021, 02:00-06:00 pm CET

#### SESSION 2:

Graffiti in Medieval and Early Modern Cultures

Chairs: Malena Ratzke & Leah Mascia (Hamburg)

02:00-02:10 Chairs : Opening Remarks/Recap

02:10-02:50 Dai Matsui (Osaka): Graffiti by Old Uigur Pilgrims in Dunhuang and Eastern Eurasia

02:50-03:30 Matthew Champion (Norfolk): Accepted and Acceptable? Attitudes to Historical Graffiti Inscriptions in the Medieval Church

03:30-04:10 Jarosław Żrałka (Krakow): Incised Images among the Palaces and Temples: The Content and Meaning of Pre-Columbian Maya Graffiti

04:10-04:25 Break

04:25-05:05 Arlo Griffiths (Paris): A Very First Exploration of Graffiti as an Epigraphic Category in South East Asia up to ca. 1500 CE

05:05-05:45 Mia Trentin (Nikosia): Medieval and Modern Graffiti in Eastern Mediterranean: Challenges and Potential

05:45-06:00 Chairs: General discussion and closing remarks

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Friday 12 March 2021, 02:00-05:30 pm CET

#### SESSION 3:

Modern and Contemporary Graffiti

Chairs: Lauren Osthof & Ondřej Škrabal (Hamburg)

02:00-02:10 Chairs: Opening Remarks/Recap

02:10-02:55 Minna Valjakka (Helsinki): Transcribed Flows and Arrhythmias: Chinese Writing Cul-

tures from Stone Inscriptions to Contemporary Graffiti

02:55-03:40 Seth M. Markle (Hartford): 'Spray It Loud': Notes on Graffiti History, Culture, and Politics in Urban Tanzania

03:40-03:50 Break

03:50-04:35 Anne Vieth (Stuttgart): Curating Graffiti

04:35-05:20 Alexander Araya López (Venice): Narrating 'Graffiti' in the Media: Why is it News?

05:20-05:30 Chairs: General discussion and closing remarks

Please register via the following link <https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/register-workshop3.html>

For further questions, please contact: [malena.ratzke@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:malena.ratzke@uni-hamburg.de)

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Reference:

CONF: Towards a Cross-Cultural Research on Graffiti (online, 26 Feb-12 Mar 21). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 19, 2021 (accessed Apr 1, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/33443>>.