

## Vessels Beyond Containment (online/Florence, 8–9 Jun 23)

Florence, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut (Palazzo Grifoni Budini Gattai, Via dei Servi 51 50122 Firenze, Italia) / Online, Jun 8–09, 2023

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut

From earliest history, humans have engaged with vessels, both natural and handmade. Vessels as portable or movable objects conserve and transport other materials – such as liquids or food – they consist of a shell, case or envelope which separates an inside and an outside, between density and porosity. Made from a great variety of materials and shapes, vessels are prime agents of transcultural exchange. Their study presents immense methodological challenges for disciplines concerned with visual and material culture.

The conference posits that vessels are conceptually and materially multidimensional; they are ontologically, aesthetically and historically complex. The selection and display of just those most precious, rare, intact, and ornamented examples beyond glass cases in museum displays, and the two-dimensional images in publications tend to flatten this complexity. As sites of interface between humans and their environments, vessels present a wealth of affordances, involving potential reflections on space, body and matter, on thingness and morphology, on natural, social and transcendental worlds, as well as on dynamics of production, translation and decoration.

Approaching vessels as smart, multisensorial and interactive objects, this conference asks: In what ways may vessels illuminate the spaces they create, occupy, enter, support, conceal, and reveal? What technological, sensorial, and material communications do they form and inspire between themselves, the people (or beings) who make and use them, and the world at large? Historically grounded research on vessels promises to open up broad avenues for understanding them as synergic objects that reflect and comment on intersecting visual, material, social, economic, environmental, and technological systems and networks. This implies the study of perforated and broken vessels or in general of vessels beyond containment, of particular interest in this conference.

Organized by Sinem Casale, Jaś Elsner and Gerhard Wolf

Program

Thursday, June 8th 2023

09.45 Sinem Casale, Jaś Elsner and Gerhard Wolf

Welcome and Introduction

10.15 Lisa Trever | Columbia University

Ai Apaec in the Deep: The Tenacity of an Ancient Peruvian Vessel-Image

11.00 Break

11.30 Ruth Bielfeldt | Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

Lamps as Vessels

12.15 Andrew Finegold | University of Illinois Chicago

On the Temporality of Classic Maya Vessels and the Containment of Art

13.00 Lunch Break

14.00 Wu Hung | University of Chicago

Meta-Vessel: Retelling the Story of Ancient Chinese Ritual Bronzes

14.45 Margaret Graves | Indiana University (online)

The Mouths of Vessels and the Limits of Language

15.30 Break

16.00 Christina Normore | Northwestern University (online)

Pot Bellies: Chaff, Dung and Grog in West African Ceramics

16.45 Ittai Weinryb | Bard College & Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin

Framing the Boxes We Study: Frontier to Metropole and Back Again

Friday, June 9th 2023

9.30 Judith Zeitlin | University of Chicago

Interiority and Transformation: Magical Vessels in Chinese Literature

10.15 Nikolaus Dietrich | Universität Heidelberg

A Wool Basket in Clay: On the Greek Culture of Transforming Materials and the Anthropology of Things

11.00 Break

11.30 Richard Neer | University of Chicago

Leaky Vessels in Early Greek Art

12.15 Anna Grasskamp | University of St Andrews & Käte Hamburger Research Centre "global dis:-connect"

Shell Connections: Parrot Cups and Sino-European Exchange

13.00 Lunch Break

14.00 Walk to and Visit of Sant'Ambrogio (Jaś Elsner)

15.45 Claudia Brittenham | University of Chicago (online)

Consider the Gourd: Intermedial Vessels in Ancient Mesoamerica

16.30 Nachiket Chanchani | University of Michigan  
Forging Vessels and Values in a Borderland

17.15 Break

17.30 Closing Remarks & Final Discussion

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This will be a hybrid event.

#### Venue

Palazzo Grifoni Budini Gattai  
Via dei Servi 51  
50122 Firenze, Italia

To participate online please register in advance via Zoom:  
<https://eu01web.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5MlceigrTloGdT5p60l0ehyEOow42SEq12e>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

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#### Reference:

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