

Revisiting Islamicate Worlds (Essen, 24–25 Apr 25)

Museum Folkwang, Essen, Apr 24–25, 2025

Registration deadline: Apr 20, 2025

Jana Averbeck

International Symposium "Revisiting Islamicate Worlds. The Folkwang Concept in Context", Museum Folkwang, Essen, April 24-25, 2025.

Organized by Mathilde Heitmann-Taillefer (Museum Folkwang), Nadine Engel (Museum Folkwang) and Eva-Maria Troelenberg (Heinrich-Heine-Universität, Düsseldorf) in cooperation with the Heinrich-Heine-Universität, Düsseldorf

The founder and patron of the Folkwang Museum in Hagen, Karl Ernst Osthaus, collected works of art from various genres, styles, periods and regions in the spirit of his art reform movement (also known as the 'Hagen Impulse'). At the turn of the 20th century, after two long journeys to the Mediterranean region and North Africa, he specifically collected works of 'Islamic art'. After his early death in 1921, and the sale of his collections in 1922/23, these holdings were transferred to the new Museum Folkwang in Essen together with the art collections. In the course of the reconstruction of the Museum Folkwang after the Second World War, additional works were purchased for the museum, which were assigned to the collection Arts of Islam.

Osthaus had established practices of displaying European and so-called 'non-western' art side by side since the museum's opening in 1902, thus staging an encounter between the arts of different cultures. This practice was continued by Ernst Gosebruch, director of the Museum Folkwang, from 1922 onwards. The current presentation of the collection which has been in place since 2019 is based on this tradition of a 'school of seeing'.

Against this background, the conference aims to continue an ongoing conversation about the museography and historiography of the Arts of Islam and its musealization, and to develop new insights and questions that are informative for the Essen collection and beyond.

The results will be incorporated into the exhibition 'Karl Ernst Osthaus and the Arts of Islam' (working title), which will be on show at the Museum Folkwang in 2026.

The international conference will be embedded in a critical examination of terminologies and concepts, including the use and problems of the term 'Islamic art' itself.

The keynote lecture will be given by Avinoam Shalem.

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PROGRAM

APRIL 24, 2025

12:00-13:00 Light lunch and welcome for speakers

13:00-13:10 Mathilde Heitmann-Taillefer, Museum Folkwang: Welcome

13:15-13:30 Eva-Maria Troelenberg: Welcome and introduction

13:30-14:30 Keynote: Avinoam Shalem, Columbia University;
Q&A moderated by Mathilde Heitmann-Taillefer

14:30-15:00 Coffee Break

15:00-16:30 PANEL 1 / The Folkwang Concept

Chair: Lorenz Korn, Universität Bamberg

Dorina Michaelis, Museum Folkwang: Missing in Action: Provenance Research, Evidence Overload and “Lost” Objects of the Folkwang Museum’s Islamic Collection

Sussan Babaie, Courtauld Institute: Manuscript Travails: Shahnama as Trophy

Friederike Weis, Heinrich-Heine-Universität, Düsseldorf: ‘The Essence of These Patterns is Sequential Juxtaposition Without End’: the Enthusiasm of Karl Ernst Osthaus for the Islamic ‘Flat Ornament’

16:30-17:00 Coffee Break

17:00-18:30 PANEL 2 / The Folkwang Context

Chair: Christin Ruppio, Regionalverband Ruhr

Christoph Rauch, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin: The Shahname Manuscript Ms. or. fol. 4251 – Special Circumstances of Acquisition and Provenance Data in the Qalamos Portal

Yuka Kadoi, Universität Wien: Persian Art through the Eyes of a Modernist: An Alternative Collecting Practice of World Arts, ca. 1900–1925

Deniz Erduman-Çalış, Museum für Islamische Kunst: Osthaus and his Collection of Islamic Ceramics as Reflected in the Collections of German Museums

19:30 Dinner for conference participants

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APRIL 25, 2025

10:30-12:30 PANEL 3 / Museums and the Arts of Islam

Chair: Franziska Koch, Heinrich-Heine-Universität

Rémi Labrusse, EHESS Paris: Arts in Search of Museums: Islamic Arts and the Crisis of the Museum System in 19th Century Europe

Francine Giese, Vitrocentre Romont: A Blind Spot in 20th-century Art Historiography: Stucco and

Glass Windows and Coloured Light

Mandana Bender, PhD Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München: A Collector's Fortune and an Artist's Eye – The Turco-Persian Illustrations and Manuscripts in the Preetorius Collection

Miriam Kühn, Museum für Islamische Kunst: Transparent Boundaries: Collecting Islamic Glass Art in the Early 20th Century

12:30-13:30 Lunch and Coffee Break

13:30-15:00 PANEL 4 / Transcultural Constellations

Chair: Ilse Sturkenboom, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität

Bilal Akkouche, Tate Modern: Rethinking 'Islamic Art' within Tate Modern's Transnational Collecting, Displays and Exhibitions

Stefanie Bach, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden: The Damascus Room in Dresden: Perspectives of a Syrian Reception Room

Anahita Mittertrainer, Museum Fünf Kontinente: „... auch I.K.H. Prinzessin Therese von Bayern hatte einige charakteristische Beispiele der früheren Sevillaner Azulechos geliehen (Nr. 1685).“ Spanish tiles from the collection of Therese von Bayern and Karl Ernst Osthaus at the Museum Fünf Kontinente

15:00-15:30 Closing discussion

15:30 End of conference

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The programme may be subject to change.

For registration please send an e-mail to: symposium@museum-folkwang.essen.de by no later than April 20, 2025.

Reference:

CONF: Revisiting Islamicate Worlds (Essen, 24-25 Apr 25). In: Arthist.net, Mar 1, 2025 (accessed Dec 30, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/44072>>.