

## Ottoman Pasts, Present Cities (London, 26–27 Jun 14)

Birkbeck College, University of London, Jun 26–27, 2014

Deadline: Jan 1, 2014

Ottoman Cosmopolitan Network, School of English, University of Leeds

Ottoman Pasts, Present Cities: Cosmopolitanism and Transcultural Memories

AHRC Research Network

International two-day conference

26–27 June 2014, Birkbeck College, University of London

Plenary speakers include Professor Ulrike Freitag, Freie Universität Berlin; Susan Meiselas, documentary photographer; Claudia Roden, chef, writer and cultural anthropologist; Professor Gayatri Spivak, Columbia University

Call for papers:

One of the largest and one of the longest, the Ottoman Empire is still relatively understudied. Running from the early 1300s to 1922 and stretching East to West, it included key sites of present or recent conflict, such as Baghdad, Beirut, Cairo, Gaza, Istanbul, Jerusalem, Nicosia, Sarajevo and Belgrade. Yet for centuries these cities were largely characterised by dynamics mostly forgotten: cultural exchange, ethnic cohabitation, and religious tolerance. These transcultural exchanges manifested themselves in fusion and cross-pollination in architecture, art, food, music, literature, language, family stories, memories and lives. The network through a series of three workshops – ‘How was the Ottoman Empire Transcultural’, ‘Ottoman Memories: Transculturalism and Empires in Comparison’, and ‘Visualising the Ottoman City’ – brought together rich examples of transcultural memories spearheaded by Gayatri Spivak’s contention that modern nationalism ‘now effaces the incessantly negotiated multinationality that was the Ottoman Empire’ (1993). Our time frame is mostly from the 1780s to the present: a time of transformation and of multiple colonialisms, resulting in the end of the Ottoman Empire in the 1920s, and the mandates, post-colonialisms, nation states and conflicts that have followed. This is a particularly rich period for excavating the range of artefacts that show the ‘incessantly negotiated multinationality’ that was the Ottoman city.

Ottoman scholarship has so far largely been organised by the historical, political, philosophical, archaeological and linguistic, often concentrating on Edward Said’s ‘orientalist’ representations of the Ottoman Empire. The project and conference aims to further the revaluation of orientalism by engaging different disciplines to read the legacies of Ottoman cities.

This two-day international conference aims to investigate these themes further through an interdisciplinary approach. We are inviting proposals for twenty-minute papers that explore all aspects of the ex-Ottoman city and its many intercultural encounters, and whose approaches to these

encounters may include, for example: cultural history, city and architectural studies particularly in relation to individual and transcultural memory; cultural studies including literature, autobiography and life-writing, the visual arts (photography, cinema, painting); anthropology, Middle-Eastern and North African studies as well as the study of all the Ottoman lands per se (including also the Balkans, Greece, Cyprus, Armenia, Eastern Europe); Jewish studies, colonial and postcolonial studies; French/francophone and Italian studies (many ex-Ottoman cities had French or Italian as their lingua franca).

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

Representations of the ex-Ottoman city in literature and life-writing

Photography, film, painting, architecture

Hybridity and transculturalism

Transcultural memory

Memory and identity

Fused or borrowed languages – language and identity

Intertextuality

Reappropriation

Travel writing

Travel and empire

Music, food, artefacts

Cultural history, political history

Ex-Ottoman cities and the European powers

The conference also includes an exhibition entitled 'East and West: Visualising the Ottoman City' which features the work of four lens-based artists representing the Ottoman city through a perspective of transcultural memory. The exhibition will explore key ideas from the network's research within a contemporary art framework.

Closing date for submissions of abstracts (250 words): 1 January 2014

Please email abstracts together with a short biographical note to:  
[ottoman.cosmopolitanism@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:ottoman.cosmopolitanism@leeds.ac.uk)

Conference Organisers/Network Members: Principal Investigator, Jay Prosser (University of Leeds), Co-investigator, Gabriel Koureas (Birkbeck College, University of London), Visual Advisor, Leslie Hakim-Dowek (University of Portsmouth), Project Advisor, Colette Wilson (University of Westminster), Research Assistant, Hengameh Saroukhani (University of Leeds)

For more information on the network, visit our website:  
<http://ottomancosmopolitanism.wordpress.com/>

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Or follow us on twitter: [https://twitter.com/Ottoman\\_Cosmo](https://twitter.com/Ottoman_Cosmo)

Reference:

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