Art on the Move in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean (2014-2015)

Deadline: Jan 10, 2014

Alina Payne, Harvard University

From Riverbed to Seashore. Art on the Move in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean in the Early Modern Period. (2014-2015)

A Harvard University Research Seminar organized as part of the Getty Foundation's Connecting Art Histories initiative

Led by Alina Payne, Harvard University

This research seminar zeroes in on rivers as the cultural infrastructure of the Mediterranean world in the early modern period, as carriers of people, things, and ideas tying geographies and cultures together. The king of such rivers was undoubtedly the Danube, running a parallel course to the Mediterranean and cutting across Europe from West to East. Flowing into the Black Sea, it entered the system of communicating vessels of the Mediterranean—the old Roman mare nostrum itself, the Sea of Marmara, the Black Sea, and, the last ripple that separates and unites three continents, the Sea of Azov.

But the Danube was not alone in swelling the Mediterranean world with the cultures along its shores. The Sava, the Adige, the Neretva, the Pruth, the Dniester and Dnieper, and the Don (which flows into the Sea of Azov) etc. connect the "traditional" Mediterranean cultures—the Italian, the Ottoman, the Greek/Byzantine, the French and Spanish—with the world of the Balkans and beyond. Starting from this perspective, this seminar seeks to develop a framework for understanding how the Balkans and its northern neighbors mediated between East and West, as well as the region's contribution to the larger Mediterranean cultural melting pot in the early modern period.

The premises underlying this seminar are twofold: 1) that the contours of the Mediterranean Renaissance need to be re-drawn to include a larger territory that reflects this connectedness; and 2) that the eastern frontier of Europe extending from the Mediterranean deep into the interior played a pivotal role in negotiating the dialogue between western Europe, Central Asia and Ottoman Turkey. On the cusp between

cultures and religions, Balkan principalities, kingdoms, and fiefdoms came to embody hybridity, to act as a form of buffer or cultural "switching" system that assimilated, translated, and linked the cultures of near and Central Asia with those of Western Europe. Taking a trans-regional approach, this project aims to reconstruct the fluid ties that linked territories in a period in which hegemonies were short-lived and unstable, and in which contact nebulas generated artistic nebulas that challenge traditional historical categories of regional identities, East/West and center/periphery.

The seminar will run from spring of 2014 to summer of 2015 and will be guided by a distinguished group of scholars. Participants are invited to propose their own projects related to these themes on which they will work during this period. We seek contributions on building types (eg. carvanserais/ hans), infrastructure (bridges, fortifications and roads), domestic architecture (villas/palaces), religious and domed structures, etc., building practices, materials and artisans, on Kleinarchitektur and portable architectural objects. Proposals are also invited from participants working on spolia, on "minor" arts—cloth/silks, goldsmithry, sculpture, leather, gems and books—as well as on collecting and treasuries, that is, on artworks and luxury items that allowed ornamental forms and formal ideas to circulate and created a taste for a hybrid aesthetic, as well as on historiography.

The countries under consideration here are: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, and Ukraine.

The seminar involves three stages: 1) a two-week "mobile" workshop traveling along the Dalmatian coast and using this region as case study of the issues, historiography and methodologies that this project seeks to foreground (May/June 2014); 2) a two and a half week stay at Harvard University (2 day workshop focusing on interim presentation of participants' findings and 2 week library access in January/February 2015); and 3) a final conference (presentation of developed individual projects) and short trip to key sites on the Black Sea. On-going participation in the seminar will be based on the quality of scholarly contribution and on the level of engagement with the group.

Applicants should be post-doctoral scholars working in the Eastern European countries on which the project focuses (maximum 10 years from a doctoral degree; doctoral degree must be in hand at time of application). Travel expenses are covered. The seminar language is English: participants will need to demonstrate a strong command of the language to enable wide-ranging discussion with the other members of the seminar. Facility with languages of the region is an asset. Applications

must include: CV, personal statement, description of proposed project (500 words + one page bibliography), one published writing sample and three letters of reference are due no later than January 10, 2014. Finalists will be interviewed; participants will be notified by early February.

Please send applications to the attention of Elizabeth Kassler-Taub, Department of History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University, ekassler@fas.harvard.edu.

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Reference:

CFP: Art on the Move in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean (2014-2015). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 18, 2013 (accessed Nov 13, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/6445>.