

**HISTORY OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE 121k**  
**ISLAMIC ORNAMENT AND THE AESTHETICS OF ABSTRACTION**  
 Professor Gulru Necipoglu (Wednesdays 3-5)

**Requirements:**

Book report, class discussion, paper presentation and final paper (15 pages)

**Reserve Readings:**

All required readings are on reserve at the Fine Arts Library.

**Contact Information:**

Office hours and weekly sign-up sheet will be posted at Sackler Museum, Room 413

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## Syllabus

(Week 1, Jan. 27)

### INTRODUCTION

(Week 2, Feb. 3):

### APPLIED ISLAMIC ORNAMENT: THE ARTS & CRAFTS MOVEMENT AND INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

Gulru Necipoğlu, “Ornamentalism and Orientalism: The Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth-Century European Literature,” in idem, *The Topkapi Scroll – Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture* (1995), 61-71.

Stephen Vernoit, “Islamic Art and Architecture: An Overview of Scholarship and Collecting,” in idem, *Discovering Islamic Art: Scholars, Collectors and Collections* (2000), 1-61.

Anette Hagedorn, “The Development of Islamic Art History in Germany in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” in *ibid*, 117-27.

### BOOK REPORT:

Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament* (1856, reprint 1982)

### OPTIONAL:

Arindam Dutta, *The Bureucracy of Beauty* (2007).

John Makenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (1995).

(Week 3, Feb. 10)

### ISLAMIC ORNAMENT, AMATEURS, AND MODERNIST ABSTRACTION

- Barry Wood, ““Great Symphony of Pure Form”: The 1931 International Exhibition of Persian Art and Its Influence,” *Ars Orientalis* 30 (2000):113-30.
- Exh. Cat.: *The Future of the Past: The Robert Mouawad Private Museum*, 11-17, 241-49 (read “Introduction” and Stefan Weber “Walls and Ceilings,” 10-17, 142-67.
- Rémi Labrusse ed., “Une traversée du malheur occidental,” “Islamophiles,” in idem, *Purs decors? Arts de l’Islam regards du XIXe siècle*, (2007), 32-53, 230-301.
- Rémi Labrusse, “Islamophilia? Europe in the Conquest of the Arts of Islam,” (Xerox) [<http://www.artsetsocieties.org/a/a-labrusse.html>]
- Mercedes Volait, *Fous du Caire: Excentriques, architectes & amateurs d’art en Egypte, 1867-1914* (2009), skim and read 155-81.
- Nicholas Watkins, “Matisse and Orientalism. Rome,” *The Burlington Magazine*, 140.1138(1998): 59-60.

#### BOOK REPORT:

Jules Bourgoïn, *Les elements de l’art arabe: Le trait des entrelacs* (1879, reprint 1973 as *Arabic Geometrical Pattern and Design*).

#### OPTIONAL:

- Nabila Oulebsir and Mercedes Volait eds., *L’orientalisme architectural entre imaginaires et saviors* (2009).
- Fereshteh Daftari, *The Influence of Persian Art on Gauguin, Matisse and Kandinsky* (1991)
- Roger Benjamin, “The Decorative Landscape, Fauvism, and the Arabesque Observation,” *Art Bulletin* LXXV, no. 2 (1993): 296-316.
- Rémi Labrusse, *Matisse: La condition de l’image* (1999).
- Alastair Wright. *Matisse and the Subject of Modernism* (2004).

(Week 4, Feb. 17):

### VEGETAL ARABESQUES

- Janine Sourdel-Thomine, “Fann,” *Encyclopedia of Islam*, New edn., 2 (1965): 775-78.
- Ernst Herzfeld, “Arabesque,” *Encyclopedia of Islam* (1910), 363-67.
- Ernst Kühnel, “Arabesque,” *Encyclopedia of Islam*, New edn., (1957), 558-61.
- Ernst Kühnel, *The Arabesque: Meaning and Transformation of an Ornament*, tr. R. Ettingshausen (1977)
- Robert S. Nelson, “Letters and Language/ Ornament and Identity in Byzantium and Islam,” in *The Experience of Islamic Art on the Margins of Islam*, ed. by I. A. Bierman (2005), 61-88.

#### BOOK REPORT:

Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*, translated by E. Kain (1992)

## OPTIONAL:

Margaret Olin, *Forms of Representation in Alois Riegl's Art Theory* (1992)

(Week 5, Feb. 24):

**GEOMETRIC ORNAMENT**

Isam el-Said and Ayse Parman, *Geometric Concepts in Islamic Art* (1976)

Keith Critchlow, *Islamic Patterns: An Analytical and Cosmological Approach* (1976)

Gulru Necipoğlu, "The Scroll Tradition," "Recent Studies on Geometric Ornament," "Geometry and the Contribution of the Mathematical Sciences," "Geometry and Aesthetic Theory," in idem, *The Topkapi Scroll – Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture* (1995), 1-39, 131-217.

Owen Wright, "The Sight of Sound," *Muqarnas*, 21(2004): 359-71

## BOOK REPORT:

Hans Belting, *Florenz und Bagdad: Eine westöstliche Geschichte des Blicks* (2009)

## OPTIONAL:

Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bakhtiar, with foreword by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture* (1973)

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality* (1987)

Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture, "Visual Islamic & Traditional Arts: Degree Show 1995".

Week 6, Mar. 3:

**NEO-ORIENTALISM: FESTIVAL OF ISLAM AND COSMOPHILIA**

Titus Burckhardt, "Introduction to Islamic Art," in *The Arts of Islam*, exh. cat. (1976), 31-38.

Gulru Necipoğlu, "Recent Studies on Geometric Ornament," in idem, *The Topkapi Scroll – Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture* (1995), 71-87.

Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, "Ornament and Islamic Art," in idem., *Cosmophilia: Islamic Art in the David Collection, Copenhagen*, exh. cat. (2006), 9-30.

Anneka Lenssen, "Muslims to take Over Institute for Contemporary Art? The 1976 World of Islam Festival," *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, 42, 1-2 (2008):40-47.

## BOOK REVIEW:

Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, *Cosmophilia: Islamic Art in the David Collection, Copenhagen*, exh. cat. (2006).

Rémi Labrusse, *Purs decors? Arts de l'Islam regards du XIXe siècle*, (2007).

## OPTIONAL:

John Sabini, "The World of Islam: Its Festival," *Saudi Aramco World* 27, no. 3 (1976).

Eva Baer, *Islamic Ornament* (1998).

Titus Burckhardt, *Art of Islam; Language and Meaning* (1976)

Week 7, Mar. 10:

**PURS DECORS? MEANINGS, CONTEXTS AND REGIMES OF VISUALITY**

Jessica Rawson, "Chinese motifs in Iranian and Turkish Art," in *Chinese Ornament: The Lotus and the Dragon* (1984), 145-98.

Gulru Necipoglu, "L'idée de décor dans les régimes de visualité islamiques," in Rémi Labrusse, *Purs decors? Arts de l'Islam regards du XIXe siècle*, (2007), 10-23  
[Xerox of English version available on reserve]

Ebba Koch, "Naturalistic Ornament as an Expression of Paradise," in *The Complete Taj Mahal* (2006), 217-23.

Exh. Cat. *The Tsars and the East: Gifts from Turkey and Iran in the Moscow Kremlin*, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery (2009)

**BOOK REVIEW:**

Julia Gonella, *Ein christlich-orientalische Wohnhaus des 17. Jahrhunderts aus Aleppo* (Syrien) (1996).

Julia Gonella and Jens Kröger eds., *Angels, Peonies, and Fabulous Creatures: The Aleppo Room in Berlin* (2007)

Christian Ewert, *Das Aleppozimmer: Strukturen und Dekorelemente der Malereien in Aleppozimmer* (2006)

**OPTIONAL:**

Rebecca Zorach, "Ornament and the School of Fontainebleau," in *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold: Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance* (2005), 140-158.

**SPRING BREAK**

Week 8, Mar. 24:

**ISLAMIC ABSTRACTION, MODERNIST AESTHETICS, AND THE CONTEMPORARY RETURN OF ORNAMENT**

Jonathan Massey, "Modernism, Ornament, Reform," "The Language or Ornament" in *Crystal and Arabesque: Claude Bragdon, Ornament and Modern Architecture* (2009), 1-18, 151-77.

Farshid Moussavi and Michael Kubo, *The Function of Ornament* (2006)

Brent C. Brolin, *Architectural Ornament: Banishment and Return* (2000)

**BOOK REPORT:**

Ariane Grigoteit, Antje Korsmeier, Dagrūn Hintze, *Blind Date Istanbul*, exh. cat. (Sabanci Museum and Deutsche Bank, 2007)

**BOOK REPORT:**

Oleg Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament* (1992)

Week 9, Mar. 31: STUDENT PRESENTATION

Week 10, Apr. 7: STUDENT PRESENTATION

Week 11, Apr. 14: STUDENT PRESENTATION

Week 12, Apr. 21: STUDENT PRESENTATION

Week 13, Apr. 28: No Class (GN lecture at Stanford)