

Getty Consortium Seminar (Winter 2015)

An accredited seminar at the Getty Research Institute for graduate students at the University of California, Irvine; the University of California, Los Angeles; the University of California, Riverside; the University of California, San Diego; the University of California, Santa Barbara; and the University of Southern California.



Gold ornaments, in Fausto Niccolini and Felice Niccolini, eds., *Le case ed i monumenti di Pompei, disegnati et descritti* (Naples, 1854–96), vol. 4, pl. 28. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute (2598-743)

Object — Value — Canon

Offered by John K. Papadopoulos
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University of California, Los Angeles

The Getty Villa and Getty Research Institute
Fridays, 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Orientation: Getty Research Institute, Friday, December 5, 2014

Seminars: January 16, 23, 30, February 6, 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2015

This graduate seminar explores three critical terms—object, value, canon—from a variety of perspectives and across cultures and times. Few disciplines have fetishized objects as much as art history and archaeology. Traditional art-historical interpretation has proceeded from the basic description of an object to discussions about its artistic, cultural, or commercial value. From these discussions, attempts are made to place objects within a canon together with other works. For archaeologists, objects and artifacts represent the very stuff of the material record, the residue of past societies. But how meaningful are these terms, and how cogently can they be applied to different cultures and contexts? To what extent, for example, is canon a Western construct that has limited relevance to the world of the premarket economies of the Mediterranean or Oceania, or the nonmarket contexts of pre-Columbian Andean societies?

Topics and perspectives include the life histories (cultural biographies) of objects, the use of objects as social or symbolic instruments, the role of objects in the construction of categories, and the interaction between the social and technological aspects of objects. Such topics highlight the active, constitutive force of objects in social and ideological contexts, emphasizing the agency of objects in constructions of meaning and value. But how is value created, defined, and expressed in any given ancient or modern society? Why were certain materials valued over other materials by people in many different parts of the world? What qualities of physical substances were at the heart of how cultures determined, negotiated, and on occasion sanctioned value? How was value articulated?

The seminar will work closely with seminal theoretical and methodological readings in anthropology, art history, cultural geography, sociology, and literary studies, which can be applied to different cultures, contexts, and categories of objects and artworks. While individual readings may be geographically or temporally focused, we will also examine individual case studies from regions and periods beyond those of the readings. The seminar will be relevant to students across the humanities and social sciences.

To apply to participate in this seminar, please submit the following:

1) Personal information

Name, home address and phone number, campus address and phone number, e-mail address

2) Graduate transcript

(not required for students in their first term)

3) Statement of interest

No longer than one page (double-spaced) about your reasons for wanting to participate in this seminar

4) Reference

A brief recommendation (a paragraph is sufficient) from a faculty member who is familiar with your work sent by e-mail to the address below

All application materials should be sent to the Getty Research Institute by November 1, 2014.

E-mail materials to: Sabine Schlosser (sschlosser@getty.edu)

Questions about course content may be directed to John K. Papadopoulos at jkp@humnet.ucla.edu.