

HAA 1030: Special Topics – Museum Studies

**Roads of Arabia: Studying, Collecting and Displaying the Art of Arabia,  
Ancient to Modern**

Prof. Melissa Eppihimer. Fall 2013,  
T 2:30 – 4:55, #28980



Frankincense and myrrh, the Queen of Sheba, Lawrence of Arabia: these elements figure prominently in Western perceptions of Arabia. Recent discoveries in the region, however, have exposed a richer history of Arabian art and culture. In conjunction with the exhibition *Roads of Arabia* at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History (CMNH), this course surveys the visual traditions of the Arabian Peninsula from its most ancient settlements to its modern Islamic cultures and critically examines their collection and display in museums in the Middle East and abroad. The objects in the CMNH exhibition demonstrate the cross-cultural interactions between Arabia and its Near Eastern, African, Mediterranean, and Central Asian neighbors, and between indigenous beliefs, Greco-Roman religion, and Islam, that characterize the history of art in Arabia. We will analyze the exhibition's aims, methods, and composition, as well as the relationship between scholarship, display, and national identity in modern countries such as Saudi Arabia, an organizer of the exhibition, and the United Arab Emirates, the future home of outposts of the Louvre and the Guggenheim. Frequent visits to the exhibition provide intimate, once-in-a-lifetime experiences. This class could count toward the completion of the requirements for the new Museum Studies minor.

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