

Early Modern Object Itineraries: Diplomacy and Trade across and in the Indian Ocean

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The past twenty years have witnessed the rise of Indian Ocean art history as a watery rubric that eludes and exceeds the continental and religious limits defined by the conventional subfields of African, Asian, and Islamic Art. In this talk, Prof. Um will consider the rise of Indian Ocean art history as a vibrant area of study that productively forges visual and material connections across the eastern and southern hemispheres, while also positing objects as fundamental sources for the writing of oceanic histories. The talk will be grounded by two works dating to the late 17th and early 18th C. Both objects present complex itineraries of creation and far-flung itineraries of travel, even if their journeys were not, ultimately, successful. Taken together, they chart a path for Indian Ocean art history, exemplifying how this area has developed as a field of study and where it might be going in the future.



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