



7th joint event Levantine Heritage Foundation with the Royal Asiatic Society
gathering in London with guest speaker **Dr Leah R Clark**, University of Oxford
19 November 2026, 6.30 pm
Royal Asiatic Society, 14 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2HD



Early Modern Sensory Exchanges

Sensory exchanges in the early modern world occurred through the trade in objects, people, and materials. Chinese porcelain, for example, was gifted to Italian courts by Mamluk and Ottoman sultans, while aromatics from the Middle East and further afield, were sought after by European elites for their pharmacies. Many of these materials were packaged up in beautiful receptacles and accompanied by special utensils for the application and use of these spices and aromatics. How were such materials, scents, and objects utilised by beholders and to what extent did they give rise to cross-cultural exchanges and new transcultural practices? This talk will look at the lifecycle of these objects—their journeys on camel backs and ships, their role as gifts in diplomatic exchanges and objects of trade, and their uses in their new settings. Such objects tell intriguing stories that connected Germany to India, Syria to Italy, Peru to Turkey.

Booking essential: <https://leah-clark-presentation.eventbrite.co.uk>



Dr Leah R. Clark is an Associate Professor and Director of Studies in the History of Art at Oxford Lifelong Learning as well as a Fellow at Kellogg College at the University of Oxford. Her research has explored the mobility and collection of art objects in the early modern world, while her more recent work has looked to the global exchange of objects with particular attention to their associated sensorial practices. Her publications include *Early Modern Transcultural Objects* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2027), *Courtly Mediators: Transcultural Objects Between Renaissance Italy and the Islamic World* (Cambridge University Press, 2023), *Collecting Art in the Italian Renaissance Court: Objects and Exchanges* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), and *European Art and the Wider World 1350-1550*, co-edited with Kathleen Christian (Manchester University Press, 2017). She is co-curator of a major exhibition opening at the Ashmolean Museum in June 2027, [*Renaissance Worlds: Art & the Senses*](#).

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