



**Early Modern Cross-Cultural
Conversions**
Summer Research Seminar
University of Cambridge
June 28 to July 26

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Sponsored by Early Modern Conversions: Cultures, Religions, Cognitive Ecologies headquartered at the Institute for the Public Life of Arts and Ideas, McGill University, and funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

“Early Modern Cross-Cultural Conversions” is a summer seminar that addresses the theme of conversion by focusing on the mobility of people, things, and forms of knowledge across religious, social, and geographical boundaries. Cross-cultural interaction generated a rich archive of material and immaterial forms—music, clocks, textiles, clothes, books, instruments, diagrams, drawings, miniatures, portraits, maps, antiquities, paintings, performances—and opens up understanding of ways in which artifacts activated conversations and creativity. By exploring cross-cultural interaction in cosmopolitan centers, across regions, and across bodies of water, the seminar will explore conversion not only as a religious phenomenon but also as a form of early modern imagination and thinking.

Doctoral students in their final year, postdocs, and junior faculty are invited to apply to take part in the research seminar by defining projects that range in time from the late fifteenth- through the seventeenth century. Projects may attend to cross-cultural interplay and its potential to foster imagination and expressiveness, as well as ways in which play is constrained. Projects might engage with soundscapes, diplomacy, scientific exchanges, manufacturing, patterns and motifs, architectural materials, urbanism, travellers, ships, guidebooks, collecting, alchemy, geography, botany, musical repertoires, instruments, and theatre.

One premise of the seminar is that societies and cultures are always already entangled, and thus we aim to shift the focus away from terms of reference such as identity, otherness, and hybridity to processes of conversion—material and immaterial conversions, remediations, reorientations, and transformations. We will explore movement, wandering, migration, experimentation, improvisation, ornamentation, and sensation in dialogue with diverse media and spaces, as well as early modern social, religious, and political investments.

Usually meeting during the afternoons, the seminar will include discussions of readings and analysis of historical, literary, pictorial, material, and musical sources as participants refine their own projects. Cambridge allows for interaction with other researchers, including postdoctoral fellows associated with CRASSH. Fieldtrips during the seminar include King's College Chapel and the Fitzwilliam Museum, with optional visits to Holkham Hall and the exhibition of artworks from the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, then on display at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts in Norwich.

Travel and accommodation will be provided by the Early Modern Conversions Project. Seminar participants will have rooms at Selwyn College for the duration of the seminar and team meeting. At the end of the seminar, participants will participate in the annual team meeting of the Early Modern Conversions project, in Cambridge, 23-26 July. Cambridge offers rich resources for study including King's College Library, the University Library, and the city's museums. <http://www.cam.ac.uk/museums-and-collections>

Doctoral candidates in their final year of study, recent doctoral graduates, and junior faculty are invited to apply to participate. Candidates should send a cover letter, CV, research proposal (max 5pp) and article-length writing sample to conversions@mcgill.ca by 15 December 2014. Two confidential letters of recommendation should be sent to the same address by the same deadline; referees are asked to indicate the name of the candidate in the subject line of their email. At least one referee should confirm time to completion for applicants who have not yet graduated.



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