

Getty Consortium Seminar (Winter 2018)

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.

Iconoclasm as Method

Offered by Alka Patel
Getty Scholar and Associate Professor of
Art History & PhD Program in Visual Studies
University of California, Irvine

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

Orientation: Getty Research Institute, Friday, December 1, 2017
Seminars: January 12, 19, 26, February 2, 9, 23, March 2, 9, 2018



Above: Baron Alexis de La Grange (French, 1825–1917). [Arch at the Qutb Complex, Delhi] (detail, 1849–51 (negative), 1851 (print), albumen silver print from waxed paper negative, 17.5 x 21.7 cm. Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 2013.55.28.

Below: Charles Moravia (British, ca. 1821–59). [Ruins of the Qutb Mosque, Delhi] (detail, 1858, albumen silver print, 30.3 x 25.4 cm. Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007.26.204.49.

Digital images courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

"*Iconoclasm*: the breaking or destroying of images; esp. the destruction of images and pictures set up as objects of veneration; *transf.* and *fig.* the attacking or overthrow of venerated institutions and cherished beliefs, regarded as fallacious or superstitious."

—*Oxford English Dictionary* (OED)

The Getty Scholar Year theme of Iconoclasm and Vandalism is extremely timely given the willful destruction or desecration of cultural heritage, both for political propaganda and the erasure of civilizational histories, over the last several decades. Continuing incidents highlight—somewhat paradoxically—the human and cultural value of objects and sites facing imminent destruction, ultimately mobilizing governments, institutions, and individuals to implement protective measures that have been at times long overdue. In the twenty-first century, then, the interpretive fate of iconoclasm as an overwhelmingly negative historical phenomenon with little recuperative power appears to be sealed.

The long human historical and historiographical landscape displays, however, interventions into material remnants of pasts and historical presents as acts with deeply ambivalent intentions and receptions. Can all such interventions be described as iconoclastic or vandalizing? Conversely, has all iconoclasm and vandalism been unequivocally destructive?

Relying on the vast array of primary material sources spanning many centuries and cultural contexts housed at the Getty Center, the Getty Villa, and other local institutions, this seminar takes a transregional and transtemporal approach to iconoclasm and vandalism. The seminar welcomes the examination of iconoclasm and vandalism from the early centuries CE through the present day. With this inclusive and comparative approach, the seminar uses the Getty Scholar Year theme to examine the inceptions and afterlives of material-cultural interventions through time and space, equally emphasizing the creation of new cultural forms from older traditions, and the multiple historiographies ensuing from these processes.

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, 2017.

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

Questions about course content may be directed to Alka Patel at alka.patel@uci.edu.