



Urban Studies Seminar 2017–2018

Annual Theme: Urban Spaces of Leisure, Arts and Sports

Monday, 22 January 2018, 5 pm

Puppet Shows as a Form of Entertainment in Qajar Iran

Lecture by **Rehab Ibrahim ElSiedy** (Cairo University)

Venue

Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33
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In cooperation with:



Entertainment is considered as one of the most important activities in any society. Its several types and methods reflect the different faces of culture of any origin. In the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century puppet shows were a widespread entertainment medium in Qajar Iran. Although the puppet show's history is not very known in Iran, it can be traced back at least to the Safavid period. However, it seems that it was in the Qajar period that this practice and industry was developed. Puppet shows became a famous popular art for all social classes, reflecting many faces of the political, economic and cultural life of that time. On the one hand, it played an important role in what can be termed as a "gathering point" for the people in the city. Wherever it was found, there was a group of people surrounding the performance. On the other hand, the puppet show was related to other craft activities in connection with the production of the puppet itself. Only very few examples of these puppets can be found in museums nowadays. With my study I want to highlight the importance of the puppet show in the Qajar society, the themes it represented and the places where it was displayed. Additionally, I want to shed light on the production of the puppets according to some exciting examples in museums.

Dr Rehab ElSiedy is a lecturer of Islamic Archaeology at the Faculty of Archaeology at Cairo University. She got her PhD in 2010 on Islamic Archaeology, particularly, Persian art and painting during the period from the 16th to the 19th century. In her post-doctoral studies at Freie Universität Berlin, she worked on her project titled "Day of Last Judgment in Persian Painting from the 16th/10th to the 19th/13th century". At the moment her research focus is centered on Qajar art and painting.