

Iran Colloquium

Mirjam Brusius

(University of Cambridge, Yale Center for British Art)

After having read art history in Berlin, Mirjam Brusius was a PhD candidate in History of Science at the University of Cambridge, where she submitted her thesis on W.H.F. Talbot, photography and the antique this summer. During her doctorate she catalogued Talbot's notebooks at the British Library. Her postdoctoral research, to be carried out in Berlin, London, Paris and Tehran, will include a book project on the organisation and visualisation of Middle Eastern archaeological finds in 19th-century Europe; research on the history of photography in Iran; and an edited book on Talbot (YUP 2012), which she is currently preparing as a visiting scholar at the Yale Center for British Art.



The back and forth of photography.

Naser al Din Shah and images of transmission between 19th century Europe and Qajar Iran

The collection of 19th century photographs at the Golestan Palace in Tehran, Iran, has been largely neglected by European historians of photography, though it is remarkable for two reasons: First, because photography in Iran arrived shortly after its invention had been announced in Europe,

making the collection particularly rich in its holdings of early photographs of the Middle East. Second, because it was the Shah, Naser al-Din himself, who promoted the medium and became himself a photographer. This makes this royal collection a visual source documenting the Shah himself, a country and its people - partly seen through the royal lens - while at the same time reflecting contemporary interests of power and hegemony; especially the Shahs interest in diplomatic relationships to Europe. This talk will explore in how far these images are problematic and ambiguous reflections of orientalist and self-orientalist attempts to shape the image of Persia and its people.

Friday, September 23rd
12:00-1:30 in HGS 204

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