4.619

HISTORIOGRAPHY of ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

This seminar offers a critical review of scholarship on Islamic art and architecture through close reading of scholarly texts, museum exhibitions, and architectural projects. It addresses methodological and historiographical questions about the field's formation, genealogy, recent expansion, and its evolving historical and theoretical contours. One paramount methodological issue is how can we study a culturally defined tradition, like Islamic art and architecture, without reducing it to an essential and timeless category? Another corollary issue is how can we critique the dominant Western architectural paradigm without discarding the idea of paradigm or turning away from its comparative potential? Two historiographical questions will also frame our discussions: how can we rethink periodization in Islamic art/architectural history in a more reflective way without cutting it off from the global historical framework? And how can we recover the presumed temporal boundaries of Islamic art/architecture — Late Antiquity before and Modernism as a separate after— as constitutive stages?