



***From “Fuzzy” to “Eclectic” and Everything in Between: Intercultural Encounters in the Pre-Modern World***

**April 14 – April 15, 2023; New Haven, CT  
Yale University**

In-person Graduate Conference hosted by the **History of Art Department’s Pre/Early Modern Forum** and generously sponsored by **Yale History of Art, Early Modern Studies, Council for East Asian Studies, and Medieval Studies**

**Keynote Speaker:** Holly Schafer, Assistant Professor of History of Art and Architecture, Brown University

The pre-modern world was shaped by encounters and engagements that spanned geographical, cultural, political, and temporal boundaries. Scholars have employed a variety of terms to describe such moments of convergence, including “hybridity,” “creolization,” “syncretism,” “eclecticism,” and even “fuzziness.”

In 2009, historians Sünne Jüterczenka and Gesa Mackenthun used the mathematical concept of “fuzzy logic” as a framework for examining the entanglements, ambiguities, and mutual impacts resulting from interactions between multiple cultures. “Fuzzy logic” argues for the presence of multiple truth values on a spectrum from absolute truth to falsehood. It allows for the exploration of blurred boundaries and the diffusion of practices. More recently, art historian Holly Schafer employs the term “eclecticism” to describe intercultural objects whose disparate elements retain their independence while creating a new form. Broadly defined as a practice inspired by a multiplicity of cultural, artistic, and stylistic sources, eclecticism provides a way of thinking about the intercultural nature of the pre-modern world.

Building on these concepts, the Pre/Early Modern Forum invites graduate students working in the humanities to explore all things “eclectic” and “fuzzy” that complicate cultural and geographical boundaries in the pre-1800 world. We encourage submissions from all geographical distinctions, especially those that explore topics related to East Asia. Interrogating the ways in which intercultural encounters blur and maintain boundaries, the conference aims to foster creative and innovative dialogue across cultures, regions, time periods, and disciplines.

**Possible topics include, but are not limited to:**

- Contact zones, intersectionality, and peripheries
- Movement of objects, people, and ideas across boundaries
- Authorship and ownership
- Translation and transcription

- Religious proselytization and conversion
- Micro-histories addressing specific instances of encounter
- Gift exchange, diplomacy, and trade
- Technology and methodology
- Patronage and collecting
- Power dynamics within systems of colonialism
- Identity formation and articulation

Interested participants are invited to submit an abstract of no more than 300 words, along with a short biography, to [yalepemf@gmail.com](mailto:yalepemf@gmail.com) by **Monday, January 2, 2023**. Accepted participants will be notified in late-January. Accommodation will be provided for all participants. At this time, we are planning for an in-person symposium but will adapt to a virtual format if Covid-19 conditions and University policies change.