

The mystery of the 'sphero-conical vessel': experimental archaeology to contemporary making

Webinar, Friday 15th December 2023, 2-5pm GMT
Hosted by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London



The so-called 'sphero-conical vessel' is one of the most enigmatic objects in Islamic art. They are found on archaeological sites across the Middle East and in museum collections around the globe. They are difficult to date, and many theories circulate about their function and contents, from their use as grenades in military operations, to containers for fermented drinks. Several scholars are currently revisiting these questions from a variety of perspectives, and these mysterious objects also appeal to contemporary artists, including Iranian ceramic artist Shahpour Pouyan, current Middle East Ceramics Fellow at the V&A.

Join us online for an informal webinar in which colleagues from around the world will share their research and we will debate these different perspectives. No need to register, just follow the link below to join our Teams meeting:

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MzQ3YWE1MDAtODFmYS00YzUyLTkyY2UtMzQzZTYxMzEyYzQy%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%226d72a8a6-623e-42c4-b817-045b4df2add4%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%229eb86712-81e4-4bec-8702-2a41e412ca57%22%7d

Programme:

Valentina Vezzoli, Assistant Professor, Università degli studi di Udine
Sphero-Conical vessels and some enigmatic scratches: archaeological perspectives from Baalbek

Martina Rugiadi, Associate Curator, Department of Islamic Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Kissing the Lips of Fuqqā'. Ironic texts on bubbly drinks, drinking etiquettes, and grape-shaped vessels

Kyra Kaercher, Assistant Professor of Biology/General Science, Montana State University-Northern
Luxury liquids, explosive devices, or both? Insights from scientific studies of spheroconical vessels

Mennat-Allah El Dorry, American University in Cairo/Ain Shams University, Egypt

Jane Smythe, Head of Exhibitions and Programming, Red Sea Museum, Saudi Arabia

Julie Monchamp, Postdoc at CNRS (Ciham-Lyon), France

Frits Heinrich, Assistant Professor of Ancient History, Agricultural History and Food History, Vrije Universiteit Brussels, Belgium

Studies in Fuqqā'a: New Ways of Approaching an Explosive Drink

Shahpour Pouyan, contemporary ceramic artist, Iran/UK

Failed Vessels

Organiser and chair: Mariam Rosser-Owen, Curator Middle East, Victoria and Albert Museum, London