

Tuesday, April 21, 2009

3.30 – 5.00 pm

Raynor Library Conference Center, Suite A

VISUAL CULTURES OF WORLD RELIGIONS

Since religious rituals and practices have been recognized to contain an aesthetic as well as an emotional dimension, visual experiences have become an important topic in religious studies. Perspectives of viewing (gaze) the divine differ between religions based on theological presumptions and rituals. For example, Hindus practice *darshan* which means an exchange of gazes between anthropomorphic and zoomorphic gods and believers, the Near Eastern monotheistic tradition in contrast displays many rules to represent God in a perceivable form that still hides the divine's true essence. Thus even though there is a difference in the modality of representation, many religions rely on visual aids in seeking the experience of the divine.

This presentation will guide us through some theoretical and methodological questions while showing relevant examples from the visual cultures in world religions.



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