"SCRAMBLE FOR THE PAST: A STORY OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, 1753-1914" INTERPRETATION PACK

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO SALT

SALT explores critical and timely issues in visual and material culture, and cultivates innovative programs for research and experimental thinking. Assuming an open attitude and establishing itself as a site of learning and debate, SALT aims to challenge, excite and provoke its visitors by encouraging them to offer critique and response. SALT hosts exhibitions, conferences and public programs; engages in interdisciplinary research projects; and maintains a library and archive of recent art, architecture, design, urbanism, and social and economic histories to make them available for research and public use.

An essential part of SALT's programming is developing ongoing, collaborative partnerships with schools, community and civic organizations through its Interpretation Program. SALT Interpretation is free, and seeks to engage young people through exhibition tours, moving image programs and artist-led collaborative projects. SALT also creates online curriculum guides (Interpretation Packs) for schools and youth organizations, which feature discussion topics, activities and educational resources to accompany each exhibition.


SALT's activities are distributed between two landmark buildings located in walking distance to each other, and also shared via www.saltonline. org. The first building, SALT Beyoğlu, whose program and circulation interiors are dedicated to exhibition and event spaces, opened April 9 on Istiklal Avenue. The second building, SALT Galata, is the former 19th century Imperial Ottoman Bank headquarters designed by Alexandre Vallaury. SALT Galata opens November 2011.

"SCRAMBLE FOR THE PAST: A STORY OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, 1753-1914"

Scramble for the Past: A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, 1753-1914 is one of the opening exhibitions at SALT Galata. The exhibition covers the rich and intricate story of archaeology in the Near East in a chronological narrative from the perspective of selected archaeological sites. Parallel to works claiming a Eurocentric, universally "classical" heritage, the exhibition will focus on the Ottoman historical account, following the path from the establishment of the British Museum, the first museum in the modern context, to that of the Pious Foundations in the Ottoman Empire (today's Turkish and Islamic Art Museum).

The exhibition was conceptualized and prepared by Zainab Bahrani, Zeynep Çelik and Edhem Eldem. A commissioned installation by Celine Condorelli functions as a support structure for the exhibition, with graphic design by Aslı Altay. In addition, two specially composed installations by artists Mark Dion and Michael Rakowitz further address some of the issues raised by the conceptual framework of the exhibition and touch on our everyday understanding of and relationship to the field of archaeology.

In connection with the exhibition, a book edited by its organizers will be published in both English and Turkish.

Plate 31. Assyrian Rock Sculpture \ Bavian
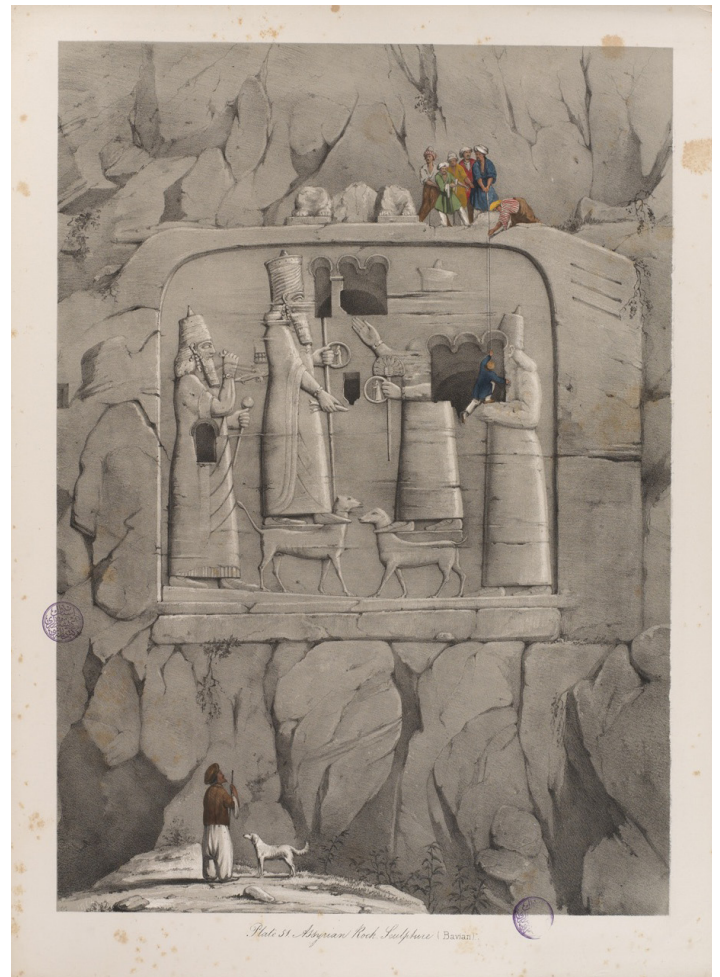
TO EDUCATORS

HOW TO USE THESE MATERIALS

This SALT Interpretation Pack has been designed as a resource for you and your students as you explore the *Scramble for the Past* exhibition. It is our hope that, as a resource with the objective of stimulating dialogue, the following materials will not act as an authority on the concepts they introduce, but rather will encourage students towards further exploration and study, towards active discussion, and towards critical thinking about the exhibitions and their themes.

Included in this Interpretation Pack are:

— *Opening Discussion: Scramble for the Past*
— *Recycling the Past*
— *Research & Discuss: The Ishtar Gate*
— *Closing Discussion: Modern Heritage Politics*
— *Additional Resources*

Each unit includes classroom activities, multi-media resources, terminology and opportunities for discussion; we encourage you to adapt, shape and build upon these materials to best meet the needs of your students and teaching curriculum. for discussion; we encourage you to adapt, shape and build upon these materials to best meet the needs of your students and teaching curriculum.
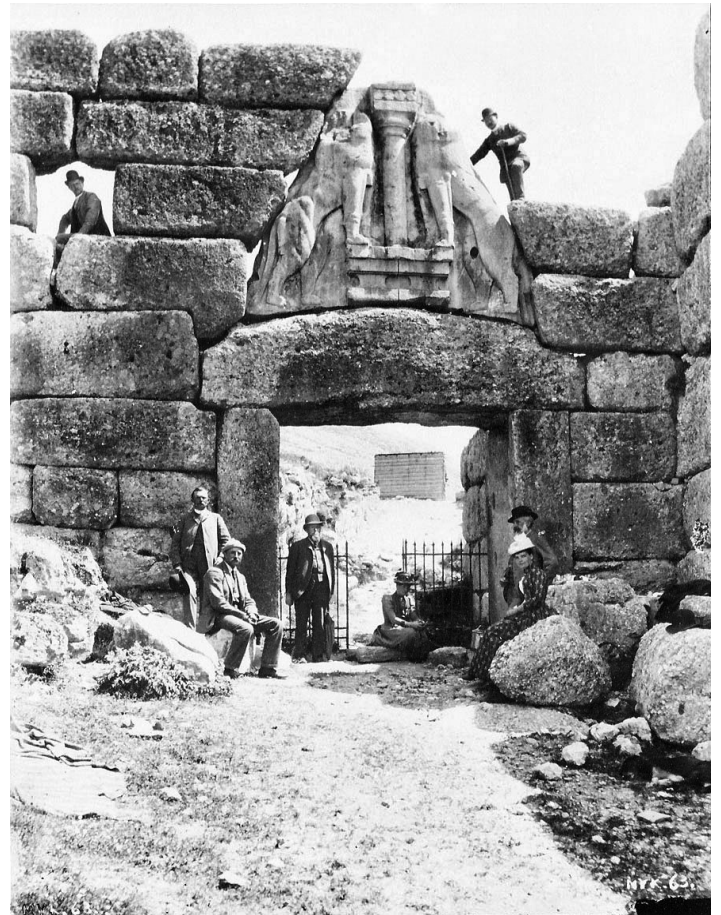
Heinrich Schliemann at the Lion Gate at Mycenae, 1884

OPENING DISCUSSION: SCRAMBLE FOR THE PAST

The 1753 founding of the British Museum marked the beginning of European museums' collection of antiquities. From this moment through the 18th and 19th centuries, European countries—primarily Britain, France and Germany—hurried to accumulate as many artifacts as possible. On one hand, this urgency was connected to a competition for power in the Near East. On the other, particularly when artifacts featured ancient Greek or Roman elements, Europeans considered discoveries in this region to be rooted in their own history. While the objects they found were geographically located in the Ottoman Empire—and, thus, far from Europe—archaeologists did not consider antiquities to be belonging to the Ottomans, but rather to their own empires.

An example of the race for antiquities can be seen in the history of the Parthenon frieze. Between 1801 and 1812, the majority of the frieze and several of its statues were removed from the nearly 2500-year-old temple on the Acropolis in Athens and shipped to Britain. Leading this initiative was 7th Earl of Elgin Thomas Bruce—at the time, British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. Whether the removal of the frieze out of the country, which Elgin insisted was conducted under an Ottoman firman (see definition on the following page), was legal remains contested. Coined the "Elgin Marbles," the ruins were moved to the British Museum in London, where they continue to be exhibited today.

The Ottoman Empire's attitude towards the excavation and removal of antiquities was initially liberal. However, as it became more apparent the political and economic importance of these objects, the government became more active in protecting these sites. After 1869, several laws prohibiting the export of antiquities were issued, and in 1891, as a means to assert the Ottoman Empire's claim to its own archaeology, Osman Hamdi Bey established the Imperial Museum (today's İstanbul Archaeological Museums) to house excavated objects.

Parthenon (Acropolis, Athens), ca. 1802. Artist Giovanni Battista prepares to remove the marbles.

Elgin Marbles in the British Museum

As an entry point for students to explore the themes of *Scramble for the Past*, we suggest leading a discussion around the race for antiquities during this period, and the resulting movement of artifacts from one site to another. What does it mean to move an object from its original context, and what role does archaeology play in this practice?

DISCUSSION
— *When an artifact belongs to an era predating current borders and national divisions, who do you believe "owns" it?*
— *Why do you think competition between countries over artifacts during the 18th and 19th centuries was so intense? What economic or political benefits might the ownership of antiquities bring?*
— *What are the benefits are to keeping an artifact in its original site vs. moving it to a museum? What are the disadvantages?*
— *Do you know of any antiquities that have been removed from your country? Where are they now? Is this an issue for people living in your country today?*

Osman Hamdi Bey at Nemrud, 1899

TERMINOLOGY
Antiquities — Relics or monuments (as coins, statues, or buildings) of ancient times
Archaeology — The scientific study of material remains (as fossil relics, artifacts, and monuments) of past human life and activities
Civilization — An organized culture encompassing many communities, often on the scale of a nation or a people; a stage or system of social, political or technical development
Empire — A political unit having an extensive territory or comprising a number of territories or nations and ruled by a single supreme authority
Firman — a royal mandate or decree issued by a sovereign in certain historical Islamic states
Frieze — in architecture, the part of an entablature between the architrave and the cornice
Ottoman Empire — a Turkish empire that lasted from 1299 until 1923. In the 16th and 17th centuries it controlled territory in southeastern Europe, southwestern Asia and North Africa. After 1453, the capital of the Ottoman Empire was Constantinople/İstanbul.

RECYCLING THE PAST

INTRODUCTION

In the fields of design, architecture and fashion, we constantly see old ideas reinterpreted to meet the needs of the present. But recycling the past is nothing new. European states of the 18th and 19th centuries took inspiration from their predecessors, imitating the design elements of ancient Greece and Rome in their monuments, gardens and paintings. After the founding of the new German Empire in 1871, for example, the country demonstrated its power and separation from former, monarchical styles with structures that echoed those of Classical Antiquity. Germany's parliament (Reichstag), Brandenburg Gate and Berlin Victory Column all feature classical elements, including columns and statues of ancient Greek and Roman gods.

Beyond the simple mirroring of architectural styles, the desire to appropriate the past has, historically, also come with negative consequences. While European archaeological expeditions in the Ottoman Empire were conducted with the pretense of "saving" objects from theft or destruction by locals, in many cases, archaeologists were removing antiquities out of the region without permission—by definition, looting. Even today, we see the practice of looting continue. During the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, for example, thousands of artifacts were stolen from the country's National Museum and many archaeological sites plundered. The number of objects taken during this period is estimated to be several hundreds of thousands.

What makes some objects—some histories— more valuable than others? The question of the things, styles and ideas we keep and reuse vs. those we leave behind becomes entirely subjective, depending largely on the inclinations and interests of a specific moment in time.

Michael Rakowitz, *The Invisible Enemy Should Not Exist*, 2007

In RECYCLING THE PAST: SESSION ONE, your students will study the re-use of classical Greek and Roman design elements in 18th and 19th century architecture. In SESSION TWO, taking a closer look at the idea of "value," they will consider *Scramble for the Past* artist Michael Rakowitz's *For what it's worth…* Responding to this work, students will collect and display objects from their homes or daily lives that they feel hold archaeological importance due to their connections to the past—or their potential to illustrate contemporary society for future generations.

OBJECTIVES

— *To consider art, architecture and design in the context of intellectual, social and political history*
— *To explore the recycling of ancient Greek and Roman design in the staging of European empires*
— *To critically examine the concept of historical value*

TERMINOLOGY

Appropriation — the act of taking something for one's own use, typically without the owner's permission

Artifact — something created by humans usually for a practical purpose; an object remaining from a particular period

Classical antiquity — a broad term for a long period of cultural history centered on the Mediterranean Sea, comprising the interlocking civilizations of ancient Greece and ancient Rome

Looting — to engage in robbing or plundering especially in war

British Museum

RECYCLING THE PAST: SESSION ONE

MATERIALS: Computer or library access for research purposes, scanner, Internet, projector (optional)

1. Print and distribute this page, or use a projector to show students images of the Marble Arch, the Arch of Titus and the Arc de Trimophe to the right. While the Arch of Titus was built in the Ancient Roman period, the Marble Arch and Arc de Triomphe were designed and constructed in the 19th century. Which classical features do students see mirrored in these later structures?

2. Now, divide your class into groups of 4 or 5. Assign each group one of the following buildings or monuments:
a) Panthéon — Paris, France
b) White House — Washington, DC, USA
c) Arc de Triomphe — Paris, France
d) St. Isaac's Cathedral — St. Petersburg, Russia
e) British Museum — London, England
f) Marble Arch — London, England
g) Victory Column — Berlin, Germany
h) Reichstag (Parliament) — Berlin, Germany

3. Either as a homework assignment or in a school library or computer lab, groups will research their structures. Ask each group to answer the following questions:
a) What kind of building is this? What is its function?
b) Who commissioned this building? Who paid for it?
c) In what kind of place is this building situated? (For example, is it located in a square or a park? Is it in the city center or on its peripheries?)
d) Is there a specific historical moment connected to the construction of this building?

Arch of Titus, Rome (81 AD)

Marble Arch, London (1828)

4. After this research period, in a class discussion, ask students to identify similarities between the characteristics of the Arch of Titus and the buildings they researched from the 18th and 19th centuries. Again, which architectural features do they see inspired by the past?

DISCUSSION
— *Which classical architectural features do you see mirrored in buildings and monuments of the 18th and 19th centuries?*
— *In your own city, have you seen this same re-use of design or architectural features? If so, where?*
— *What do you think the reasons are for imitating old styles in architecture and design? What might be the incentive for countries to make visual reference to a specific historical period?*

Arch de Triomphe, Paris (1806-1836)

RECYCLING THE PAST: SESSION TWO

MATERIALS: Found objects, digital or mobile phone cameras (if available)

In 2010, artist Michael Rakowitz was commissioned by SALT to produce an art installation exploring how archaeological practice can function within the everyday, in reference to the historical narrative of the *Scramble for the Past* exhibition. Spending a month in İstanbul exploring the city's historical sites and antique shops, Michael discovered what valuable items, random objects and even rubbish had been left behind. One discovery that particularly inspired him was a caption displayed in the İstanbul Mosaic Museum referring to archaeologists' use of trash located around mosaics to date these decorative floor works.

      With these ideas in mind, Michael invited students in İstanbul to select objects from their homes or daily lives that they felt could hold archaeological importance. These items had to, in some way, express living conditions in İstanbul today, the social communities that live or lived here, and the current tastes, attitudes and economic circumstances of everyday life. A bit like an *Antiques Roadshow* valuation, Michael met with students in the *Scramble for the Past* exhibition space to discuss the meaning of their objects. If selected, students were given the option to lend their items for the duration of the exhibition, or to donate them to SALT's permanent collection. These objects are now on display in the Scramble for the Past exhibition at SALT Galata with a museum label citing the owner and the object's relevance to the project.

      As a class, visit the *Scramble for the Past* exhibition at SALT Galata. Responding to Michael Rakowitz's piece, students will create their own installation of historically "valuable" objects.

For what it's worth… workshop with Beyoğlu İTO Kız Teknik & Meslek Lisesi students, November 4, 2011.

For what it's worth… workshop with Avusturya Lisesi students, November 3, 2011.

1. Begin this activity at SALT Galata with a discussion around Michael Rakowitz's *For what it's worth...* What kinds of objects make up the installation? Do students believe these objects hold archaeological value? Why or why not?

2. Back in the classroom, engage students in a conversation around "value". What aspects or remnants of the past do they consider valuable, vs. worthless? Note that these can range from design elements and styles, to ideas or political movements.

3. In response to Michael Rakowitz's piece, students will create their own group installation. As a homework assignment, ask students to bring one object to class that they believe could be considered of value in terms of its potential to represent life in İstanbul today to future generations.

4. Give students the opportunity to present their objects to the class. If digital or mobile phone cameras are readily available, ask students to photograph their objects and upload these images to the web, creating an online album and discussion forum that features your students' items and the outcomes of their conversations around historical value.

DISCUSSION
— *What are the different ways we define "value"? For example, what is the difference between something that is economically valuable, vs. those things that are historically, culturally or socially valuable?*
— *Of the objects displayed in Michael Rakowitz's installation, were there any contributions that surprised you? What was the nature of these objects' value?*
— *Who do you believe decides what parts of the past are worth keeping, vs. those that are not? When you compare your object with those of your classmates, do you see "value" as a subjective concept?*

RESEARCH & DISCUSS: THE ISHTAR GATE

In 2007, *Scramble for the Past* artist Michael Rakowitz created *The invisible enemy should not exist*, an exhibition around artifacts stolen from the National Museum of Iraq. Raising questions around these objects' whereabouts, as well as the series of events surrounding the invasion and the museum's plundering, the centerpiece of Rakowitz's project was a series of sculptures symbolizing an attempt to reconstruct looted archaeological artifacts. These reconstructions were made from the packaging of Middle Eastern foodstuffs and Arabic newspapers—items emblematic to Iraqi society and found throughout the US. The exhibition represented the beginning of an ongoing commitment to recuperate the over 7,000 objects that remain missing.

The exhibition took its title from the direct translation of Aj-ibur-shapu, the ancient Babylonian processional way that ran through the Ishtar Gate. Included are Rakowitz's drawings of the gate's excavation and removal from Iraq in 1914 by German archeologist Robert Koldewey. Today, a reconstruction of the gate from materials excavated by Koldewey is part of the permanent collection of the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, while several original pieces are displayed in museums worldwide, including the İstanbul Archaeological Museums. In the 1950s, the Iraqi government rebuilt the gate near a reconstruction of the ancient city of Babylon, created by Saddam Hussein as a monument to his own sovereignty. The reconstructed Ishtar Gate is the site most frequently photographed and posted on the Internet by US servicemen stationed in Iraq.

As an extension to the previous activities, give your students the opportunity to independently research the various incarnations of the Ishtar Gate of Babylon. If possible, as a class, visit the İstanbul Archaeological Museums to see pieces of the gate in its collection—and to continue your discussion around the movement of antiquities, appropriation and the recycling of the past. The museum is open Monday to Friday, 9.30 – 17.00; entrance is free for students.

Ishtar Gate, Pergamon Museum, Berlin

DISCUSSION
— *How do you think the movement and reconstruction of an archaeological object changes its meaning? In the different incarnations of the Ishtar Gate, for example, do you see the significance or visual impact of this monument change?*
— *What do you think the reasons are for appropriating old styles in architecture and design? What might be the incentive for countries to make visual reference to a specific historical period?*
— *What are the benefits are to keeping an artifact in its original site vs. moving it to a museum? What are the disadvantages?*

INTERPRETATION PACK

CLOSING DISCUSSION: MODERN HERITAGE POLITICS

After visiting the *Scramble for the Past* exhibition and engaging in some of the supplemental discussions and activities included in this Interpretation Pack, your students have considered the recycling of elements of the past; explored cultural appropriation in the context of archaeology; and critically examined why particular objects, ideas and histories are deemed to have "value".

As a conclusion to your students' experience of the exhibition, we suggest building a conversation around contemporary heritage politics. Today, artifacts and ruins deemed to have "outstanding universal value" and which meet specific criteria are added to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) World Heritage List. Inclusion on the World Heritage List prioritizes the protection of sites from destruction, decay or removal. For a country to have a site included on the World Heritage List is very important, as nominations can stimulate tourism, attract commerce, and promote positive national and regional identities. World Heritage Sites include India's Taj Mahal, the fortified city of Hatra in Iraq, and Old Havana, Cuba.

Being on the World Heritage List can also, however, have negative consequences. Granting heritage status to sites without adequate infrastructure (garbage collection, toilets, transportation, etc.) can mean that spikes in tourism actually further damage the site. Furthermore, in granting heritage status, UNESCO claims the right to all future decision-making around that site; thus, no sites can be renovated without UNESCO's approval. A recent example of tension between preservation and modernization can be observed in İstanbul, which, since 2006, has been under threat of having its heritage status revoked if specific structures—for example, timber housing in Süleymaniye and Zeyrek, and the old city walls—are not protected and renovated.

Stephan Petermann, SALT Beyoğlu, September 16, 2011

UNESCO has also expressed concern around Golden Horn metro construction and the Marmaray rail project, an undersea rail tunnel planned to connect İstanbul's European and Anatolian shores. While both these projects will ease traffic congestion, conservationists fear construction will have irreversible effects on the environment and the city's skyline.

Watch the video above of architect Stephan Petermann discussing heritage preservation and the difficulty of defining "heritage". After watching the video, as a class, consider the current conflict around İstanbul's UNESCO status. What impact does heritage have upon a city and its residents?

DISCUSSION
— *What is your opinion of heritage politics in İstanbul? Do you think it is possible to both protect ancient sites and create new urban infrastructure?*
— *If given the task of creating criteria for heritage sites, what would these qualities be?*
— *Who do you believe should decide what objects, sites, etc. should be preserved and how they should ultimately be used?*
— *Do you think it is possible to talk of a "universal value"—that something can be important and valuable on a global level?*

TERMINOLOGY
Cultural heritage — the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations
Infrastructure — the system of public works of a country, state, or region; also : the resources (as personnel, buildings, or equipment) required for an activity.
Preservation — keeping safe from injury, harm, or destruction
UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) — a specialized agency of the United Nations. Its stated purpose is to contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration through education, science, and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, the rule of law, and the human rights along with fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the UN Charter. It is the heir of the League of Nations' International Commission on Intellectual Cooperation.
Universal — present or occurring everywhere
World Heritage List — List of those properties UNESCO considers to have "outstanding universal value" and thus making up universal cultural and natural heritage

Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan examines a model of a planned bridge over the Golden Horn that will connect the metro line in Taksim to the Marmaray project (*Today's Zaman*, May 8, 2011)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WEB RESOURCES

SALT Online | saltonline.org

İstanbul Archaeological Museums
istanbularkeoloji.gov.tr/main_page

UNESCO World Heritage List
whc.unesco.org/en/list

BOOKS & ARTICLES

The Iliad (800 BC)
Homer

Troy and Its Remains (1875)
Heinrich Schliemann

"İstanbul teeters on brink of UNESCO's troubled
list" (June 25, 2010)
Hürriyet Daily News

"Is UNESCO damaging the world's treasures?"
(April 29, 2009)
The Independent

AUDIO GUIDE

Soundcloud.com/salt-online

Detail of the Alexander Sarcophagus in the İstanbul Archaeology
Museums