



**Urban Studies Seminar 2017–2018**  
**Annual Theme:**  
**Urban Spaces of Leisure, Arts and Sports**

Monday, 20 November 2017, 5 pm



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**Beautifying Istanbul:  
Intimate Encounters and Concerns  
in Urban Beauty Salons**

Lecture by **Claudia Liebelt** (University of Bayreuth)

Based on anthropological research in Istanbul between 2011 and 2015, the lecture describes a changing urban geography of beauty, which has multiple repercussions on spatialized notions of femininity, intimate bodily grooming, and aesthetics. Beauty salons in two urban neighborhoods typically placed on different ends of both the social and the Islamist-secularist axes highlight similarities and differences of intimate encounters and concerns in the city. Urban beauty salons are social spaces where publicly debated ideals of femininity and sexuality are visibly manufactured, and those involved have to negotiate new styles of bodily appearance and forms of intimate relations. Beauty salon customers and workers create strategies to deal with (bodily) intimacy and test the moral, social, and religious boundaries of what is attractive, respectable, or permissible. Following interlocutors' narratives, the talk probes the conceptualization of a linked "beautification" of urban bodies and spaces in a particular "neo-libidinal" economy.

**Claudia Liebelt** has completed her Ph.D. in Social Anthropology in Halle and is assistant professor at the Chair for Social Anthropology in Bayreuth. She also is the research director of a project financed by the German Research Foundation on Aesthetic Body Modifications and Femininity in a Global City: Cultures of Beauty in Istanbul. Her last article is "Grooming Istanbul: Intimate Encounters and Body Work in Turkish Beauty Salons", *Journal of the Middle East Women's Studies* 12 (2): 181-202. Her research interests include urban anthropology, the anthropology of the body, beauty and aesthetic body modifications, migration and citizenship, gender, care and domestic work, as well as medical anthropology.

**Venue**

Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient  
Kirchweg 33  
14129 Berlin

**In cooperation with:**

