



Twice a month,
Mondays 5 pm - 7 pm

Venue:

Conference Hall
Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33
14129 Berlin-Nikolassee

Participants are asked to register
at the following address:

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the Zentrum Moderner Orient
(ZMO) and 'Europe in the Middle
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(EUME).

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www.zmo.de
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Urban Studies Seminar 2012 - 2013

Chaired by Prof. Ulrike Freitag and Dr. Nora Lafi

Annual Theme: Cities as Laboratories of Change

Monday, January 14th, 2013, 5 pm - 7 pm

Feelings in Times of Change: Emotional Practices and Urban Transformation in Cairo, 1860-1880

Lecture by Joseph Ben Prestel

In the second half of the 19th c. Cairo entered a period of tremendous urban transformation. Whereas the city had seen several important changes earlier in the century as a result of the reforms under Muḥammad 'Alī and his successors, the ambitious program of urban renewal implemented during the reign of Khedive Ismā'īl (1863-1879) represented an even more intensified transformation. During this period, new buildings, neighborhoods, and spaces designed for leisure, such as the opera house and Azbakiya Gardens, were added to the cityscape, increasing the surface area of the Egyptian capital by around 25 percent. At the same time, other dynamics such as the growth of the state apparatus and the increasing number of manumitted slaves in the wake of the Anglo-Egyptian slave trade convention of 1877 altered the social fabric of the city. In this presentation, J. Ben Prestel will look at the connection between these dynamics and the inhabitants of the city. More precisely, he will engage the premises of a history of emotions in order to link the question of urban change in Cairo to a change in the notion of "urban" dwellers that began to be adopted in the second half of the nineteenth century. To this end, his study focuses on shifts in what can be understood as "emotional practices" - practices that contemporaries framed as liminal, connecting body and mind, 'individual' and 'collective.' Drawing on accounts of urban change from the emerging *afandiya*, as well as police records, J. Ben Prestel's work considers two very different, yet intersecting arenas of such practices: prostitution and intellectual production. By looking at these two areas, J. Ben Prestel seeks to understand how changes in social relations and the cityscape could contribute to a reframing of the subjectivity of historical actors in the city.

Joseph Ben Prestel is a PhD candidate at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, where he is part of the Research Center for the History of Emotions. He is currently working on a dissertation about urban emotions in Berlin and Cairo between 1860 and 1914. He studied history and political science at the Free University in Berlin, New-York University, and Sciences-Po Paris. His research interests include the history of emotions, global history, Egyptian history and German history.