

## Cultural Heritage And Preservation Studies (CHAPS)



### lecture series: **CULTURAL HERITAGE NOW**

Featuring Dr. Mirjam Brusius

## What's behind the front stage? Museum storage, preservation, repatriation

The history of museums has mostly centered around questions of exhibiting, display and spectatorship. But museums do not just consist of exhibition halls. They are composed of vast hidden spaces, where the majority of museum objects are kept. In this talk Dr. Mirjam Brusius will address the binary between "display" and "backstage" of museums from a historical angle. Backstage areas were never simply areas where potential display objects are kept. They performed functions that, when studied, reveal deep purposes of the museum that go well beyond a mere history of display. They often included archives, study centers and libraries, which were places of scholarly encounter. The talk will also raise some fundamental questions about the nature of museums today. Why do museums store objects they might never display, and which intentions might those objects fulfil? These questions seem to matter more than ever since calls for the repatriation of certain objects have become the focus of public debates in Europe in the recent years.

### Bio

Dr. Mirjam Brusius is a research fellow in Colonial and Global History at the German Historical Institute London (GHIL). She holds degrees in History of Art and Cultural Studies (MA Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin 2007) and History and Philosophy of Science (PhD University of Cambridge 2011). Her current interests concern the history of archaeology, the history of heritage, the history of photography, and the tensions between preservation and destruction in the Middle East and Europe. She recently co-edited (with Kavita Singh) "Museum Storage and Meaning: Tales from the Crypt" (Routledge, 2018).

### Details

Tuesday September 17  
2:50pm

Zimmerli Art Museum  
Education Room