

“The Sea, the sea!” Art, Activism and Guantánamo

Erin L. Thompson

Monday, November 5th 12 to 1:30 pm in HG 1030



Erin is Associate Professor of Art Crime at New York's John Jay College of Criminal Justice, with a J.D. from Columbia Law School, Certificate in Global Business Law from the Sorbonne, both a Ph.D. and M. Philosophy in Art History from Columbia and a BA in Art History and Philosophy from Barnard. Her recent book, *Possession: The Curious History of Private Collectors*, covers the history of private collecting of Greek and Roman Antiquities. She is currently researching the ways in which terrorist groups both sell and destroy art to support their genocidal campaigns, as well as the legalities and ethics of digital reproductions of cultural heritage.



Muhammad Ansi, *Sailboats in Yellows*

Professor Thompson recently curated an exhibit in New York City of Guantánamo Bay detainees' art, most of whom have never faced trial or even had charges filed against them, their release still uncertain. Their artworks have been among the only ways detainees could communicate with the outside world - until the Pentagon declared it would no longer allow detainee-made art to leave Guantánamo.

Professor Thompson will discuss the exhibit and its consequences, her work with former detainees, the unlikely way their paintings of the sea reopened the debate on the future of Guantánamo, as well as its legal aspects, including analyzing the basis for the Pentagon's disputed claim that detainee-produced artworks is government property, possible ways to preserve detainee art, and the government's response to a filing seeking release of detainee art (citing a Japanese internment case as precedent for government freedom to conduct war by any means necessary.)