CALL FOR PAPERS
“Making Sense of Islam”
Sensuality and Affect in the Muslim Humanities

“The humanities can be described as the study of the myriad ways in which people, from every period of history and from every corner of the globe, process and document the human experience.” (The Human Experience, Stanford University).

On behalf of the Duke-UNC Graduate Islamic Studies Conference, we are pleased to accept abstracts for our ninth annual conference. With this year’s conference, we hope to mark a turn from a bounded study of the “Islamic sciences” to a more capacious engagement with Muslim articulations of the human experience in its multiple dimensions. This engagement with human experience both incorporates and moves beyond the intellectual to include the body, affect, sensation, and arts as sites of understanding. We hope to generate an interdisciplinary conversation about how diverse Muslim traditions—ritual, ceremonial, artistic, literary, philosophical, and legal—participate in and invoke the sensate and the affective. We thus interpret the humanities broadly in terms of human experience, not limiting our investigations to specific literary genres.

We are interested in receiving papers that explore this theme through a variety of topics in the study of Islam. We invite papers from a range of disciplines (including but not limited to art and art history, design, geography, literature, music, philosophy, political science, religious studies, cultural anthropology, history and sociology) that examine such questions within historical and contemporary Islamicate contexts.

Possible themes for papers include but are not limited to:

- The visual language of Islamic design and architecture
- Sensation in classical & modern Prose and poetry
- Cultural institutions and practices for sensing the supernatural
- The choreography of religious ceremony
- The physical and material evocation of memory
- Trends in modern Muslim art and artists
- Philosophical and scientific theories of human sensation
- Sight, memory, and sound as evidence in Islamic Law

As a hallmark of the Duke-UNC Islamic Studies Conference, we will provide opportunity for interactive, deliberative, and inter-disciplinary engagement with scholarly work in progress by gathering in an intimate workshop format. We expect that those invited to present papers will remain present for the duration of the conference in order to engage the other participants in a true exchange of ideas. Lunch and refreshments will be provided on both days, and a formal dinner will be held on Saturday night.

Limited financial assistance to cover travel expenses will be offered to those who demonstrate financial need and do not receive funding from their home institutions.

Proposal Submission Requirements:
Please submit at minimum a 1,000-word detailed abstract accompanied by a working bibliography and CV to DUKEUNCconf@gmail.com by December 15, 2011. Submissions that include a written paper are highly preferred. Ph.D. students in advanced stages of research and dissertation writing are especially encouraged to apply.