



January 27, 2015

Noam Sienna, MA candidate in the Department of Religion

“The Cultural Skin: Henna Body Art in Judaism and Islam”

Henna art is a form of temporary body adornment, a practice shared by many religious and ethnic communities throughout North Africa, the Levant and Mediterranean basin, and Western, Central, and South Asia. This paper focuses on the artistic traditions of Jewish and Muslim communities in North Africa and Central Asia, exploring the ways in which religion and culture are inscribed on the skin through henna at significant ritual moments. I will explore how henna patterns have evolved in conversation with other folk arts, including calligraphy, textiles, ceramics, and jewellery, and I will demonstrate that henna art represents a significant locus for the development of religious and cultural aesthetics, formed out of the contact between diverse populations.

Please join us for Noam’s talk from 12-1pm in room ER300F, Erindale Residence, UTM.