

## **Menorahs in Color: Polychromy in Jewish Visual Culture of Roman Antiquity**

Speaker: Steven Fine, Yeshiva University

Host Department: Judaic Studies, Frankel Center for

Date: 04/01/2014

Time: 04:00 PM

Location: 202 S. Thayer St., Room 2022, Ann Arbor ([Show map](#))

### Description:

In recent years, polychromy has developed as a significant area of research in the study of classical art. This lecture explores the significance of this work for interpreting Jewish visual culture during Roman antiquity, through the focal lens of the Arch of Titus Digital Restoration Project. In July 2012, this project discovered that the Arch of Titus menorah was originally colored with yellow ochre paint. The lecture begins by presenting the general field of polychromy research, which has developed in recent years and resulted in significant museum exhibitions in Europe and the US. It then turns to resistance to polychromy studies among art historians, often called “chromophobia,” and to uniquely Jewish early twentieth century variants that claimed that Jews were especially prone to colorblindness. After surveying earlier research on polychromy in Jewish contexts, we turn to polychromy in ancient Palestinian synagogue literature and art. Finally, the talk explores the significance of polychromy for the study of the Arch of Titus menorah panel, and more broadly considers the importance of polychromy studies for contextualizing Jewish attitudes toward Roman religious art (avodah zarah).

Sponsored by: Judaic Studies, Art History, EIHS, Classical Studies, Kelsey, IPCAA