

# GEMS IN TRANSIT WORKSHOP

Materials, Values and Knowledge in the Early Modern World,

1400-1800

**Amsterdam / Utrecht, The Netherlands**

**7 - 8 April, 2016**



'Embleem: edelsteen', Caspar Luyken, Christoph Weigel (1695 – 1705), etching, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.

**Organised by Michael Bycroft, Sven Dupré and Marta Ajmar**

# Gems in Transit:

**Materials, Values and Knowledge in the Early Modern World, 1400-1800**

**A two-day workshop on the art, science, trade and consumption of gems in the early modern world**

**April 7: Plantage Muidersgracht 12, Amsterdam - Building REC-M, Room S.02**

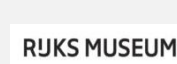
**April 8: Kromme Nieuwegracht 80, Utrecht - Ravensteijnzaal 1.06**

In the early modern period, as today, gems were the ultimate 'hybrid objects.' They played key roles in decorative art, global trade, and science and medicine. The aim of this workshop is to connect the many roles of early modern gems by bringing together historians of different stripes who study gems as material objects. Participants will consider practices — such as mineral collecting and gem appraisal — that combined two or more of these roles. They will also trace the movement of gems and gem-related skills between communities of different kinds, including merchants, diamond-cutters, goldsmiths, natural philosophers, gem connoisseurs and jewellery wearers. The workshop will cover the consumption as well as the production of gems.

This workshop will address three large questions about the early modern world: what role did artisans, and especially those concerned with the decorative arts, play in early modern science? What impact did newly-available foreign goods have on European culture in this period? And what was the place of 'old luxuries', such as diamonds and rubies, in an age obsessed with 'new luxuries' such as porcelain and painted cotton?

Spaces for this workshop are limited. If you are interested in attending, please email [j.briggeman@uu.nl](mailto:j.briggeman@uu.nl).

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# Programme Day 1

**April 7: Plantage Muidersgracht 12, Amsterdam - Building REC-M, Room S.02**

- 10.00 – 10.15      Marta Ajmar, Michael Bycroft and Sven Dupré  
*Introduction Gems in Transit*
- 10.15 – 11.00      Anna Grasskamp  
*Creating 'Bright and Clear Things': (Foreign) Underwater Spaces and Ming Material Culture*
- 11.00 – 11.45      Ranabir Chakravarti  
*Diamonds in Demand - The Pre-Modern South Asian Context*
- 11.45 – 12.15      Coffee break
- 12.15 – 13.00      Claire Sabel  
*'The Most Noble of All Commodities': the Impact of European Trade with Southeast Asia on the Mineralogical Studies of Robert Boyle*

## Programme Day 2

**April 8: Kromme Nieuwegracht 80, Utrecht - Ravensteynzaal 1.06**

- 10.00 – 10.45      Christina Anderson  
*Diamond-Studded Paths: Lines of Communication and the Trading Network of the Hellemans Family, Jewellers from Antwerp*
- 10.45 – 11.30      Tijn Vanneste  
*Of Slaves, Adventurers, Colonists and Foreign Traders: Mining and Trading Diamonds in Brazil (18th-19th Centuries)*
- 11.30 – 12.00      Coffee break
- 12.00 – 12.30      Marjolijn Bol  
*Polito et Claro. The Art and Knowledge of Polishing in the Premodern Period*  
(Comments: Karin Hofmeester)
- 12.30 – 13.00      Karin Hofmeester  
*Technique, Knowledge and Taste in Transit: Diamond Polishing in Europe, 1500-1800*  
(Comments: Marjolijn Bol)
- 13.00 – 14.00      Lunch
- 14.00 – 14.30      Marlise Rijks  
*Between Collection and Craft: the Inventories of Antwerp Goldsmiths*  
(Comments: Marieke Hendriksen)
- 14.30 – 15.00      Marieke Hendriksen  
*Researched and Ridiculed? Gemstones in 18th-century Dutch Medicine, Chemistry and Pharmacy*  
(Comments: Marlise Rijks)
- 15.00 – 15.30      Coffee break
- 15.30 – 16.30      Concluding discussion