



Global Early Modern Studies Lecture Series
presents

**Foreign Cloth, Local Habits:
Clothing, Regalia, and the Art of
Conversion in the Early Modern
Kingdom of Kongo**

With Dr. Cécile Fromont of University of
Chicago

From their king's decision to embrace Catholicism at the turn of the sixteenth century to the advent of imperial colonialism in the late eighteenth century, the men and women of the central African kingdom of Kongo creatively mixed, merged, and redefined local and foreign visual forms, religious thought, and political concepts into the novel, coherent, but also constantly evolving worldview of Kongo Christianity. Sartorial practices and regalia in particular showcased the artful conversion of the realm. In their clothing and insignia, the kingdom's elite combined and recast foreign and local, old and new, material and emblems into heralds of Kongo Christian power, wealth, and, eventually history.

Cécile Fromont is an assistant professor of Art History and the College at the University of Chicago. Her research investigates the arts, religion, and visual culture of the early modern southern Atlantic with a special focus on Kongo, Angola, and Brazil between the sixteenth and eighteenth century. Her first book, *The Art of Conversion: Christian Visual Culture in the Kingdom of Kongo* will be published in 2014. She is currently working on her next project *Nature, Culture, and Faith in Translation: Capuchin Images and Cross-Cultural Knowledge of Kongo and Angola, 1650-1750*. This book-length study of an unpublished corpus of watercolors explores the role that visuality played in the construction of early modern scientific and ethnographic knowledge, the function of visual translation in the formulation and reception of Christian doctrine across cultures, and, more broadly, the status of images in the molding of cross-cultural epistemologies. She received her M.A. and Ph.D from Harvard University.

Tuesday, November 26, 2013

5:30 p.m.

Smith Auditorium, Meadows Museum

Organized by the "Global Early Modern Studies" Fellows Seminar, this lecture series will cultivate a collective understanding of the impact of global research on the broader concerns of scholarship on the early modern period.

For more information, visit www.smu.edu/Dedman/dcii.