Performing the Past
How Objects Shape Communal Identity

This series considers the potential of objects to convey communally shared values. Objects give material form to the rules and belief patterns of those who value them. They are imbued with memories and emotions, which make them the ideal keepers of remembrance and feeling. It is indeed in the performance or practice of daily life that the objects used by a culture become emblematic of that society. Things, then, are used to “do” history, providing a privileged path of access to the past. This series explores the holiness or otherness embodied in the stuff of life; how does the material trace of a community reflect its nature? In considering works from different disciplines, this series will illuminate the aura of objects as reliquaries of the commonplace. The series welcome proposals for monographs and edited collections that adopt broad disciplinary, indeed, post-disciplinary, approaches including but not exclusively, from the fields of history, literature, anthropology, art and architectural history, and visual and material culture. Chronologically, the series welcomes studies that address the periods between 500-1980. Books in this series may focus on Europe or extend to analyses in global contexts.

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Image: Carmelite Nun’s cell in chicken egg with pedestal, from Monastery of Tronche, 19th. Photo: Jean-Michel Gobillot, Courtesy of Thierry Pinette.
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