

# RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

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## *Drinking the Written Qur'an – writing a diffractive ethnography*

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When Qur'anic verses, sometimes supplemented with certain names, drawings, or numbers, are written with saffron ink on a plain plate or a plain piece of paper and then washed off with water, this water then is trusted to contain the Qur'anic verses, including their healing power. In Swahili, this liquid is called *kombe* and it is referred to as *dawa ya kiislamu* (Islamic medicine).

Building on ethnographic fieldwork, my PhD thesis takes *kombe* as a topic and also forms it as a topic. It constitutes a written material product about writing that is materially liquefied and takes this relation into account: it is what I call a “diffractive ethnography.”

In the presentation, I will introduce my thesis and place particular emphasis on the conceptual challenges that writing about liquefied writing (and thus the creation of visual readability about something made visually un-readable) entails.