

**Thursday 28 March** at 6.30 for 7 pm

**MONETARY VALUE, CULTURAL WORTH**

**The Design of the Euro and the Issue of a Common European Culture**

Lecture by **Alessandro Scafi** (*The Warburg Institute*)

Accademia Italiana/Artstur, at Ognisko, 55 Exhibition Road, SW7

Brexit is about to change the map of the EU. What does the design of the European single currency tell us about the past, the present, and the future of the European Union? Transferring a series of seven banknotes from the “drawing board” to people’s wallets required many years of careful planning. In February 1996 the Council of the European Monetary Institute (EMI), the forerunner of the European Central Bank (ECB), launched a euro banknote design competition. The competition participants had to base their designs on the theme “Ages and styles of Europe” and/or use an abstract or modern design. A total of 44 entries were submitted by 29 designers or teams of designers. We will look at these unknown drafts and share this view of history in the making.



*European Central Bank, Euro Banknote Design Exhibition, 1996*

It is well known that money is used as an economic tool to regulate exchange but also serves as a symbolic sign of cultural identity. Analysis of the Euro’s design sheds light on the political and cultural potential of the EU and on its position between promoting purely economic goals and seeking to achieve a tighter political coalition. The complex symbolism adopted for the Euro may also be seen as an indication of the ongoing process of transformation and redefinition of the meaning of the state in a modern, globalized world, and of the relationships both among states and between states and citizens.

Since 2007 **Alessandro Scafi** has been Lecturer in Medieval and Renaissance Cultural history at the Warburg Institute, School of Advanced Study, University of London. He is the author of *Mapping Paradise: A History of Heaven on Earth* (London: British Library; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006; Winner: 2006 Awards for Excellence, Association of American Publishers; Italian transl. Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2007) and *Maps of Paradise* (London: British Library; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013; German transl. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, WBG, 2015). He co-authored (with Veronica della Dora, Avril Maddrell and Heather Walton) *Christian Pilgrimage, Landscape and Heritage: Journeying to the Sacred* (New York and London: Routledge, 2014) and edited *The Cosmography of Paradise: The Other World from Ancient Mesopotamia to Medieval Europe* (London: The Warburg Institute, 2016). He is also the author of audioguides for museums and exhibitions and has been a contributor to a number of newspapers as well as TV and radio cultural broadcasts. Since 2011 he has run at the Warburg Institute with John Took a series of Dante public readings aimed at a general public. On the iconography of the euro Dr Scafi has published *Eurodesign: Immagini, avventure e misteri della moneta europea* (Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2009).



*Euro Coin, 1999 Circul 2002*

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