Gold from West Africa was the engine that drove the movement of things, people, and ideas across Africa, Europe, and the Middle East in an interconnected medieval world. As the works in this exhibition show, it is not possible to understand the emergence of the early modern world without this West African story. *Caravans of Gold* calls on what archaeologists have termed “the archaeological imagination”—the act of recapturing the past through surviving traces—to present a critical rethinking of the medieval period. Here, rare and precious archaeological fragments are seen side by side, bringing new understanding to complete works of art from the medieval period.

This online workshop includes a virtual tour of the exhibition, two interactive sessions with teachers with classroom and exhibition materials, and a scholar lecture by Professor Khaled Esseissah. The workshop is a collaboration among the education department of the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Georgetown University’s Center for Contemporary Arab Studies and Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, and Howard University’s Center for African Studies.

This program is made possible by a Title VI grant from the United States Department of Education, which is funding National Resource Centers on Africa at Howard University and on the Middle East at Georgetown University, and by support from the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown.

Fulbe artist
Senegal
Biconical bead
19th to early 20th century C.E.
Gilded silver
The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI, Founders Society Purchase, Eleanor Clay Ford Fund for African Art, 77.10