

**Transatlantic Interdisciplinary Research Colloquium Small
Forms. Aesthetics – Media – Modernity**

Abstract

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The Excerpt, The Gift Book, and Washington Irving's Poetics of Portability

Reading Washington Irving's *Sketch Book* (1819-20) alongside print artifacts that foreground their material portability, this talk explores how the concept of the "portable" offered nineteenth-century Americans an organizing principle for the development of a literary culture less democratic than imperial in outlook—one in which portable forms and formats help link exclusive social networks across geographic distance.