Design and Ostentation (New York, 7-8 Apr 16)

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, New York, Apr 7–08, 2016
Deadline: Jan 25, 2016

Ethan Robey

Call for Papers

“Showing Off”: Design and Ostentation

The Twenty-Fifth Annual Parsons/Cooper Hewitt Graduate Student Symposium on the History of Design

What makes an object desirable? And why do we show it off? From Veblen’s theories of conspicuous display to Bourdieu’s concept of “ostentatious discretion,” scholars have long been fascinated with how display and extravagance, or their converse (e.g. studied reserve or ironic shabbiness) act as signs of economic and/or cultural capital.

The symposium will explore issues relating to ornament and excess--or their conspicuous avoidance--in relation to social structures, aesthetics, technology, politics and economics. Proposals might consider the invention, uses and semiotics of materials whether natural or synthetic, mundane or exotic; relationships of beauty and value; luxury studies and branding; normcore and humblebragging in design; collecting and collections; or the display of objects, including virtual or cinematic display. Objects of study might include jewelry, fashion or other articles of personal adornment; interiors, interior design and furniture; industrial design, e.g. cars or home appliances; ostentatious technologies, e.g. watches, glasses, headsets or home theaters; or hotels, casinos, museums, apartment buildings, stores, theaters or other public or private sites of demonstrative architecture.

Proposals are welcome from graduate students at any level in fields such as Art History, History of Design, Design Studies, Fashion Studies, History of the Decorative Arts, Cultural Anthropology, History of Architecture, Consumer Studies, Design and Technology, Media Studies, Museum Studies, Food Studies, etc.

The symposium's Catherine Hoover Voorsanger Keynote speaker will be Ulysses Grant Dietz, Chief Curator and Curator of Decorative Arts at the Newark Museum. The Keynote will be on Thursday evening, April 7, 2016 and the symposium sessions will be in the morning and afternoon on Friday, April 8.

To submit a proposal, send a two-page abstract, one-page bibliography and a c.v. to: Ethan Robey, Associate Director, MA Program in the History of Design and Curatorial Studies, <robeye@newschool.edu>

The symposium is sponsored by the MA Program in the History of Design and Curatorial Studies offered jointly by Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum and Parsons School of Design.

Reference:

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