Visual and Material Culture Exchange (Berlin, 22-24 Mar 18)

Berlin, Germany, Mar 22–24, 2018
Deadline: Dec 1, 2017

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Call for Papers
Visual and Material Culture Exchange across the Baltic Sea Region, 1750-1850

Although one of the world's greatest cultural crossroads, the Baltic Sea has often been overlooked by scholars as a site of cultural exchange in favor of exploring national and regional identities. Since the 1990s, the concept of a Baltic Sea Region encompassing the sea and its surrounding land has fostered transnational thinking about the region, transcending Cold War binaries of 'East' and 'West' in an effort to view the area more holistically. Still, common terminology such as 'Scandinavia' and 'the Baltic States', suggests these cultures are mutually exclusive, or, as the case with 'Central and Eastern Europe', ambiguously monolithic.

While historians have been examining the Baltic Sea Region — present-day Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, and Sweden — as an important center of cross-cultural interaction, the area's visual and material culture, one of the most important avenues of exchange, is often reduced to illustrative examples of historical phenomena. Art historical narratives continue to be tethered to national and ethnocentric approaches, a bias this conference seeks to complicate.

This project (three conferences – Greifswald 2017, Berlin 2018, and Tallinn 2019 – and an anticipated edited volume) emerges from these twin desires: to study the Baltic Sea Region as a cultural crossroads, and to depart from isolated, national/regional narratives. By foregrounding visual and material exchanges and the ideological or pragmatic factors that motivated them, we seek to establish common ground for viewing the Baltic Sea as a nexus of intertwined, fluctuating individuals and cultures always in conversation. We invite papers that engage material/visual culture as conceptual lenses through which to reevaluate the history, meaning, and significance of the Baltic Sea Region.

The 2018 conference focuses on the period 1750-1850. We invite proposals on any relevant topic; possibilities include:

- art education: students/professors at foreign academies
- itinerant artists/craftsmen
- foreign artists at royal courts
- art commerce – agents, dealers, collectors, advisors

- visual and material culture of race, slavery, colonialism, imperialism. Enlightenment theories regarding the 'noble savage'
- relationship between art and science, constructions of 'visual epistemologies'
- impact of print media/books
- artists' travel

Proposals must include (in English):
a) an abstract of maximum 150 words summarizing your argument;
b) academic resume; and
c) full contact information including e-mail.

Papers will be 20 minutes in length and will be followed by discussion. The language of the conference is English. Contributions should be sent to Michelle Facos (mfacos@indiana.edu) and Bart Pushaw (bcpushaw@gmail.com) by 1 December 2017.

Notification of acceptance will be by 15 December. This conference is sponsored by Indiana University-Bloomington, and will be held at IU's Berlin Gateway in Kreuzberg.

Reference:

CFP: Visual and Material Culture Exchange (Berlin, 22-24 Mar 18). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 23, 2017 (accessed Nov 19, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/16807>.