Cultural Brokerage and Materiality (Cambridge, 14–15 Dec 18)

Cambridge, Jesus College, Dec 14–15, 2018

Cornelia Escher

The workshop "Cultural Brokerage and Materiality" is the third in a series of international meetings on the theme of “cultural brokers and their networks: 1700s to the present”. Whereas the first workshops focused on the cultural broker and agency (Cambridge, 2016), and the cultural broker’s role in society (Konstanz, 2017), this event will turn to the material dimensions of cultural brokerage. Specifically, it will analyze cultural brokers’ interactions with the “goods” of transfer and will portray the cultural broker in a variety of material settings. In so doing, we will scrutinize the metaphor of “translation” that is often used to describe the process of brokerage and will focus attention on some of the non-verbal transactions that also define the activity of the broker.

Our principal question will therefore be to ask how the abstract category of “culture” is inscripted and encoded in the material and how the material is transformed, set into play or used in the process of brokerage. Analyses should ideally also shed light on conflicting or converging interests of cultural brokers – be they economic, political or individual. Conflicts may centre around notions of authenticity and truthfulness of the material, but also on the possibility falsification and the idea of the fake, as they feature during transcultural exchange.

Programme

Friday 14 December 2018

13.30 Welcome and introduction
Benjamin Walton (Cambridge) and Cornelia Escher (Düsseldorf)

14.00 Art & debated identities

Bianca Gaudenzi (Konstanz / Cambridge)
‘Brokering identity through restitution: The return of Nazi-looted art in Austria, the German Federal Republic and Italy, 1945-1989’

Felicity Bodenstein (Berlin)
Creating a Collection of Benin Royal Court Art for Benin City and Lagos (1940-1970)

Response: Mary-Ann Middelkoop (Cambridge)

16.00 Science & the curated object

Moritz von Brescius (Bern)

Translating Asia through artefacts: the Schlagintweit collection as imperial resource and spectacle

Rebekka Wolf (Munich)
Victor-Charles Mahillon as a mediator between times and cultures

Response: Harry Liebersohn (Urbana-Champaign)

17.30 Keynote Address

Ulinka Rublack (Cambridge)
Can the object be a broker?

Saturday 15 December 2018

9.30 Opera and material culture

Charlotte Bentley (Cambridge)
Translating opera: parlour music and cultural negotiation in nineteenth-century New Orleans

Ditlev Rindom (Cambridge)
Italian Voices: New York, Puccini and the Gramophone

Response: Antje Dietze (Leipzig)

11.30 Material settings: architecture and archaeology

Mari Lending (Oslo)
Images of Egypt

Astrid Swenson (Bath)
The brokered cathedral: sensing global materialities in Cologne

Response: Edward Gillin (Cambridge)

14.30 Final round table discussion

Bianca Gaudenzi, moderator
Harry Liebersohn (Urbana-Champaign)
Martin Rempe (Konstanz)
Nikolai Wehrs (Konstanz)

Reference:
CONF: Cultural Brokerage and Materiality (Cambridge, 14-15 Dec 18). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 23, 2018 (accessed Nov 5, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/19616>.