The Mind in the Matter (London, 27 Mar 19)

Institute of Historical Research, Senate House, Malet St., London WC1E 7HU, Mar 27, 2019
Registration deadline: Mar 25, 2019

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SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF COLLECTING

THE MIND IN THE MATTER: NEW APPROACHES TO THE PSYCHOLOGY OF COLLECTING

Research Workshop

Psychology informs us about what drives an individual to collect. In the Enlightenment, the human mind was often analysed and discussed by means of metaphors and analogies borrowed from the world of collecting. In the nineteenth-century, the stereotypes surrounding the monomaniac, eccentric or perverse collector was codified in the art press and through fiction. In the twentieth century, the topic was treated at length by scholars such as Werner Munsterberger, often working in an explicitly psychoanalytic framework. Whilst this Freudian approach has been subject to intense criticism in the past thirty years, many scholars continue to interpret collecting in terms of categories such as ‘lack’, ‘surrogacy’, ‘desire’ and ‘loss’.
Join us for a workshop that investigates the extent to which psychological models are still valid and necessary to understand collecting as a human activity. Is there a tension between the universalising psychological theories and the drive to study collecting historically? What sources are particularly useful or revealing for uncovering the collector’s motivations or relations to his objects? What can recent developments in psychology and neuroscience add to our understanding? How far can or should we enter the interior life of a collector, and what role does imagination play in communicating these insights to new audiences? And what are the meaningful alternatives, apart from opportunistic acquisitions; to a psychological approach of the study of collecting - can we ever escape from this way of thinking?

Programme

9.30- Registration

10.00- Welcome and Introductory Remarks

10.10- “I Became a Perfect Vellomaniac”: Thomas Phillipps and his manuscript collection
Dr Toby Burrows, Senior Researcher, Oxford University

10.30- Charles Robert Cockerell and Perceiving the Past c.1820
Professor Susan Pearce, Professor Emeritus of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester

10.50- Interpreting interior spaces: an insight into the mind of the collector
Dr, Isobel Macdonald, University of Glasgow and The Burrell Collection.

11.10- Questions

11.30- Coffee Break

11.50- The Mind of a Collector
Professor John Harrison, Associate Professor at the Alzheimer Center at the VU Medical Center in Amsterdam and a Visiting Professor with the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience at King's College London

12.10- The Work of The Wildgoose Memorial Library: Collecting & Recovering the Past from 'Somewhere Outside the Realm, Beyond the Reach of Intellect'
Dr Jane Wildgoose, artist, writer, and NESTA Fellow, co-leader of the Material Thinking and Creative Practice Module, MA Museum and Galleries/Heritage and Contemporary Practice at Kingston University

12.30- Acquiring art today: Studying the motives and process of the contemporary collector
Shaune Arp, Gagosian Gallery, New York and Geneva

12.50- Questions

13.10- Roundtable/ Closing Remarks

Please register for your place on Eventbrite:
https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-mind-in-the-matter-new-approaches-to-the-psychology-of-collecting-tickets-55514537476

Tickets are free for students and £10 for members. For any enquiries about the event, please contact secretary@societyhistorycollecting.org

Organizing committee: Tom Stammers, Adriana Turpin, Eleni Vassilika

Reference:
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