

Journal 18: Special Issue on 1720

Deadline: Sep 21, 2019

Nina Dubin

Call for Papers

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The year 1720 witnessed the world's first international financial disaster, precipitated by the South Sea and Mississippi Bubbles. On the occasion of its upcoming tercentenary – and mindful of its relevance to our own contemporary experiences of financial collapse and instability – Journal 18 is soliciting articles that reevaluate the importance and long-term cultural impact of 1720 as a watershed year. Though the 1720 economic crisis has long been recognized as gateway to the boom-and-bust cycles of the modern world, the field of art history has thus far contributed relatively little to our understanding of its significance. This issue takes part in the work of redressing this imbalance.

Throughout the eighteenth century, cultural as well as financial life remained permeated by the memory of the Mississippi and South Sea Bubbles: disasters that resulted when the bankrupted governments of France and England, respectively, sought to reverse their financial fortunes by trading their debt for equity in overseas trading corporations. While many artworks reflect the slave labor-based pursuit of tobacco, sugar, gold and other commodities that sustained the speculative frenzy, others more broadly register the enduring impact of a crash course in new financial products. Rather than simply representing the rise of a capitalist economy whose ascendancy may arguably be traced to 1720, how did eighteenth-century artworks variously frame, internalize, resist and embody the bubbles? More broadly, as Susan Buck-Morss has written, it was during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment that the category of “the economy” was not only invented and naturalized but also given representation. In the long aftermath of 1720, what roles did art, architecture and material culture play in this process? From Dutch caricatures of the bubbles that continued to circulate decades after the crisis to French Revolutionary trompe l'oeil prints of discredited banknotes, period artworks attest to the long shadow of financial catastrophe.

We invite proposals for articles that explore artistic engagements with the bubbles and with eighteenth-century bubble economies more generally. Of particular interest are explorations of the colonial ambitions behind the 1720 enterprises. We also welcome proposals that examine other visual and material engagements with 1720 as a seminal year in the formation of an increasingly global political economy.

Issue Editors

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Proposals for Issue #10 1720 are now being accepted. Deadline: September 21, 2019.

To submit a proposal, send an abstract (250 words) and brief biography to editor@journal18.org and dubin@uic.edu. Articles should not exceed 6000 words (including footnotes) and will be due on April 1, 2020. For further details, see Information for Authors.

Reference:

CFP: Journal 18: Special Issue on 1720. In: Arthist.net, Sep 7, 2019 (accessed Jun 22, 2025),
<<https://arthist.net/archive/21502>>.