Antiquities, the Art Market and Collecting (London, 17–18 Sep 20)

Birkbeck, University of London, Sep 17–18, 2020

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NEW DATE: EVENT POSTPONED

It is with regret that we have decided to postpone the Antiquities, the Art Market and Collecting in Britain and Italy in the 18th century conference at Birkbeck this year (17th-18th September 2020), due to the ongoing Covid-19 health crisis. Given the current limitations on travel and the closure of university campuses, research institutions, libraries, archives and collections, as well as the obvious challenges to personal safety, the conference will not take place this year. It will instead be held on 16th-17th September 2021.

The Call for Papers is therefore temporarily closed. To all who have submitted abstracts so far, thank you very much for your interest; we hope that you will consider submitting an abstract again when the Call for Papers is reissued closer to the new deadline.

Wishing you all good health and solidarity in these difficult times.

Dr Caroline Barron, Prof. Catharine Edwards and Prof. Kate Retford

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Recent years have seen a resurgence of interest in the formation and display of country house collections of art and antiquities in Britain, and particularly those created as a result of a Grand Tour to Italy in the eighteenth century. From The English Prize at the Ashmolean Museum in 2012 and the collaboration between Houghton Hall and The Hermitage State Museum, Houghton Revisited, in 2013, to The Lost Treasures of Strawberry Hill: Masterpieces from Horace Walpole's Collection in 2018, curators and academics have sought to investigate the antiquities, paintings and collectibles that were brought to Britain in such large quantities.

However, the organisation of the art market at that time has received less attention, and far less than it deserves given its fundamental role in the processes by which objects arrived in collections at that time. New contexts for collecting have also emerged, such as the history of consumption and the economic background to the acquisition of so-called 'luxury' goods and prestige objects. The art market of the eighteenth century continues to play a vital role in collecting today; with so many of the objects acquired during a Grand Tour since dispersed in house sales and auctions, or bequeathed or sold to museums. The antiquities and paintings that once adorned the galleries of the cultured in Britain are also still to be found for sale, indicating the longevity of their

appeal and value for collectors.

This conference seeks to explore the processes by which these collections were formed, interrogating the relationship between the Italian and British art markets of the eighteenth century, the role of the dealers in Italy and the auction houses in Britain, through which many of the objects were later to pass, encompassing in depth discussion of the objects themselves. We invite abstracts of no more than 500 words for 30 minute papers to be submitted to the organising committee by 15th April 2020 (antiquitiesartmarketconference@gmail.com) as well as a short CV. We welcome proposals from scholars working in museums, collections and archives, as well as from academics from across disciplines such as History, Art History, Museum Studies and Classics. PhD students and ECRs are particularly encouraged to submit abstracts.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Dealers in antiquities between Rome and Britain
- Auctions and auction houses in Britain
- Object biographies of antiquities, old master paintings, modern paintings, rare books, prints and neo-classical sculpture circulating in the 18th-century art market
- Customers and collectors in the 18th century
- Networks and communities of dealers and collectors
- The economic history of the art market
- The afterlife of collections from the 18th century to today

Organising committee: Dr Caroline Barron, Professor Catharine Edwards, Professor Kate Retford

Reference:

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