

## Courtly Encounters (London, 10–11 Jun 21)

The Museum of the Order of Saint John, London, Jun 10–11, 2021

Deadline: Jan 31, 2021

Leah Clark

Due to the cancellation of our annual conference in March 2020 because of COVID-19, we are reopening the call for papers for our annual conference, now planned for 10-11 June 2021.

In 2021 the Open University's interdisciplinary Spaces and Places conference will address the theme of 'Courtly Encounters' by exploring instances of cultural exchange that shaped the day-to-day and extraordinary sensory experiences of court life.

Since Subrahmanyam's seminal book *Courtly Encounters*, scholars have incorporated the trans-cultural in courtly studies, but not to the extent it deserves. At a time when scholars across the humanities are embracing a 'global turn,' it is an important moment to reassess court studies and consider new approaches that allow us to move beyond Eurocentricism and simple explanations of 'shared' tastes and also adopt novel approaches.

The early modern court was not a closed entity but was reliant on the movement of people and things, its power being dependent on its relationships with other courts and states. In the early modern period, increased exploration led to fierce competition over the control of trade routes and territories, and inevitably led to diplomatic entanglements that reached from Brazil to Portugal to India. These entanglements brought about hostile relationships, confusion and admiration, giving rise to cross-cultural transfer, exchange and friction as objects, practices and people moved through trade and diplomacy.

This conference will examine courtly encounters during the early modern period to consider the following questions:

- How were courtly spaces adapted and transformed through the movement of material and immaterial things and to what extent did those things condition sensorial experiences?
- Which particular aspects of political, social, and economic infrastructures enabled the exchange of objects, ideas, and people?
- To what extent do new methodologies and approaches need to be developed to consider courts within a global geopolitical network and how might sensorial approaches enable this?
- How might sensory experiences of the same objects differ according to courtly environments (considering, for example, transcultural exchange or experiences of objects in different architectural spaces and/or geographical locations)?

This annual conference is fundamentally interdisciplinary: literary, musical, architectural, artistic and religious spaces will be the subjects of enquiry, not as discrete or separate entities, but ones which overlapped, came into contact with one another, and at times were in conflict.

Papers that address new methodologies, the digital humanities, sensorial or object-centred enquiries, cross-cultural comparisons, or new theoretical perspectives are particularly welcome.

Please send a 150-word abstract along with a short biography to Leah Clark (leah.clark@open.ac.uk) and Helen Coffey (helen.coffey@open.ac.uk) by 31 January 2021.

The conference will take place at the Museum of the Order of Saint John, London, on 10-11 June 2021.

Reference:

CFP: Courtly Encounters (London, 10-11 Jun 21). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 19, 2020 (accessed Mar 30, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/23573>>.