Valuing luxury, call for articles

Deadline: Jul 31, 2024
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Dr Elisabetta Maistri - Dr Robert Hanson

"Valuing luxury. Controversial Collections, Divisive Displays, and Ethical Exhibits".
In an era concerned with social and historical injustices, of wealth inequality and exploitation, and a growing sense of environmental responsibility, the prized position we grant luxuries both within and beyond museums seems manifestly hypocritical. This interdisciplinary anthology focuses on the dark side of luxuries acquired during the Early Modern Era, exploring the questions of how we should acknowledge and represent their problematic legacies in the contemporary era in public and private collections. Driving the anthropology are the questions of if and/or how museums should present their collections in a manner that celebrates humanity's triumphs without erasing the injustices that fuelled them?

We invite scholars to contribute case-study driven chapters which will see authors discuss the history, concept, and normativity of luxury status through the following thematic lenses:

1. Decolonisation & Social Justice: This section explores how exhibitions of luxuries can serve as a tool for addressing contemporary and historical social injustices via the inclusion of historically suppressed peoples and their perspectives.

Hypothetical topics include, but are not limited to:

The inclusion of broader perspectives on the nature and origin of specific luxury goods.
Balancing the duality of objects as both prized luxuries and manifestations of oppression.
Who decides the significance of an object: the market or the victim(s).
2. Appropriation & Repatriation: With so much of the world's luxuries in the "wrong place", this section explores the nature of "justified acquisition" alongside the questions concerning museum retention and repatriation.

Hypothetical topics include, but are not limited to:

Is legitimate acquisition sufficient to justify retention?
The concept museum as a safe haven or a plunderer's hoard
What do we owe to dead victims?
3. Luxury & War: Focusing on luxuries that derive from and/or celebrate pre-20th century wars, this section explores our relationship with objects that attest to and/or venerate humanity's militarist histories, from war trophies to symbols of might and conquest.

Hypothetical topics include, but are not limited to:

If/how should we preserve and exhibit luxuries acquired via militarist plunder.
To what extent are contemporary values and perspectives regarding a war relevant to if/how we present objects tied to the war?
How should we display relics and luxury objects of veneration for those now considered militaristically vicious?
Given the global nature of this anthology, we strongly welcome contributions from scholars and researchers working on European, American, African, and Eastern Empires, Monarchies, and Caliphates from both practical and theoretical disciplines. Priority given to submissions on objects created prior to the 20th century and to objects associated with the global south. We are also particularly keen to promote the work from underrepresented demographics in the scholarship, particularly women and scholars from the global south.

Abstracts should be no more than 500 words and should be submitted to rwhem19@gmail.com by 31st July 2024. Authors should state which theme their paper should be associated with.

Please name the file as follow: Surname_THEME NUMBER_TOPIC

Successful abstracts will be called to submit the complete paper to the same email address on 1st November 2024, and will be subject to double-blind peer review prior to the submission of the anthology to the publishing house.

Editor's Bios:

Dr Rob Hanson: Researcher in applied philosophy for public policymaking, specifically in the areas of archaeological and anthropological ethics. Member of Durham's Centre for the Ethics of Cultural Heritage and the Centre for Humanities Engaging in Science and Society, and Centre for Ethics and Law in Life Sciences, Groningen's Philosophy, Politics, and Economics Research Network, and Durban's BRICS Research Network. Currently working on his monograph Being Good with the Past: Aristotelian Perspectives on Heritage Ethics.

Dr Elisabetta Maistri: currently is the Collection Manager, Curator and Head of Education at the Eccel Kreuzer Museum in Bozen (IT). She holds a Ph.D. in History of Spanish Art from Durham University, an MA in History of Early Modern Art (UniVe), a PgDip in Art Registration (IED), an MA in Arts Management (UniVe), and a BA in Economic Law and Administration (UniPd).

Reference:
CFP: Valuing luxury, call for articles. In: ArtHist.net, Jan 19, 2024 (accessed Nov 29, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/41014>.