

Session at NACBS (Denver, 15-17 Nov 24)

Denver, Colorado, Nov 15-17, 2024

Deadline: Mar 24, 2024

Katrina Manica

North American Conference on British Studies.

Live, Look, Loot: British Cosmopolitan Identities and Material Culture.

Panel Contact: Dr. Katrina Manica (kat.manica@utoronto.ca).

Panel Chair: tbd (please also contact if you would like to chair).

Collecting and collections by Britons throughout the British empire manifested in private and public collections. From East India Company officers writing about coins in what is now north India to the looting and theft of the Benin Bronzes to Oscar Wilde's earnest or sardonic claim that he wanted to live up to his Blue and White porcelain, Britons were keen collectors of art and material culture globally. Complicating how historians narrate the transmission of ideas, art, and material culture across the British empire, Jason Edwards describes nineteenth-century British cosmopolitanism as constellations of transcultural exchange (2017). Such constellations of exchange and/or contestation bring seemingly disparate cultures into dialogue alongside and even, perhaps, beyond Britain.

Pushing back against legacies of imperialism which articulate and centre the homogenous identity of the white British subject who evaluates and is pleased by art and material culture, we call for papers that consider new ways that art and/or material culture complicates and contests British imperial identities through the matrices of race, sexuality, sex, gender, class, (dis)ability, colonizer/colonized, and/or the human/non-human animal. We also especially invite papers which Indigenize and decolonize histories of material culture and art. Material culture under interest includes the materiality of books, sacred objects, the mundane, paintings, interior designs, porcelain collections, museum collections, taxidermy, ivory and its afterlives, World's Fairs Exhibitions, etc.

Please e-mail Katrina Manica at kat.manica@utoronto.ca with paper proposals of 250-300 words by 24 March 2024.

Reference:

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