Colonial Objectscapes of the Global Long 18th Century (Zaragoza, 12-16 Jul 27)

Zaragoza, Spain, Jul 12–16, 2027
Deadline: Nov 30, 2026

Alisha Ma, London School of Economics and Political Science

Colonial Objectscapes of the Global Long Eighteenth Century - Panel at the 17th International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ISECS) Congress 2027.

Expanding on Martin Pitts and Miguel John Versluys' (2021) concept of an objectscape as 'the material and stylistic properties of a repertoire of objects in a given period or geographic range', this session explores the material cultures generated and shaped by European colonial networks, exploitation, ideologies, and resistance over the long eighteenth century. Though the globalisation of many commodities and artistic traditions has occurred since long before this period, the eighteenth century saw marked changes to the nature and scale in the movement of objects. Such changes resulted from various factors including but not limited to the establishment of new trade routes; the reorganisation of labour via African and indigenous American chattel slavery; and technological developments relating to transport, farming, and manufacturing. Without discounting pre-colonial histories as well as concurrent local and indigenous histories of objects affected by the shifting dynamics of the early modern period, the framework of the objectscape takes as a point of departure the connected or shared cultural meanings and identities that are accrued within a specific context—here being the colonial.

We invite papers that consider how materials and objects function within their historical context as an assemblage, rather than individual units of analysis. In practice, this involves studying interactions between different objects and materials as well as with their makers and consumers, the spaces they inhabit, or the ways that they are visually and aesthetically represented. This framework approaches material culture studies holistically by combining object-based research with art, labour, and environmental histories among others. The panel especially emphasises the global scope of such objectscapes, involving a multitude of agents beyond the elite, European, and human. We thus also welcome ecocritical perspectives which ask how objectscapes are shaped by indigenous ecologies and environmental agencies.

Panel convenor: Alisha Ma (London School of Economics and Political Science)

Please submit a 200-word abstract and/or any questions to the panel convenor at: a.e.ma@lse.ac.uk

Deadline for submission: 30 Nov 2026

Conference website: https://www.isecs-zaragoza2027.net/en/en-home/

Reference:

CFP: Colonial Objectscapes of the Global Long 18th Century (Zaragoza, 12-16 Jul 27). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 11, 2026 (accessed Nov 9, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/54557>.