

Cosmopolitan Culture, Consumption and the Making of Taste: 1600-1770

A Conference of the Research Center for Cultural History of the University of Massachusetts Boston. Co-sponsored by the Center, the History Department of University of Massachusetts Boston, The Confucius Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston, Peet's Coffee House and Chocolate by Sparrow.

**Old Faculty Club, Healey Library 11th fl. rm 0011B, University of Massachusetts Boston
April 25-26, 2008**

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw the emergence of essentially new patterns of luxury consumption in Europe, fueled in part by a growth in upper class tourism, the expansion of global trading networks and the introduction of exotic Asian, African and American products. As this happened certain consumer goods and the sensations involved in their consumption became associated with social fashions, intellectual skills and bodies of knowledge, in ways that redefined high culture. These goods ranged from antiques, paintings and items of furniture to beverages and drugs, such as coffee, chocolate, tea, opium and tobacco. By the early eighteenth century the capacity to consume material culture properly, in keeping with modern fashion, was being described by a newly coined phrase, "good taste".

This conference will explore the concept of taste within the comparative perspective of the consumer cultures of Europe and China. An opening session, to which the public will be invited, will deal specifically with an emerging fashion for chocolate and coffee, two non-European beverages that took the world of fashion by storm after their introduction in the seventeenth century. Saturday morning will be devoted to other forms of European consumer culture, involving aristocratic tourism, the collection of classical antiquities and the developing craze for exotic flowers and plants. In the afternoon the focus will shift to Chinese consumer culture in the same period in order to illuminate both similarities and differences. The concluding paper will provide a broad comparative discussion of consumer culture in Asia and Europe.

Friday Evening April 25

5:00-7:45 pm

5-7pm Session I: The Cultures of Chocolate and Coffee

Marcie Norton (George Washington University). "The Cultural Meanings of Chocolate"

Brian Cowan (McGill University). "New Worlds, New Tastes: Coffee and the Invention of Gastronomy in Early Modern Europe"

7-7:45pm Reception with Chocolate Tasting by Sparrow Enterprises and Coffee by Peet's Coffee and Tea

Saturday April 26

9:00-10:00 AM

Keynote: Linda Levy Peck (George Washington University). "Aristocratic Tourism and Consumer Culture in England"

10:00-10:15 Coffee Break

10:15-11:45 AM

Session II: Further Explorations in European Consumer Culture

Tamara Griggs (University of Chicago). "The Marketing of Antiquities"

Elizabeth Hyde (Kean University) "Reason and Taste in the Consumption of Flowers in Early Modern France."

Malcolm Smuts (University of Massachusetts Boston) Comment

12:00- 1:15 PM

Buffet Lunch in Conference Room

1:30-3:00 PM

Session III: Consumer Culture in China

Joanna Waley-Cohen (NYU): "Gastronomy and Consumption in China"

Timothy Brook (Oxford and University of British Columbia): "Chinese consumer culture"

Nancy Berliner (Peabody- Essex Museum) Comment

3:15-4:15 PM

Concluding Keynote: Kenneth Pomeranz (California Irvine), "The Comparative Histories of Consumer Culture in China and the West"

Please direct all enquiries to the conference organizers: Malcolm Smuts (UMass-Boston; malcolm.smuts@umb.edu); Elizabeth Fay (UMass-Boston, Elizabeth.Fay@umb.edu); and Robert Wollons (UMass-Boston Roberta.Wollons@umb.edu).