

Call for Papers

Pleasures of imagination – art, architecture and esthetics in 18th century Europe

Helsinki, 20–21 March 2020

The Finnish Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies is organizing a conference which focuses on the different aspects of 18th century aesthetic culture. The conference will take place on Friday and Saturday 20–21 March at the House of Science and Letters in Helsinki. The perspective of the conference is trans-cultural and its aim is to articulate the multiplicity of the aesthetic phenomena of the period. One goal of the conference is to bring together 18th century scholars from different fields of study.

Consequently we call doctoral students as well as post doc and senior researchers to send us a paper proposal consisting of a title and 200 words by 30 September 2019 to email addresses markku.kekalainen@helsinki.fi and lotta.nylund@helsinki.fi. The abstract should include contact information. The paper can be in Finnish, English, or Swedish. The conference is free of charge.

Keynote speakers:

Dr Hannah Williams, Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow, Queen Mary University of London
Dr Merit Laine, Associate Professor, Department of Art History, Uppsala University



Place Royale 1709, Versailles, Musée du Château; John Closterman, Maurice Ashley-Cooper; Anthony Ashley-Cooper, National Portrait Gallery, London; Tavla, Bertil Wreting/Nordiska museet; Pehr Hilleström, Vid sybågen, Åsa Lundén/Nationalmuseum

Session I Discussions and theories concerning beauty

Aesthetics had a privileged position in the eighteenth-century thought, sociability, and life style. The culture of politeness comprehended aesthetic judgment, connoisseurship of arts, and amateurish avocation of arts. The aesthetic culture included significant religious, political and ideological distinctions. Absolutist Baroque was condemned by some Republican critiques while Palladianism and Neoclassicism were introduced as uncorrupted art of liberty. Aesthetics as an independent academic discipline was also born in the eighteenth century when Shaftesbury, Addison, du Bos, Diderot, Baumgarten and Kant defined the conditions, nature, and limits of the aesthetic experience.

Session II Urbanism and the city as a spatial experience

Urban civilization was problematized from many perspectives during the period from the second half of the 17th century to the first half of the 19th century. The centralized and hierarchical order of the Baroque residence cities reflected the ideology of Absolutism and Counter-Reformation. From this point of view, the rebuilding of

London after the Great Fire was a highly symptomatic process: Baroque city plans were abandoned and since then the growth of London was kept up by the private initiative. The semi-public sphere developed in the big cities of Europe since the 17th century was crucial for the development of aesthetic culture. Academies, salons, and coffee-houses offered the space for discussions about arts and the norms of taste, the new trends of arts were introduced in the salons and pleasure gardens, and the commercial consumption of arts received more and more important role as the financier of arts.

Session III Academic art and the challengers of Classicism

Classicism was throughout the 18th century the dominating style of official art and architecture. Art academies founded around Europe were based on the model of the French Academie Royale. The Academie's mission was to promote the arts by enforcing the rules and ideals of art through theoretical writings, education and exhibitions, and by granting prizes and rewards.

Session IV Elite materiel and aesthetic culture

In the eighteenth century, new ideas on dwelling, lived milieus, objects and goods shaped elite material and aesthetic culture in urban and rural surroundings. For board social groups global trade offered opportunities to acquire luxury and semi-luxury products, silver buttons and fans, silk scarfs and printed fabrics, coffee and tea sets, engravings and comfortable furniture such as upholstered sofas. Bedchambers that tiled stoves warmed, and dining rooms and drawings rooms for sociability were built at country houses, vicarages and rectories. Large windows opened a view over formal and kitchen gardens.

Session V Craftmanship and art in practice

Regulations, the guild system, material circumstances and social rules had an impact on the production of the art, architecture and art handicraft. The practice of making works of art changed slowly during the 18th century. The art education moved slowly from the workshops to the academies, art markets became more dominant and an increasing part of the population consumed art. New techniques and instruments also had an effect on the practice of making works of art.

Session VI The *longue durée* of art styles in peripheral regions

Eighteenth-century art in Scandinavia comprehended some Early Modern aesthetic trends, not only Gustavian Style, which has dominated the general image of art in this century. Renaissance ideals, earlier Classicism, and Rococo were manifested in churches and mansions especially in peripheral regions. In some cases, it is possible to speak about the peripheral *longue durée* of the 16th and 17th century aesthetic ideals in interiors, fashion, furniture, and portrait painting.

The conference is organized by The Finnish Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies with support from The Finnish Cultural Foundation and Niilo Helander Fondation.

The Organizing Committee:

Markku Kekäläinen, FT, Helsingin yliopisto
Johanna Ilmakunnas, dos., biträdande professor, Åbo Akademi
Lotta Nylund, FM, tutkijakoulutettava, Helsingin yliopisto
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