

THE FRICK COLLECTION
The FURNITURE HISTORY SOCIETY

FURNITURE AND THE DOMESTIC INTERIOR: 1500–1915

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2017
The Frick Collection | 10:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Attendance is free with [online registration](#).

Abstracts

From Private Collection to Public Museum: Second Empire Furniture in the Collection of the Bowes Museum, County Durham

Simon Spier, PhD candidate, University of Leeds & The Bowes Museum

This paper traces the history of the collection of modern French furniture of John (1811–1885) and Joséphine Bowes (1825–1874) from domestic furniture to museum objects. The pair bought many pieces to furnish their town and country houses, and when the idea to establish a public art museum began to influence their collecting activities, these pieces became a core component of this vision. Using a range of archival sources, this paper will chart the “object itineraries” of key pieces of furniture from The Bowes Museum to demonstrate differing ideas of private taste and public education in the late nineteenth century.

Trompe-l'œil? Early Modern Table Clocks in the Shape of Everyday Objects

Susanne Thuerigen, PhD candidate, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich

As the market for table clocks expanded in southern Germany in the late sixteenth century, so did the variety of clock cases. Strikingly, many of these clock cases adopt the forms of precious everyday objects that already existed in wealthy homes, such as mirrors, books, or vases. Astronomical table clocks made in the shape of a mirror, primarily in Augsburg, serve as a case study for how the transfer of material and symbolic properties from one work to another shaped the reception of the newly developed object.

The “Camerella:” A Bed Inseparable From Its Chamber

Pasquale Focarile, 2017 Eva Schler Fellow, The Medici Archive Project

During the second half of the seventeenth century, a new piece of furniture, the *camerella* (small chamber), transformed the Florentine bedchamber. A rectangular curtained structure, the *camerella* isolated the bed by creating a small chamber within a larger one, each performing separate functions. Using visual and documentary sources, this paper describes the *camerella*'s structure and function in relation to the space of the chamber and the objects displayed around or introduced into it. The combined analysis of objects and spaces will explain the *camerella*'s success in Florentine mansions and how it contributed to the evolution of the modern bedchamber.

Wood and Plaster “Moors” in Early Modern Venetian Household Inventories 1600–1800

Hannah Lee, PhD candidate, Queen Mary University of London

The use of the represented body of the “other” as a functional object was by no means a new phenomenon in early modern Europe. Yet at the beginning of the seventeenth century a fashion developed for figures of “moors,” made from wood or plaster, in the homes of the Venetian elite. This paper will combine material collected from household inventories with surviving objects to discuss the market for these pieces, their position in interiors, and the techniques and materials of their creation. It will explore what they reveal about attitudes towards race, servitude, and the human body.

“The Completest Triumph of Barbarous Taste:” Reevaluating Russian Rococo Furniture 1730–1775

Philippe Halbert, PhD student, Yale University

Visiting Russia in 1774, the English traveler Nathaniel Wraxhall expressed profound aversion towards local interpretations of the rococo, calling it “the completest triumph of barbarous taste.” Far from passive in their engagement with an inherently foreign, Western style, Russian decorative arts of the mid-eighteenth century integrated Slavic aesthetics, including a penchant for painted wooden surfaces, glittering gold ornament, and often monumental proportions, within a larger and highly original design dialogue. As it shaped aristocratic patronage and served the ambitions of three female sovereigns, Russian rococo furniture both accompanied and, in its own way, propelled the empire's bid for Westernization in the wake of Peter the Great's revolutionary reforms.

“Moving Art:” Furniture and Mobility in Eighteenth-Century France

Lilit Sadoyan, PhD candidate, University of California, Santa Barbara

Meuble, French for furniture, has its root in the Latin *mobilis*, implying a sense of movability and suggesting a kind of furniture that was not fixed. In eighteenth-century

France, an increased fascination with mechanical devices, a predilection for comfort, and a propensity for privacy characterized the development of many different and novel furniture forms. Yet, mobility was at the heart of their multivalent purposes. This paper considers mobility as the essential property of French furniture in this period. It will highlight the “movement” of works in The Frick Collection by Martin Carlin and Jean-Henri Riesener, as objects that were not only transferred, but also transformed.

Making Sense of Carmontelle’s Chairs

Margot Bernstein, PhD candidate, Columbia University

Louis Carrogis, called Carmontelle (1717–1806), was a major visual chronicler of his time who captured eighteenth-century celebrities, elites, and servants while working at the royal Orléans court. Carmontelle's drawn portraits are ubiquitous and instantly recognizable as illustrations of the late eighteenth century, yet no one has asked why they so perfectly express their period. Through close readings of a selection of Carmontelle’s portraits, this paper analyzes how the sitters’ engagement with fashionable seating furniture expresses individualism; it argues that the Enlightenment sense of self that Carmontelle conveys in his portraits depends as much upon furniture as it does on faces.