

Call for Proposals

Capitalism and the Senses

A Conference on Friday, November 6, 2020

Hagley Museum and Library

Wilmington, Delaware

This conference will explore the sensory history of capitalism—the ways that *seeing*, *hearing*, *tasting*, *smelling*, and *touching* have shaped, and been shaped by, capitalism over the longue durée, from the early modern era to the present. From the stench of the stockyards to the saccharine sounds of Muzak, everyday sensory environments have been made and remade by capitalism, and as portals through which we take in knowledge of the world, the senses have been subject to manipulation, exploitation, and commodification. If, as Karl Marx contended in 1844, the senses have a history, then that history is intertwined with the development of capitalism, which has drawn on the embodied power of the senses and, in turn, influenced how sensory experience has changed over time.

We are interested in original, unpublished, and historically informed papers written from a range of disciplinary viewpoints, including but not limited to history, anthropology, psychology, historical sociology, and the history of science. We especially encourage proposals that engage with the following themes, but are open to any work that falls within this call for proposals:

- the construction of knowledge about the senses
- the creation of sensory standards and measurements for commercial purposes
- the development of new forms of sensory labor and sensory manipulation in the workplace
- the impact of industrial research and innovative technologies on sensory products
- the use of sensory appeals in marketing, advertising, packaging, and selling
- the manipulation of commercial products to augment their sensory appeal

Please submit proposals of no more than 500 words and a one-page C.V. to Carol Lockman at clockman@Hagley.org by May 1, 2020. Conference presenters will be asked to submit complete versions of their conference papers by October 15, 2020. Presenters will receive lodging in the conference hotel and compensation for their travel costs. The conference organizers are planning an edited volume based on a selection of revised conference papers. The program committee is comprised of Regina Lee Blaszczyk, University of Leeds; David Suisman, University of Delaware; Roger Horowitz and Erik Rau, Hagley Library.