

CALL FOR PAPERS

Routine and ritual in the post-medieval home
7th-9th September 2012
King's Manor
University of York

This conference seeks to shed new light on the material culture of both routine and ritual practices in post-medieval vernacular houses. In recent years, scholars across a range of disciplines have become increasingly interested in the potential of objects to shed light on social relationships and domestic practices within the family, household and neighbourhood. This has led to a rise in studies of inventories, as records of particular assemblages within the home, made at a particular moment in time, and of objects themselves, recovered through archaeological excavation or curated within museum collections. Such studies have made use of new theoretical and methodological approaches, such as the idea of 'biographies', and the power of objects in telling 'stories' about the past – and indeed the present. However, to date, much less attention has been paid to the spatial context of objects, and to the ways in which the groupings of objects recovered in excavation, recorded in contemporary documents or illustrations, or curated and displayed as Museum assemblages, can shed light on the social practices households from the early modern period, to the present day.

Routine and Ritual seeks to bring together academic and commercial archaeologists with scholars from other disciplines of cultural and local history, art history and the Museum profession, to discuss and debate the material culture of the post-medieval home and to facilitate dialogue across the disciplines and specialisms concerned with the interpretation of objects to academic and wider audiences. Contributors are asked to think about the relationships between the people who inhabited houses, domestic practices including 'routine' activities such as cooking and eating, sleeping, socialising and working, but also more nominally 'ritual' activities such as the ritual protection of the home, or the marking of life-cycle rituals such as birth, marriage and death. What role did possessions - buildings and objects - play in these activities? What can we say about the sensory experience both within and between different kinds of home – levels of light, heating, ventilation, the feel of furniture and furnishings, the smell of cooking, scent or sanitation?

Rather than inviting contributors to speak on individual object specialisms, this conference seeks to consider both the methodological challenges posed by the 'material turn', and the potential of buildings and objects to answer some of the questions posed above. We invite contributions from scholars, Museum professionals or units already working with these challenges. Joint papers and interdisciplinary contributions, are warmly welcomed.

Proposals and abstracts are welcomed and should be sent to the organisers:

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Further details and booking forms will be available early in 2012