

Quarter/Year

Spring 2016

Course Number

ART-HIST 440-0-1

Day/Time

R 2:00-4:50 PM

Instructor

Swan

Course Title

Early Modern Art, Science, Collecting: In the Realm of the Senses



Encyclopedic or microcosmic early modern collections also known as Wunderkammers or Cabinets of Curiosities brought together all manner of artifact and natural object, and offered an arena for aesthetic contemplation and natural historical or scientific investigation alike. A space of knowledge-production and a highly socialized domain as well, the early modern collection responded to and activated the senses; some called the sorts of objects assembled in Wunderkammers—rhinoceros horns, ivory lathework carving, resins and gems, instruments, feather work, paintings and carved coconuts and shells set in elaborate filigree—“sensualities.” This seminar examines early modern collections in Spain and Portugal, at Hapsburg and Medici courts, and in Dutch and Flemish cities as intersections of practices historiographically segregated as art history and

history of science. Intended as both an introduction to the ways in which the practices of art and science depended on and informed one another in the early modern period in Europe, this seminar will also offer students the opportunity to engage with and make interventions in an ongoing scholarly discussion about art, science, wonder, and the social order of objects in early modern Europe. Subthemes include the epistemological underpinnings of descriptive and pictorial efforts; the respective roles of art and science in global exploration; art and nature; artisanal and tacit knowledge; gardens, laboratories, and related sites of scientific and artistic practice.

Required Textbooks

Daston and Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature*
Foucault, *The Order of Things*
Latour, *Reassembling the Social*
Course reader [PDF]

Assessments

Presentations on readings and on objects;
final research paper