

Society for the History of Technology (SHOT) Annual Meeting, Milan, 24-27 October 2019

Open Session Proposal

Title: Technology and Luxury

Panel Organizer: Dr Artemis Yagou

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Luxury has existed in a variety of forms throughout history, whenever individuals could have access to items beyond the limits of necessity: fine foodstuffs and wines, magnificent residences, sumptuous furniture, lavish fabrics, precious jewelry, expensive watches or gadgets, extravagant cars and yachts, valuable works of art. Artefacts of luxury are nowadays kept in museums and collections all over the world.

The history of luxury has been typically connected with monarchs and leaders, dominant social classes and various elites. At the same time, economic growth since the 17th century (especially in Western Europe) and the resulting diffusion of semi-luxury goods to wider segments of the population have led to the introduction of the concept of popular luxury.

Arguably, all manifestations of luxury are inextricably related to technology. The proposed panel seeks to interrogate the multifarious relationship between technology and luxury, broadly interpreted. The panel is expected to contribute to the Annual Meeting's focus on the interface between technology, art, and design.

Potential themes are:

- The relationship between luxury products and technologies for material extraction and processing
- The interplay between luxury production and the development of specialist technical skills
- The connection between industrialization and luxury production
- The perception of artefacts as luxurious on the basis of their technical novelty
- Visual or literary representations of technology-related luxury
- Collecting technical artefacts as a form of luxury

Other themes connecting technology with luxury are also welcome.

Proposals may deal with any time period or geographical area.

Please send your proposals (one-page abstract of 500 words max and short CV of 300 words max) with current contact information to: a.yagou@deutsches-museum.de until March 25, 2019.