

Displaying Innovation: object, knowledge and audiences

Date: Thursday, July 1, 2010 - 16:00

Maison Française d'Oxford

Conveners : Muriel Le Roux, MFO and Marie Thébaud-Sorger, Marie Curie-Warwick University

This workshop aims to explore the way in which different types of technological innovation have been displayed to the public in a range of different contexts. We will focus in particular on how knowledge of these innovations has been disseminated in practical terms to audiences by the use of such devices as staging arrangements, explanations, or spectacular special effects. The process of constructing evidence occurs through complex interactions. Our aim will be to rethink the public demonstration of technology inspired by the work done firstly by historians of science as well as sociologists. What kind of useful dialogues can be established across disciplines and periods? This meeting will draw on the research of the French sociologist Claude Rosental and his model of the public demonstration of technology and will consider historical examples in the light of this model. Taking part in the workshop will be a number of historians whose research has focused on objects (18e-19e) like fireworks, chemistry courses, anatomical wax models, balloons, architecture and engineering... By highlighting some processes which connect shows and demonstrations, innovations, knowledge production and the making of new markets, we would like to foster exchanges between periods in an interdisciplinary approach.

Introduction

Claude Rosental Institut Marcel Mauss, CNRS & Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris,
Department of Sociology, Harvard University
"A Sociology of Public Demonstrations of Technology"

Round table- and discussion

Anna Maerker, Senior Lecturer, Oxford Brookes University
"Global Bodies: Marketing Anatomical Models in the Nineteenth Century"

Simon Werrett, Associate Professor, University of Washington
"Spectacle and the Making of Gas-Lighting in Britain and France"

Simona Valeriani, Research Officer, London School of Economic and Political Science
"Innovative civil engineering artefacts and their display: 'themed parks' and 'model buildings' in the 18th century"

Conclusion : **Muriel Le Roux**, MFO and **Marie Thébaud-Sorger**, Marie Curie-Warwick University