

CULTURE AND MARKETS

This colloquium will focus on the issues of commerce, culture and creativity with which eighteenth-century thinkers such as Adam Smith, David Hume and Jean-Jacques Rousseau were preoccupied. They saw the advent of a new commercial society and wondered how this would affect the world of ideas. The growth in the division of labor, the decline of traditional patronage and the rise of markets for music, paintings and literature, affect how we think about the arts and commercial society.

The modern world faces these issues in different guises. The current catchwords are “globalization” and “cultural diversity.” Commerce is spreading internationally and changing most of the world quite rapidly. As a response, UNESCO is trying to write a new international law to regulate the international spread of culture. Domestically, debates over commercialism resurface regularly in discussions of copyright law, the Internet and illegal file sharing.

The colloquium readings will consist of classic texts on these subjects, and will seek to promote a better understanding of earlier debates and their relevance to the modern world.

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