Salon IV: 'Ephemeral Europe'

Transcription

Dr Lisa Skogh: Hello, you are listening to the V&A Podcast series What was Europe? A New Salon. In this series of four conversations, we bring together 33 experts to discuss the geographical and social-historical landscape of Europe from 1600 to 1815, together reflecting on its intercultural exchanges and ephemerality and making connections to the Europe we know today.

Professor Bill Sherman: So hi everybody, I'm Bill Sherman, Head of Research at the V&A and delighted to join my co-hosts [Simon Schaffer and Lisa Skogh] in welcoming you to the fourth and final salon in "What Was Europe." Quite a sad event and quite a happy event, it's been a really great series of conversations. I think this room was intended to be used in precisely this fashion, surrounded by objects that really brought to life through conversation and we've done that, we've got the hang of it, just about now after three sessions and it's really nice to bring this, "What was Europe?" series to a close with ephemeral Europe tonight.

We're sitting, especially if you're listening to us rather than present with us, we're sitting in a large wooden globe commissioned by the Cuban collective Los Carpinteros. And it's a globe that represents the intellectual ideals and hosts the social activities associated with the great salons that were in some ways the engine rooms of the enlightenment. And it's been a fascinating setting for us to be having our conversations in and a great way I think to inaugurate the V&A's newest set of galleries with 1100 objects from all over Europe but as I say really incomplete in a way without people and without voices and without conversations about the issues that have made this series almost uncannily timely. And I don't think any of us would have expected that in the course of the four conversations we would emerge with a date for a referendum about whether we will remain in Europe so that's an extremely interesting context within which to have had these unfolding conversations and it's informed what we're doing and I'm sure it may even inform what Simon Schaffer is about to say, so Simon Schaffer, over to you.

Professor Simon Schaffer: Hello, so what's the next term in this series? "Where was Europe", "Europa and Britannia", "Europe through non-European eyes"? You might for example suppose that the next term in that series is "Europe from beyond the Solar System", that would be an appropriate 18th-century theme, Micromégas, Zadig, how do we all look from worlds that we can barely imagine. But no, it turns out the fourth term in the series is "Ephemeral Europe". Well there are many reasons why that seems appropriate, at least it does so to me.

One is to remind us, let me start with the basics, of the immense importance and contribution of the work of conservators to the projects that we all are fascinated by and the success and effect of these galleries. The relation between ephemerality and conservation is obviously a golden thread both for historians and on gallery and behind the scenes in museum work. One only has to think for a moment about the strange chiasmus that links together what is transient and what is stored and accessioned and displayed and looked after and maintained in a museum.

Avons-nous: le déluge! There are clearly at least two kinds of objects, many of them on gallery but certainly many of them are likely to be discussed here that raise the puzzle of ephemerality in very clear ways. To broaden the scope, think for example of malanggan sculptures made in what some of us now called Nauru Island in the Bismarck Archipelago, that's how European that is, which turn out to be remarkably robust but are made to be transient. Think on the other hand of the sugared models of skulls in the Dia de los Muertos celebrations in Mexico and elsewhere which turn out to be remarkably fragile, a curator's nightmare and yet bring to presence the eternal in the Day of the Dead.

The very word ephemeral, *ephemera*, ephemerality and I think our speakers will address this, raises those questions in very clear ways. As far as I can tell, the term erupts into most European languages from the classical Greek medical tradition. It's to do with the Greek word for a "day" so it captures those diseases that come into being and pass away within 24 hours as opposed to longer term diseases. It then moves rather rapidly to entomology, ephemeron, the mayfly. Then it moves to astronomy, ephemerides, almanacs, in other

words charts and catalogues of days and it's only at the end of what is rapidly becoming our period, that's to say in the 70s, 80s and 90s that it's used in any European language in the sense that we're going to use it this evening.

So the period that we're concerned with is precisely the period in most European languages when *ephemera* become *ephemera*. Up till then they've been many things but they haven't quite been that. Vanitas and transience and death clearly play their role, there's an absolutely magnificent representation of that in one of the early galleries in the Europe sequence which is the medallic history of Louis XIV, extraordinary image in which time is defeated by history through the production of commemorative medals and time is so enslaved that all he's left to do is to become a desk, a lectern on which Cleo's writing rests. So the function there of history in general but above all, let's not forget the materiality of history, in this case medals but other objects play their role is to fight the good fight against time and overcome Chronos and then exploit his very broad back.

Okay that, I guess, is enough from me, two thoughts – remember that Lisa's proposed the theme of "Ephemeral Europe" rather than European *ephemera*, I think there's quite an interesting relationship between those, partly for the reason that Bill's just given. Are we living through a demonstration of one or the other, of European *ephemera*, better in or of the ephemerality of Europe itself? Second, and I know our friends and colleagues will address this, alongside all the technologies of ephemerality are the technologies of conservation and preservation. So we should be thinking, at least it seems to me at least as much about say pharmacy jars as we are thinking about those tantalising objects that make conservatives lose their sleep.

Dr Lisa Skogh: Well, thank you so much Bill and thank you Simon. I would like to mention that this series is sponsored by the British Academy and I would like to thank them very much for their support and including British Academy fellows, Lisbet Rausing but also Simon Schaffer and Evelyn Welch who endorsed our application to the British Academy. I would also to thank our colleagues at the V&A for providing such a spectacular setting and especially with us here today is Liz Miller and Joanna Norman.

As we have just heard, the topic of today is perhaps more poetic than the three previous salons. Today we are going to see if we can grasp the Europe we might not see in material things around us and with us here today to explore this at today's much larger salon, that's why we're sitting quite tightly today, we're actually 33 people in here of both emerging and established scholars across fields in the humanities and social sciences.

I'm also especially pleased to introduce to you our three main speakers who will address the topic of ephemeral Europe and our first speaker today is Swiss-born Tina Asmussen who today resides in Berlin where she is a post-doctoral fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science. Her current research is called "Subterranean Economies" which she investigates material and epistemic culture of the minds in early modern Europe. She received her PhD from the University of Lucerne where her dissertation, which I've just learned today is about to be published, concerns Athanasius Kircher's role in the knowledge production, the sciences and collecting history.

She has also been part of a post-doctoral project at the University of Basel together with Christina Göttler , called "Sites of Mediation. - , European Entangled History" -, a highly relevant topic for our salon, Tina.

Dr Tina Asmassen: Tonight for the fourth and last time we sit here in this wonderful globe and for us it serves as a salon and it forms the framework of our social gathering. Today, I'd like to add the concept of the *theatrum* to the concept of the salon. This brings us thematically to room number six of the galleries, the Cabinet. In late 16- and 17-century, in 17-century Europe *theatrum* was a key metaphor for the human perception of the world. It helped not only to structure and organise but also to present knowledge about Europe and its relations to the world. The early modern cabinet or the *Kunstkammer* was often described as a *theatrum* which still today is a term used internationally.

In the *theatrum* the visitors and spectators could perceive the world as a whole. Through the collected objects and artefacts within the microcosm of the cabinet, the microcosmic dimension was made visible. Etymologically *theatrum* means a place for seeing and the issue of vision was very much on the agenda in early modern cabinets throughout Europe. Moreover, seeing and

vision were inextricably tied up with performance and spectacle. The owner or the Keeper guided the visitors through the collection and acted the collectibles their relation to each other and to the world outside in a way that suited the visitor status, their knowledge and the occasion of the visit. Early modern cabinets and collectibles were therefore very dynamics sights of exchange of people, objects and knowledge. Objects were brought, discussed, analysed, tasted, transformed, admired, given away or sold. But the cabinets were not only physical places, their dynamic and performative qualities turned them into ephemeral theatres, which were enacted always differently in context and situations specific ways. The visitors played a crucial part in it. They were not only spectators of the *theatri* - but actors contributing actively to the plots.

One of the most famous cabinets of the 17th-century was Athanasius Kircher's collection at the Jesuit College in Rome. Kircher the German polymath, lived and taught in Rome since 1634. There he was a professor of mathematics, physics and oriental languages. Kircher was among the most prolific and well-known scholars of the 17th century and the guided tour through his collection was on the agenda of every Grand Touring elite tourist in early modern Europe.

His collection, the Theatrum Kircherianum contained mechanical wonders, optical devices, coins and medals, antique and Egyptian artefacts, Chinese inscriptions, Japanese weapons, stuffed exotic animals or bones of a mermaid. Kircher's collection was a spectacular representation of his erudition and his patronage networks which spread through all over Europe. But being located in papal Rome it was also a powerful representation of the claims of power of the Posttridentine Church and the Jesuit Order in particular.

Kircher's cabinet represented a triumphal Christian Europe and this included also the Near East as the Christian roots of Europe and this Christian Europe dominated the world. This image of the triumphant Europe or the *Europa Ttiumphans* corresponds chronographically with many allegories of the four continents appearing in 16th and 17th century. For example let's think at the ceiling fresco of Andrea Pozzo in the Jesuit Church, St. Ignazio in Rome.

Europa receives the light of God and spreads it to the world. In accordance to Cesare Ripa's allegory of *Europa*, which is described as the foremost of all

continents, *Europa* appears as the queen ruling the world. In these wonderful new galleries here at the V&A we today see the objects without a direct reference to their historical *theatri*. Sometimes we get a glimpse from a context of display and staging or at the dynamic exchanges of objects and knowledge. But most of the time the historical forms of meaning and the ways in which the objects were experienced, used and staged are lost.

We see the thingness of the things without their ephemeral theatre. However, just as Kircher and his contemporaries created plots in which the collectables were embedded, we today create our own *theatri* in our museums. Today, as the European idea is highly contested, scholars outdo each other by analysing process of cultural transfer and exchange. We are interested in movements and flows rather than ruptures and boundaries and many research project investigates the shared European identities of early modern societies or the cultural histories of a political idea. Sometimes their story of Europe begins with 1700, sometimes like here with 1600. Sometimes with the European expansion or the fall of Constantinople or even earlier.

Even if we investigate Europe today in the context of the world as a whole influenced by post-colonial studies and global history, let's just think here in the galleries of all the non-European objects and in our last salon which looked at Europe through non-European eyes but even through this global context of Europe there is a thing that strikes me.

Europe often seems quite flat. The transfer processes and exchanges of people, objects and good knowledge often seem to happen very smoothly, especially with regard to trade or specific figures of cultural brokerage like Kircher is one. It's therefore very important to not just consider it a concept of early modern Europe through the thingness, durability and stability in order to create thick and smooth plots might not also the weak ties which were based on ephemeral instable and fragmentary qualities be able to connect people, objects, practices, knowledge and ideas and what does this mean for the story of Europe that we'd like to tell?

These questions I'd like to raise in this wonderful salon, a room without objects that becomes our own ephemeral theatre where we can and actually do reflect

and explore or question “What was Europe then and what it is today? Thank you.

Dr Lisa Skogh: Thank you so much Tina. Our second speaker today is a historian of science or originates from New Zealand, Michael Bycroft studied at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand and University of Toronto before gaining his PhD at the University of Cambridge in 2013. He’s currently a Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow at the Department of History at the University of Warwick. He’s writing a book with the wonderful title “Which stones are precious? Craft, Commerce and Classification in Early Modern Europe”. Just as Tina, Michael has also been part of Sven Dupré’s group “Art and Science” at the Max Planck Institute in Berlin and Michael’s current book project begins with the observation that precious and semi-precious stones were among most important kinds of objects recognised by natural philosophers in early modern Europe.

Dr Michael Bycroft: Thanks very much Lisa for the introduction. As you have just heard I studied precious stones. I was a little worried when I was allowed to talk about ephemerality, what exactly is ephemeral about a diamond or a ruby or a piece of rock crystal, there seems like there’s nothing that could be more objurgate or permanent or lasting than that kind of objects. But of course I need not have worried because the moment a reflection shows that there is a lot that changes about a diamond for example, its price changes, the values that are attached to it changes, the shape of it, the cut of it changes. It might be cut and re-cut several times over the course of its lifetime.

Reflecting on that, I concluded that the mere fact of being ephemeral and changing is not particularly interesting in its own right and that the more interesting question is what different kinds of ephemerality -I’m going to have trouble this evening -ephemerality we can think of and especially different ways in which the same object can be ephemeral and non- ephemeral at the same time. And it turns out that diamonds and other precious stones and the history, the early modern history of the stones gives us several vivid illustrations and metaphors for the ways in which things could be ephemeral and non- ephemeral at the same time.

I'm going to make three points with illustrations. The first point is the most obvious one, a thing could be ephemeral in some respects and non- ephemeral in other respects. Diamonds are hard to change by scratching them with a knife but quite easy to change by striking them with a hammer. If you strike them with a hammer they're rather fragile, that's well-known. The same applies to ideas about diamonds, for example in the course of early modern natural history of diamonds and other precious stones there are two key categories, one was the category of the precious stone and the other one was the category of the oriental stone, the stone that came from the east often associated with a greater level of preciousness, a greater level of hardness and of desirability.

What is interesting is that only one of those categories survives throughout the 18th century and still existed in classification schemes at the beginning of the 19th century and it wasn't the category of the precious stone but the category of the oriental gem. So the idea of the oriental stone was much more long lasting than the idea of the precious stone in general.

So some things change and other things stay the same, that's my first point. The second point is that change can happen without *things* changing, the things might just change hands, consider what I consider to be the most ephemeral mineral collection in early modern science. I(t?) considered (consisted of/in?) one object and it lasted for one evening, the object was called Mr Clayton's diamonds. It was an object that the English experiment(er?), Sir Robert Boyle possessed for a few hours on 27th October 1663 and fortunately for us he wrote down a report of what happened on that one night stand with his diamonds. As I was just going out of town and pay attention to all the different kinds of ephemerality in his report.

"As I was just going out of Town, hearing that an Ingenious Gentleman of my Acquaintance, lately return'd from Italy, had a Diamond, that being rubb'd, would shine (very briefly) in the Dark, and that he (my friend?) was not far off, I snatch'd time from my Occasions to make him a Visit, but finding him ready to go abroad, and having in vain try'd to make the Stone yield any Light in the Day time, I borrow'd it of him for that Night, upon condition to restore it (to) him within a Day or two at the furthest...And hereupon I hastened that Evening out of Town, and finding after Supper that the Stone which in the Day time

w(c)ould afford no discernable Light, was really Conspicuous in the Dark, I was so taken with the Novelty, and so desirous to make some use of an (this) opportunity that was like to last so little a while, that though at that time I had nobody to assist me but a Foot-Boy, (usually Boyle was surrounded by a whole phalanx of assistants... only a Foot-boy this evening) yet sitting up late, I made a shift that Night to try (out) a pretty number of such of the things that then came into my thoughts, as were not in that place and (that) time unpractical"

Apologies for Boyle's syntax. So for Boyle, Mr Clayton's diamonds was all too ephemeral. It appeared one evening and then it disappeared. But the diamond itself did not change, in fact the whole point of these experiments was that the diamond didn't change when, or changed very little when he carried them out. Boyle was a mechanical philosopher, he wanted to show that remarkable phenomena could be produced simply by mechanically altering an object such as by rubbing it. The reason he preferred diamonds that glowed in the dark to putrefying fish for example which also glowed in the dark is that it's difficult to understand putrefying fish in terms of matter and motion but it's easy to understand the rubbing of a diamond in terms of matter and motion.

So this was a highly ephemeral object but one which did not change itself. So my first point was that the same thing can both change and stay the same. My last point is that they can stay the same because they change. So why are diamonds so hard? Well, to cut a long story short, it's partly because they're made of carbon atoms and these atoms are made of little particles which are in a constant state of oscillation and indecision and circulation.

With that in mind consider the predicament of the Paris Guild of Goldsmiths in 1701. Louis XIV had just published a sumptuary law that threatened their trade in precious stones. According to the law the wives and unmarried daughters of clerks and notaries and merchants and artisans would be forbidden from wearing any precious stones whatsoever except a few rings. This was not a good change for the goldsmith as you can imagine given that a huge, a very large proportion of their clientele consisted in precisely this middle range of consumers. So the goldsmith strategy and their remonstrations to Louis XIV consisted in trying to keep things the same, retain their ability to sell lots of

stones by pointing out that things were constantly changing, in particular diamonds are constantly changing hands in France.

What they wanted to show is that diamonds could generate wealth within France so that they could generate wealth without French gold and silver leaving the kingdom. Their arguments, to quote them is:

"The use we make of these stones precedes only from their movement and from the continual circulation that we give to them, families sell these stones" - I am paraphrasing – "sell these stones to individuals and generate large profits and by these, this sometimes results from the death of a family member, these are a great aid to the public because of the sums they produce for heirs and minors with an o and orphans and by the new works that are made from these stones which are sold, the new works made by artisans and craftsmen which sustain an affinity of families or jewellers and gem cutters. All these different works and all these fashionings proceed only from the movement and change and circulation of gems in the kingdom".

So the goldsmith was saying, like a character from the Italian film *The Leopard* about 19th-century Italian aristocrats, if we want things to stay the same around here, something has to change. So those are my three points. I have two questions, one is about the point I made, well the bare assertion I made at the beginning that things that change are not in themselves interesting, is that the case? If we were to find things that were truly ephemeral that just popped into existence and then immediately popped out of existence again, would they be interesting to us or is the reason we study ephemerality because it only is ephemeral on the surface and in fact once we look more closely we find that it is meaningful and consequential and significant for historical actors?

Second question: was there something special about ephemerality in early modern Europe? We can all think of ephemeral things that popped into existence or dropped out of existence in this period, mineral collections, periodicals, coffee shops, broad sheets, Holy Roman Empires, East India companies and so on. But of course there had been ephemeral things before. Was there an unusually large number of new ephemeral things in this period or did those ephemeral things have different character than they had before?

An easy answer might be to say that this was "The Age of the New". By pure coincidence I was reading on the train a book by Margaret Jacob, the historian of 18th-century science and history and I read on page two, "after 1700 and largely before 1800 so in the 17 century, all western people discovered more worlds, natural geographic, technological, cultural or simply human than had ever been the case before or since".

So if this is "The Age of the New", is this the reason that ephemerality becomes at least linguistically as Simon has suggested, is this the reason that ephemerality becomes ephemerality in this period? So those are my two questions. Thank you.

Dr Lisa Skogh: Our third speaker this evening is Elaine Tierney. She gained her PhD from the V&A and the University of Sussex where she investigated the role of festivals in urban life in early modern Europe. She gained her BA in English at the University of Cambridge and prior to that she spent a lot of time in her native Ireland. She is interested in keeping her scholarship connected around political, social, material and economic historical frameworks. Her doctorate is currently being turned into her first monograph and she's currently a lecturer in early modern history at the University of Manchester while also still - and thankfully - retaining her role here at the V&A in the Research Department as editor of the peer-reviewed *V&A Online Journal*. Elaine, the floor is yours.

Dr Elaine Tierney: It's a real honour to be, not only the last but the latest speaker to this evening's salon so you know,: mission accomplished. Ephemerality, the word as deployed in scholarly writing can be a bit of a blank intervention. [unclear] a bit in a text intended to bring instant depth, an intellectual and abstract quality [unclear] but at least its murmurs of approval from the reader or listener.

I say "scholarly writing" but I mean me. My work on early modern urban life is full of ephemerality, ephemeral architecture, ephemeral objects, ephemeral design, ephemeral performances but what precisely does any of this mean? Well before we kind of launch into that during the conversation, I thought we'd

start with a series of suggestive snap shots of early modern ephemerality. So I'm going to start in Stockholm in 1650 where as part of celebrations for the coronation of Queen Christina a huge triumphal arch was erected in the city.

Intended as a temporary addition to the city, the arch was still in place some ten years later, long after Christina herself had abdicated. Curiously in spite of enduring out of doors for over a decade it has been described as an example of "ephemeral architecture". By comparison with other structures of the late 17th century Tessin palace, say - the triumphal arch was certainly a more temporary addition to Stockholm and now exists solely and visual depictions and textual descriptions. And yet, its prolonged afterlife far in excess of the event it was intended to mark, usefully complicates what we mean by ephemerality.

My second snap shot is a bit closer to home: The Strand in London in 1700. One of the main thoroughfares connecting the City proper and Westminster: its length was punctuated on landmarks: some permanent and enduring like The New Exchange, one of early modern London's luxurious shopping destinations, others less so like the maypole that was synonymous at The Strand from its reinstallation in 1661.

However, in addition to these well documented examples, there were other landmarks of a sorts, like Thomas Catchmead's shed. This stood near the maypole from 1666, erected as a temporary premise, when Catchmead was burnt out of his shop, in Fish Lane, during the Great Fire, was still in place at the turn of the 18th century. And actually, his granddaughters are still living there.

In the grand scheme of things, these were very different entities, but they do show one common characteristic: they no longer exist. In being so, they speak to the full spectrum of the ephemeralities that made up the early modern built environment: permanent and enduring, less enduring, but remarked upon, inherently temporary and overlooked.

My third snapshot takes us out of the early modern city and into the V&A: to room 7, in the new Europe 1600-1815 galleries. And to an extravagantly appointed writing cabinet, from the early 18th century. But I'm not interested in the cabinet. I'm interested in what was discovered, under one of its secret

drawers, on Boxing day 1967. The most evocative of all ephemeral objects: a scrap of paper.

This short text composed by Jacob Arend, one of the cabinet's makers, restores to view the objects hidden history, the war, famine and privation that compelled this young journeyman to seek his fortune elsewhere. In this instance, the contrast between the material properties of these objects: paper versus cabinets, ephemerality versus solid, poses a provocative question, which is the more exceptional survival?

To wrap up, this series of snapshots puts pressure on what we mean when we talk about ephemerality. Seemingly, the critical relationship is between place or space, time or temporality and materials or materiality. And yet, these were and continue to be fluid, constantly changing relationships. Ephemerality could, indeed can be pejorative, disposable, fragile and not expected to last, forgotten, ignored and practically invisible, like Catchmead's shed.

But it can also be special, created for a specific occasion, like the coronation triumphal arch and permitted to last longer than the event it marked are subsequently special, precisely because it lasted against the odds, like Arend's note. This evening, I'd like us to interrogate these shifting relationships, to produce a more satisfying account to what ephemerality might actually mean, to make it more than a clever blank. Does it constitute a material state, is the ephemeral category of objects? To what extent our ideas about ephemerality, historically and geographically contingent. What do museums, like the one we're sat in, do to so-called ephemeral objects. And, how and when does something stop, or become, or indeed stop being ephemeral, thank you.

Professor Simon Schaffer: Ok the floor is open, if you want to talk about … museum, or Catchmead's shed, or Mr Clayton's diamond that would be terrific. If you want to answer the question, are ephemeral objects intrinsically tedious that would also be great.

Dr Danielle Thom: I wanted to respond to one of Michael's points, about the question surrounding whether, if ephemerality is a state that is, in some ways especially linked to the period that we're looking at. And I wonder if there's a

connection between the material ephemeral and the development of, or rather the refinement of consuming publics in this period. If there's a connection between the manifestation of ephemera and the new sort of forums for consumption and cultural transmission, the publicness opens up. An example that springs to mind is, the connections between, for example, the Royal Fireworks in London, in 1749 that celebrated the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, Handle's music for the royal fireworks that's commissioned in response and the various prints that are printed and sold, to represent the occasion of the fireworks.

You have this whole network of consumables, some which are material goods, some which have to be performed, but they're all linked to these new and developing arenas for consumption and for commercialised leisure. And I think there might be a connection between this emerging public, or emerging publics and a demand for ephemera, in its material and consumable form.

Dr Anna Marie Roos: It's a very interesting question, some objects were specifically, like fireworks, designed to be ephemeral, but some of them were ephemeral, non-ephemeral at once, which is part of their charm. I'm thinking for instance of the thing that is glass in Prince Rupert's drops, yes? Because we're talking about diamonds being broken and chipped away and fashioned into crystals for beauty. But the point of Prince Rupert's drops was, if you take a bit of glass, you drop it into ice water, you create a tear drop shape. You can pound away on the head of the teardrop all you want to, with a hammer and it won't shatter and it seems absolutely durable, but if you clip of the tail, the thing explodes.

And it's due to a really interesting process, chemical process of [unclear] inside the Prince Rupert's drops, because the glass [unclear] so quickly. These were done as toys, Prince Rupert of Bavaria investigated these. But he was doing these, because they're interested in glassworks, society is interested in creating a good glass. Why? Well, Christopher Merret wanted to have a good bottle that could withstand double fermentation, to make sparkling wine. And so it's this really beautiful, sort of microcosm of consumer demand, interest in disposable goods, for entertainment, but also about technology and science and understanding exactly what's going on in that little drop.

Dr Tina Asmussen: Thank you Danielle for your question, or your remark. And I would like to say something that, perhaps, takes the consumer perspective a little bit back, to shed the view to, perhaps to Rome. In the 16th and 17th century there was so much ephemerality in the Roman city, all these, like the papal festivities and the entrance of Queen Christina. And we have the interest for news, with the *avisi* that spread all over Europe. And people were consuming this news, but it was also a stage to manifest, or to make power claims. And they were not all, yeah the ephemerality was not so much bound, I think with the consumer culture, but also with politics and power and with the fireworks and yeah that's that.

So I want to, to stress that it's not that much of an enlightened discourse, to take it really back to the 16th, yeah even to earlier centuries.

Ms Joanna Norman: Joanna Norman, V&A. Just to pick up on that Tina and to go back to something that Elaine said, I question how much, in that kind of context, of 16th and 17th century Rome, where this was so much a part of regular activity, how far it was seen as something ephemeral? Because it's, I mean it can be thought of, very much, in the same way as building palaces, all the different papal families, vying for power in their building of palaces, in their commissioning of art works, in their collections and this is another aspect of that.

And so I wonder how it's being referred to, actually, in the way that that sort of discourse is talking about it, whether it is even something they're seeing that's so fleeting, as we think of it now?

Dr Nadia Baadj: I would also, I think, related this explosion of ephemerality to the growth of collecting, in this period and I think that, once you take objects and put them in the collection, as Tina rightfully noted, the experience is always ephemeral and that it's constantly, dynamic changing, it's not a static thing, it's hard to pin down, it will change every time, depending on the viewer, or who's interacting with it. And I think then too, a number of the objects that are being collected and that are in demand, relate to fleeting or ephemeral experiences. You have an interest in wonders, in monstrous things and different kinds of

events, whether natural or preternatural that we rely on a certain description, whether in a visual and then, when that object, or account enters a collection we have, you know, we have this relation to an event that was ephemeral that we really can't pin down, or capture.

So I think the wide spread growth of collecting may play into a role, play a role in this period.

Dr Helen Pfeifer: I wanted to respond to Tina's point about power and I really appreciate that point. And I think that maybe one way we can think of power in this period and perhaps throughout history is the relationship to ephemerality and the ability to control the ephemeral as being a characteristic of, both conjure up the ephemeral and to control and nail down and pin down the ephemeral as a characteristic of the powerful and the period.

So if we think of the fireworks, both the sort of wealth and the decadence that it requires to put on fireworks, but also, you know, who is in fact commissioned to document the fireworks and to give sort of the official version of the fireworks and who is actually dis-empowered from that process of pinning down and defining what is ephemeral.

Dr Lisa Skogh: Picking up on what Nadia was saying about collecting, I'm thinking about the word ephemera, in reference to, if we're talking about rarities. And André Mollet wrote a treaties on, to an unknown lover of, or curious lover, meaning a person of very special skills, on the art of cultivating melons. And melons might seem quite funny to us, today, were seen as very, very important objects to cultivate. Obviously living objects. Not only this treaties, but you can see in correspondence, between collectors, especially many Northern, European courts, how they are sending seeds, melon seeds to one another, but also they are creating special areas in their gardens, which in Northern, at Gottorf, for instance, it was called the Melonenberg. And you can read in their correspondence also how they are sending melons to one another.

Now how is this also important in a more traditional art historical context? Well, for instance, we think about that some still lifes might be seen as not very good still lifes and I have an example of that, that were in the Swedish Royal

Collections, these are actually portraits of melons. Of specific melons, where it is noted their weight, where they were grown, i.e. a rarity to have been able to cultivate them and the way they are painted, pretty poorly, I have to say, but they were still displayed next to rulers from continental Europe, in an audience chamber.

Dr Clare Hickman: I was actually going to talk about gardens, as well, so it's an excellent introduction, Lisa, thank you. Because they seem to strike me as a place, which is about power and collecting and are ephemeral in their own nature. So gardens are never fixed. So if you look at the paintings of like Versailles, in the gallery and it looks like Versailles now, but of course, which Versailles are we looking at, plants change, any gardener will tell you, you should have been here last week to see this plant, or next week when this is out, you've missed the best thing. And that kind of trying to and also have a bloom that kind of is a new bloom that's come out as an exotic plant, it's bloomed for the first time.

So when the, I can't remember which plant it is now, there's a plant that flowers the first time, Edinburgh Botanic garden, in the 1780's and they advertised times to go and see it. And this is like an ephemeral thing and you can go in this week, when it will be blooming for the first time and you can see it. So garden's strike me as representing a lot of these things in one space. And we think about conserving them, that then becomes very difficult, because which garden do you want to conserve, is it the one when it's created, is it the one twenty years in, is it the one when families have lived there for three hundred years? So it kind of seems to cover a lot of those things.

Dr Arthur MacGregor: I was struck by the way that museums are both repositories of ephemera, but also, in a way, the very enemies of ephemera in the natural history world that we've kind of moved onto. Very often, the only way that these specimens can be represented, in any permanent or meaningful way in the museum is by putting an end to that ephemera, to suspending their transience to drowning the spider in spirits, or crushing the buttercup between two leaves of paper, or whatever it might be.

And indeed, the whole basis on which scientific natural history depends since the Linnean period, on this concept of type specimens, you have to have one specimen, which is kept forever in sort of suspended animation and to which we, today, repeatedly refer back to that one specimen, if there are matters of taxonomy to be resolved, as it were. Far be it for me to suggest museums are graveyards of specimens, but, in a sense, in that specific sense of suspending ephemerality that's what they are.

Dr Felicia Gottmann: This is, quite possible a bit mean, but we've so far been talking a lot about ephemera and very little about Europe. And I wonder how far, all of what we've said so far, is very unspecific to Europe and what, or to echo Michael's question before, what is there, if anything that is specific about early modern European ephemerality? If you think about the collections of the Chinese Emperor, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Temporal Structures in North America, the specific festivals that you had in South America, then what of all that we've said, so far, is specific to any early modern understandings of ephemera, or is all of this just generally applicable?

Professor Simon Schaffer: I think that's the fundamental question, since the topic is ephemeral Europe, as I said and not a European *ephemera*. Here are some guesses, one the Eucharist? This is a culture which organises itself, either in favour, or against, an extraordinary doctrine, which is that it's possible for entities to change substance, without changing accidents. That's what the priest does in the mass, it still looks like bread, but it's not bread. And enormous amounts of iconography, debate, cultural work, as in the museum curturianum are devoted to that cult and to thinking that cult and to policing it, so that it's no undermined, for example by people like atomists, like Robert bloody Boyle, who, if he's right then the Eucharist's can't work the way the Church says. And it seems to me that there are particular models of, as it were, policing what is ephemeral, which may not be unique to this conjuncture, but they're extraordinarily strong in this conjuncture. And, in these galleries, which begin with the papal ideological programme that they start with, that seems like an interesting place to think. The second example is, the, and we've already heard expert folk talk about this, a very peculiar way of organising shopping and organising consumption and valorising the marginal rate of return of what is ephemeral, right.

So that melons are valuable, not just cause melons are great, folks, especially in Sweden! But they don't last - that's why they're valuable. So what is valorised is the transient in just that way. And it seems to me, it might be interesting to explore the intersection between a certain religiosity and a certain model of consumption, which many historians have done, but maybe not under the sign of the transient or the ephemeral, but rather under the sign of commodity fetishism. That would start to be, at least, maybe something specific, perhaps, about the early modern European conjuncture. Not I insist unique, surely not that, but at least it would pick out some features of what's on gallery, in quite an interesting way, perhaps?

Dr Spike Sweeting: So this is a kind of riff on what you've just said there, that one of the ways that ephemerality is policed and I think one of the more enduring ways, ironically, that develops in this period, is the management of data and I'm thinking particularly insurance and life insurance being something that, whilst I think this is a little bit questionable, might move you from a religious view of the world, to a secular one, that going through the process of signing up and paying your premium, which is enormously popular in London and then later in the period across all kind of capital cities, in Western Europe, does become a way of managing your life, in a completely different way.

That doesn't mean you don't die of diseases and things very quickly, so it's not necessarily backed up by any great growth in actuarial science, or medical practice. But I think there is this kind of growing move to, for want of a better word, secular understandings of ephemerality.

Professor Richard Wistreich: Yeah, I'm just picking on two things, first of all in answer to Michael, sorry Richard Wistreich, in answer to Michael's question, is ephemerality interesting, particularly things that come into being and then disappear? I think, there's one that obviously is of most interest to me, is the whole question of sound. Sound is, perhaps, the ultimate ephemeral object and I'm going to use that word object with intention here. And particularly, I'm interested, of course, in it's organised form, as music. And you might say, well, that's interesting music, or in sound, is something which is enduring through all periods of history and across all the world. But one of the

key things that happens, in the early modern period, I think is interesting, is a development of a mechanism, or the very first mechanism, long before the invention of recording machines, to try and find a way of capturing sound, so that it then can be reproduced again and that is, of course, musical notation.

Again, you might say, well musical notation goes right back to the middle ages, but what happens, in the early modern period, for the first time, is musical notation being not so much a cue for memory, but a way of both recording sounding things that have happened and providing a system, by which they can be then reproduced again. Just before I stop, again, to pick up on Elaine's question, what do museums do to ephemeral objects? Here we have a wonderful example again, which I think we should think about, which is the way that we display sounds and music in museums, is of course, here through beautiful instruments, instruments, which are made to stand in for that ultimate ephemerality of music.

Of course, instruments themselves, make no sound, unless they are played. Even more problematic and impossible to display of course is the human voice. And it's, particularly in the 16th and then, even more so in the 17th century, a real fascination with the ephemerality of the voice. And that's partly for medical reasons, so [unclear] is beginning to talk about, what is this strange thing, the voice, which seems to be everywhere, but the hands cannot take hold of it? Is it no sooner appeared, than it has disappeared, exactly using Michael's words. The voice is the one thing that you can't, ever hold onto, because it is the ultimate ephemeral. And yet, there is the possibility that if you record it, in the form of a notation, it can be reproduced. And that is why, the collecting of exquisite voices becomes part of the cabinet, in the form of very wealthy aristocrats, people who have means, literally collecting singers. And they, of course are also ephemeral, female singers don't last for very long, because when they marry, they may no longer appear in public. But that absolute obsession with the ephemeral in singing.

Dr Maurice Sass: Thank you very much for the... Because I'm working on visual cultures of hunting and there it's the same is that all I'm interested in, is ephemeral, was not to grab, as an object, because performance itself, as sound is something we can't put in a museum. And this strikes me so much, because

of what you said, Simon Schaffer, that in a way, our culture of trying to grasp this change, what happens is kind of very Catholic attitude toward culture, that's everything, I just wanted to tell you. Thank you.

Dr Erin Maglaque: I was wondering if I could actually just follow on from that and talk specifically about the kind of contemporary European problem. Michael your kind of quote that you read from your book about, if we want something to stay the same, something has to change, that seems like to me like it could be the sort of slogan for the Remain campaign right? And I wonder, I mean and this seems to be the Remain campaign kind of central problem that we want to stay the same, we want to stay in Europe, but something has to change.

And it seems that, they're problem with kind of selling that is that, there's something about sort of change within stability that we can't quite wrap our minds around, right? And I wonder if that's because we valorise stability, in a way which has moved on from how early moderns, sort of valorised ephemerality, right, and what changed and when, I think will be a really interesting thing to find out.

Professor Evelyn Welch: One of the things I like doing most, going into old buildings, is looking at the maps on the wall and seeing the way the pinks and blues have changed over time, as different countries have expanded and contracted there. And building on the earlier comments there, you know, how do you put the ephemeral next to Europe and keep that as one conjunction? One way of doing it, is turning it round. Well, what would be the opposite, what would a durable Europe look like? What would a permanent Europe look like? What would a collected Europe look like? And finally you'd just have one map and it would never change, there.

So the key difference, it seems to me, between the institutions that are trying to manage what Europe is now, is that in our period, of course, it's the bodies of men and women, which defined much of what Europe was, what nationality, religion, definition of loyalty there. And, when a woman ceased to be reproductive, cease to produce the heirs of the next generation that whole part of that geography then passes into another lineage there. So, if you like, we are

built on ephemerality, the ephemerality of the human body, they're not quite like a mayfly, but pretty close, if you're a geologist.

Dr Michael Bycroft: I wanted to try to grapple with Felicia's question, but I guess there are two ways of addressing it. One is the comparative way, was there a difference between ephemerality of a French cabinet of precious stones in the 18th century and a Chinese cabinet of jade that would be the comparative way. But there's also a connective way, to use the jargon, to approach the question. Supposing that Europe became more closely in contact with the rest of the world, in this period, what effects did that have on the amount of *ephemera* that exists, or the character of the *ephemera* that existed in Europe. And the obvious topic to discuss here is imitation and substitution efforts to produce, in Europe, things like Chinese varnish and Chinese porcelain. We have items from the Meissen factory in this very space I think. And an obvious thing to say would be their imitations are less durable than the originals, was that the case? Well I guess one reason that soft paste porcelain was considered inferior to hard paste porcelain, was that it was more durable under duress and especially heat.

I suppose counter fight rubies and diamonds and emeralds made of glass and metallic pigments, are certainly less durable than the original articles. And one can certainly think of other examples of cast iron versus wrought iron is another case, cast iron is less durable than wrought iron. A cast iron door knob, for example is less durable that a wrought iron door knob, the cast iron being a kind of imitation or substitute, although not a substitute of non-European commodity. So, is imitation and substation one of the answers to this question?

Dr Elaine Tierney: I just want to briefly follow on from that. Because I think we've been, we've kind of taken it hook, line and sinker that something ephemeral is a positive conative, it has, you know positive connotations. Whereas, there are other points in the sort of early modern period and quite the contrary is true. I'm interested you say porcelain, because I'm struck by the moment where people move from having sugar sculpture to porcelain sort of centre pieces. Also think about the relationship between timber and brick, you

know, are there kind of more pejorative definitions of the, I suppose the temporary?

Cause I think, you know, we've gone for ephemerality as a word we're using, but what about disposable, provisional, temporary and stable? You know these, I suppose the spectrum of different ways of referring to these things, which are defined by the relationship between space, time and materiality.

Dr Felicia Gottmann: Another thing that I think would be really interesting in that context is fashion. Because, by its very nature, fashion has to be ephemeral, so it has to change to be fashionable. And it's one of those things where, I think, a lot of the points made before come together. Because, for instance, in clothing, the top European thing you wanted to imitate was French silks, but what allowed a broad spectrum of the population to engage, suddenly, in fashionable consumption, that is to buy things that they could afford to be ephemeral and they could afford to wear out very quickly, was through Indian imported cottons and then, subsequently their European imitations, which are beautifully displayed in the V&A.

But, on the lower end of the spectrum, where suddenly, for the first time, you know, poorer people could engage in fashionable consumption, that would not be in a museum, because that, by its very nature, be ephemeral, because you'd wear it out until it's gone. It was only the really lovely Chinese silk, Banyan, which you can see straight through here that you'd keep, because it was precious enough. But the idea of ephemerality as allowing for the lower end of the European consuming public to imitate something that the high end could do, is also something that we might consider.

Mr Liam Byrne: Can I just add to that, one really important aspect of ephemerality also seems to be that of fun. We've spoken a lot about decay and preservation and trying to sort of stop the inevitability of kind of mortality and, you know, things falling apart. The object that I keep thinking of, in the European galleries, as being wonderfully ephemeral is that drinking jug, over there somewhere, that has kind of holes all around the side of it. And the way that you get water out of it, is actually by sucking through this little thing at the tip of it, which is secretly a straw that goes through the handle.

And part of the point of having that object, in your collection, is the beautiful ephemeral fun of the moment when you first figure out how it works. And it's only really fun the very, very first time that you sip through the thing, you're not going to wake up every morning and drink, whatever people drink in the morning in the 18th century, through this jug. But you keep it, as part of your household, so that you can watch people realise how it works, over and over again and thus, kind of recreate that moment of ephemerality.

So it's a lot about, sort of, yeah individual human experience of particular moments.

Dr Olivia Horsfall Turner: I have one thing, in sort of response to that, but which connects to a lot of our discussions about performativity. And that is, how many times do you have to do something that is, in itself, ephemeral, before it's to become permanent. So, for instance, you know that you can go to a performance of an opera, or a firework display, you know that a triumphal arch will be erected on the advent of a new monarch. And does something change there, that you know it's going to happen, therefore it has become institutionalised. So, in some ways there's the illusion of ephemerality that we project onto it, whereas, in fact, there is also an institutionalisation of ephemerality, which changes its status. And that would apply to the drinking jug and the joke about how you actually seal it off to create a vacuum, to be able to consume from it. The other point, while I've got the word, I'm going to hold onto it, just for a little bit longer! And I'd like to return to Simon's point, about Europe dividing itself, in terms of the Eucharist. And of course, one of the ways in which Europe polices itself, in terms of religious confession is through iconoclasm.

And it's at moments of iconoclasm that I think we can really see an interesting play between ephemerality and permanence. And I'd like to throw out there the idea that it's these moments of loss that also precipitate movements of conservation and preservation. And so, for instance, in the 1640's, during the civil wars in England, where we have iconoclasm, destruction taking place and therefore the corollary of that, which is the preservationist to desire to record monuments. And we have John Weaver, going around and recording things. We

have Thomas Dingley going around and drawing things. And right through Thomas Brown with his records of tombs as well.

So there's a great surge of trying to pin things down and trying to hold onto things. And it occurs to me that there's an interesting parallel between the Eucharist and it's accidents and it's spirit and also the way in which these monuments are defending against iconoclasm, by differentiating between their external appearance and their historical value as documents and their original intention about why they were created, as opposed to being worshipped as icons. And that, that is a way of negotiating the spirit and the accident of a monument. But I think in that evolution of concern about preservation, we do have a particular conservation philosophy that is particularly European.

Dr Danielle Thom: I'd like to pick up on Olivia's point about preservation and also some of the previous points, regarding for example, fashion and insurance, it strikes me that one of the narratives of ephemerality that seems to be, for me, dominating this period, is a sense that, in fact there's a movement to try and mitigate against the effects of ephemerality, sometimes using the ephemeral itself, to do so. A lot of disparate examples come to mind that only have this in common. We mentioned earlier, the effects of non-European influence on our sense of the ephemeral, something that popped into my head was inoculation, which hails from Turkey, bought back by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, bit of a mouthful!

Inoculation is the temporary introduction of, of germs, I'm not a medical historian, to produce a mild, temporary disease, to mitigate against the possibility of, a substantially worse, all be it still, temporary disease, to mitigate against the possibility of the ephemerality of human life being snuffed out, earlier than it ought to be. In this period you have the proliferation of artistic copies, of important classical sculptures, being copied in plaster and in bronze and being shared among collectors, because the original may not be accessible, or it may be crumbling.

We mentioned fashion earlier, the ephemerality of fashion, of the garment, is also something that is used to fight the ephemerality of the body, so you have, you know, figure altering stays and corsets and wigs and so on, which are,

although ephemeral in themselves, are being marshalled to combat the effects of ephemerality elsewhere. So you have this kind of cyclical narrative, if you like, of the ephemeral constantly eating itself, in a way.

Dr William Kynan-Wilson: I just like to comment on the issue of ephemeral Europe. And I think there's a seduction and power and fascination with the ephemeral that is common to all societies. But, at the beginning, we heard how this is a timely debate. But I wonder if it's always been a timely debate? And whether Europe is especially obsessed with its own ephemerality? In a way that is, perhaps, distinctive. And, of course, empires often muse upon on their fall. Virgil thinks of the ruins of Rome and Ruskin on, when looking at Venice, thinks of the fall of the British Empire. But a continent that questions its fragility, or raises that, I don't know whether other continents do that. And if so, what does that say about Europe, in this period and now? So I'd just like to throw that, throw that out to the floor.

Dr José Ramon Marcaida: I'd also like to throw something to the floor, is this idea that here we are, in a Salon, which is voice meditate and yet, we have these two things recording our voice, so the whole idea of the effort against ephemerality, which is driven, for example, through digital humanities, how we are obsessed with this idea of preservation and fighting ephemerality. And I was thinking of something that is very European, maybe you disagree, of this period, which is the whole idea of the Republic of Letters. So the Republic of Letters, it's mediated through conversation, correspondence, text, discussions and many of these things are ephemeral. And yet, we have this massive projects now of digital humanities, trying to preserve these correspondences, trying to get copies of all these fragile items, in order to preserve the illusion of this republic of letters that is so European.

Dr Anna Marie Roos: A couple of comments, first of all, on about this idea of imitation in art. Sometimes we just have to go back to Dame Nature, there's a genre of paintings in the Netherlands that literally translates as "the dark forest" and many of the artists were trying to figure out how to imitate butterflies in paint. And a lot of them finally said, sod it, I can't do it, I'm just going to take the butterfly and just stick it into the painting. And I mean and that's what a lot of natural history illustrators did as well, they just traced the

animal, they splat it down and they traced it. And so, that was there way of having nature's permanent record counter that ephemerality. And then we have this idea here of the Republic of Letters, I worked on one of those projects and it does, in some ways, in a visual graphic form, show you the connections between individuals. But what I often found, it was the things found enclosed in the letters, when we did find them that were the most important, such as a little packet of chemicals, being sent from one chemist to another, or a leaf or a plume. Or, a little memoir that had a handy pocket for a comb case that had a love letter in it, or a token.

These physical objects to me, spoke, somehow more so than the paper letter and they gave me an emotional response that all the digital humanities in the world did not. And that's something that I thought, it's that butterfly question again, isn't it, it's that desire for something we can hold. And I think that this, the whole theme that we see now, with object-oriented history, is because we are so bombarded by the digital and ephemeral visual and we want something we can hold. Maybe that's why we do taxidermy now - that's fashionable as well!

Dr Olivia Horsfall Turner: I think, just following on from that point about ephemerality of and materiality of objects, really that speaks to the concern that we have now, with objects as historical evidence and as these witnesses from the past, that have travelled through time. And that, in itself, makes me think of Bacon's idea about objects as flotsam and jetsam, the shipwreck, the items which are washed up on the shore of the present, but which come to us directly from the past. And that there is, like the butterfly, a sense of absolute correspondence, something comes and is still manifesting itself in the same way, in our time, as it was in the time that it was created.

And that, although these things are fragile, they are, somehow, inherently speaking of permanence.

Professor Simon Schaffer: As is our custom, we give the voice, we give the moment for our three speakers, to point out what we should have said and didn't and what we said and shouldn't have mentioned at all! So they each have two minutes, starting with Tina.

Dr Tina Asmussen: Thank you and it was great that the question at the end came to the issue of materiality and ephemerality then. And when I scrolled the internet to read a few reviews about the galleries, one blog I read, she told, she said she was a little bit disappointed that there were no clear or guide through the collections. And the room was a bit and the rooms were not good connected. But I think, rather, it's an advantage that we go, several times, through the collections and every time we see a new thing and we have this ephemeral space, here in the globe that is made for discussion and to bring things together in, yeah, unusual connections.

And sometimes, when in recent discussions about material culture, I have the impression we have certain promise to the, with the materials that there is something real, or stable, where culture materialises and where culture takes concrete form. And we search for the thickness of things and trying to thicken the plot. And especially with these galleries where there is so loose connections, there is also a plea, I think, too, for the thinness and the affects to several, to discover that are bound with these objects. And, for us now and also for the societies in the past.

So we have to look at the story for ephemerality of Europe, or the story of early modern Europe, as a mixture of the thickness of the things, but also to consider their thinness and the weak ties and the loose connections.

Dr Michael Bycroft: I have two things to say, which I will take two minutes! The first is that one of the premises of most of the discussion is that material culture exploded in early modern Europe and that materials are intrinsically ephemeral and this is why this was a time of great ephemerality. But, I think there's certainly a lot to say for that idea. But one can also think about the ephemerality of things that are not material, the ephemerality of ideas. Compare Aristoteles ideas to say, Descartes' ideas. Descartes' was extremely influential, but he was much more ephemeral than Aristotle. Or, if you think about different theories, about why things fall to the ground, when you let them go, Aristotle's theory about that, was much more durable than any of the theories about that, which were introduced in the 17th century.

So ideas were also ephemeral in early modern Europe. My second point was going to be derived from this book, which is called *The Origins of Early Modern Science*, by Herbert Butterfield. This is a book that I didn't accidentally bring, I deliberately bought this one. Much maligned for being bombastic and idealistic and triumphalist and basically wrong and there's a lot to be said for that view. But, there are some sensible things in here. There's one chapter which is entitled *The Place of the Signs of Revolution and the History of Western Civilisation*, which is a great title, but also gives you an idea of why he is so maligned.

Page 180 he says that, "we can speak in history of certain epoxy of crucial transition, when the subterranean movements come above ground and new things are palpably born and the very face of the earth can seem to be changing." And he things exactly this is what's happening, in, well let me carry on: "the movement, this crucial transition was localised however and it is connected with the humming activity, which was taking place, say from around 1660, so second half of the 17th century, not only in England, Holland and France, but also, actually between these countries, the shuttle running to and fro and weaving, what was to become a different kind of Western Culture."

So a lot of this is questionable, but I think there are two lessons, one can take from this passage about Europe. One is that it is useful to think about groups of nations, rather than, about regions and especially about nations surrounding different bodies of water, rather than thinking about individual nations themselves. So Butterfield talks about the transition from a Mediterranean centred Europe to an English channel centred Europe, which he thinks is something which happens in the 17th century. And the second point is that, it is useful to think about movements between different regions and different countries, within Europe. And I think this image of a different kind of Western culture being woven out of the shuttle, this power shuttle, running to and fro across north Western Europe and across the rest of Europe is a good image to end upon.

Dr Elaine Tierney: I'm going to have to do, try and read my own hand writing, which is a real challenge! I've really been struck this evening by our

reflections on the relationships between power, religiosity, performance and records, I think you know [unclear] and the positive, sort of, associations of ephemerality. But I'm going to finish with two things, the first is a fireworks display, because I managed to hold myself back earlier, because I love talking about fireworks. And these are the fireworks for the Coronation of James II in 1685, which have a fantastic records, so Francis Sanford, *The History of the Coronation of James II,* which is in the National Art Library. And you look at the image of the fireworks display and it's absolutely splendid, you know, it's a test to the absolute divine rightness of his monarchy, the fireworks fall into line. It's a really canny display of late 17th century power. It's also completely misleading. Because we have here, you know, on one level, what does the printed image tell us about fireworks, there's no sound, there's no colour. It also doesn't tell us that, about the several men who were injured in the process of putting this fireworks display on.

So all the stuff that's taken out in some of these, these kind of enduring, enduring records and I think it's a really blunt indication of the way in which certain aspects of a permanent record of ephemerality can triumph over the ephemerality of the occasion itself. And the extent to which his historians were dependent on the materials, traces left behind. The second thing I'd like to reprise, I'm going to go back to Thomas Catchmead and his shed, but not to, you know, hoorah, Thomas Catchmead, he's never been spoken about so much since the 1700's!

But I'd like to pick up on, I think a really beautiful notion that Tina introduced and this notion of ephemeral counter narratives, cause I think Thomas Catchmead's shed, we can kind of categorise it as being this. So things that aren't enduring, things that are a test to all sorts of lives and objects that resist our attempts to access them, which are also indicative of the different sorts of lives than the ones we've been talking about, so I think lives lived on the margins and on the edge. So you know, which is something, which is very much a part of experience for lots of people in the early modern periods.

I was really kind of struck by this idea of, recently, about this idea of a permanently temporary way of living, particularly, you know, living in Manchester at the moment, where I'm struck, whenever I go to the Piccadilly

station by the reappearance of these kind of, these temporary encampments, which for me, call to mind, things like, you know, Thomas Catchmead's shed, the places where people are living straight after the Great Fire. Where the poor Palatine's are being, sort of getting (illegible). So you, I suppose, I've actually been very pleased by this evening, because it has given me a more developed definition of ephemerality that I came, hoping to find.

Dr Lisa Skogh: Let's give a round of applause to our three main speakers and to the Salon.
Applause

Dr Lisa Skogh: To mark this especially festive and possibly somewhat, ephemeral Salon series, I am so pleased and honoured to have Liam Byrne, not just as a guest of the Salon, but also, that he so very generously has offered to share his skills on early modern music with us, here and now. Liam Byrne is a professor at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, here in London. And he's also, or last year he was the music resident, here at the V&A. We shall now be able to enjoy the very first live musical performance, here in the Globe, on Viola de Gamba that I know Liam will introduce himself.

And we will hear two movements of a particular importance to early modern salon culture, which I will let Liam enlighten us all about and enjoy. Please join me in welcoming Liam Byrne.

Mr Liam Byrne: Thank you very much and thank you very much for having me, it's a pleasure for me to. I think, guys what we'll do, I'll give a little introduction into one of these mics. So, in addition to performing for you right now, which I'm going to do, because that was, of course, an important part of 18th century salon culture. The pieces that I'm playing are both deeply connected to aspects of things, a thing in the gallery and a thing that we are doing ourselves. But also, I wanted to relate what I'm about to do, to the point that Richard made earlier about the advent of musical notation, as a really early form of recording a practice, which enabled anybody who had been trained in the practice of playing and reading musical notation, to recreate a performance as such.

Because the pieces that I'm about to play for you are by a man called Marin Marais who lived between 1656 and 1728. And he was an incredibly important composer, at the French Court and was, in fact at the peak of his career the Maitre de la Chapelle du Roy. But, most interestingly, he was a viola da gamba virtuoso himself that published five books of pieces, which were, in a sense, records of his performance that were designed to be sold to educated noble amateurs, who would then re-create the pieces of his, at home. And so they're kind of, he was famous for playing these pieces, for those who were lucky enough to hear him. But also Marais devised certain notational principles, certain symbols and ornamental signs that were brand new that he put into his music, in order to make it more possible for people to recreate his performances, as he intended them.

You should come up and see some of the facsimiles of the original prints later, because they're incredibly beautiful, partially because Marais, very uniquely, owned the plates, on which his music was engraved, which was so rare for composers at the time, who usually didn't have that kind of money. But it enabled him to be so specific about what he actually wrote down and he actually altered the plates between several editions of the same print.

So what I'm going to play for you are two movements from Marais's suite *Gout Etranger* that was published in 1717. It's actually the first and the last movement, it's a very long and unusual suite that is a collection of curiosities and oddities and also attempts at capturing some other kind of foreign idea in music. So it leads to a lot of what we've been speaking about. The first movement is called *Marche Tartare*. And I was inspired to play this one by the beautiful, gigantic tapestry, from the *Art of War Series*, in March. Both because the tapestry and this piece of music have an undeniable kind of Marshall element, but also an incredible amount of elegance that reminds us how differently militarism was understood and experienced in the early 18th century.

And the last piece that I will play is called *Le Badinage* or, which is a term meaning, kind of joking conversation. We haven't been making that many jokes here, but you know, there's been a lot of conversation and it's quite a beautiful piece. But, before I do those, because I haven't played in a couple of hours, I'm

just going to play a very short prelude for you, as a kind of introduction. Which is another 18th century French thing.

This instrument that I'm playing actually is a copy from the 1980's, from an English instrument built in 1680's, in St Paul's Church yard, which then made its way to France, as many English instruments did, after the viol fell out of popularity in England. So the instrument currently lives in Brussels and has a sort of early 18th century conversion, so that's the state in which it's been copied.

So a prelude and then *Marche Tartare* followed by *Le Badinage*.

[Playing music]

Dr Lisa Skogh: Thank you so much Liam, what a wonderful and beautiful way to conclude our Salon series. As we have seen through these last months, of Salon conversations, the concept of Europe is not one sided, nor two sided, there's so many ways we can discuss, interpret, a so-called European identity. Whether intellectually, or through curiosity, collecting materials, artefacts, or preferably both, in order not to revert to stereotypical image of Europe. And can we today, also in light of the political discussions in this country, also distance ourselves, when we are talking about Europe, from the concept being discussed, in light of the referendum that Bill mentioned?

Now I have a very long list of thanks. I would, especially like to thank my two collaborators, Bill Sherman and Simon Schaffer, for a wonderful and immensely enjoyable collaboration this past year. And I would also like to thank Nicola Froggatt, who is our grounds manager, who's been very much involved in this project. I would also like to thank all the participants of the Salon series, some of you have been able to attend all four of them. And I would also like to thank those who could not be here, at the Salon today.

And also to our podcast listeners out there.

This podcast series could not have been made, without our brilliant AV technicians: Andrew Shelford and Olly Orwell! As well as our digital manager Keith Hale. Lastly, but definitely not least, I would like to thank our student

volunteers from the V&A Museum and Royal College of Art and Design MA programme, namely Victoria, Olivia, Andrea, Guillermo, Joel and Imme, who have ensured a smooth running of the Salon series. And any listeners, who might take interest, by this series of podcasts and to think further about the relationship, between material, intellectual and social history in early modern Europe, or how these themes work themselves out in other time periods and geographies, will certainly find the activities of this course very interesting.

Details on the history of design curriculum, public research seminars and how to apply for this programme, can also be found on our History of Design section, at the V&A's website. I would like to thank the whole Salon and to thank one and all, thank you.

[Applause]

Professor Simon Schaffer: Before we finish, we should of course thank Lisa Skogh, who has bought *le gout etranger* to what would otherwise would have been a worryingly Brito-centric event, so thank you.

[Applause]

Lisa Skogh: Thank you for listening to What was Europe?: A New Salon. We would also like to thank the British Academy for generously supporting this new salon series. This was in fact our last salon in the series, but it does not mean the discussions we have raised will end. We very much hope that you will not only return to visit the V&A's new galleries of European art and design but also welcome you to revisit our podcast which have taken us all on unexpected journeys into the past and present of Europe. We hope you have enjoyed these conversations as much as we have, so thank you for listening.