



Paris: Life & Luxury in the Eighteenth Century

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Luxury items from centuries past are most often seen within museum settings, devoid of their connotations in time and space. This groundbreaking book seeks to reimagine objects from eighteenth-century Paris within their original context, showing how they were used in the daily routines of elite members of society. Against the background of the reign of Louis XV (r. 1723–1774), the chapters move chronologically from morning to night, covering such topics as temporal literacy and technological advances in timekeeping; innovations in domestic architecture and design for privacy; fashion and self-identity as expressed in the ritual of the morning toilette; reading and discussion of literary texts as influences on the collecting of art; and sociability and politesse during nocturnal entertainments.

The book reflects current scholarship in social history and material culture, but rather than being an exploration of the vernacular, it investigates the emergence of the luxury trade in eighteenth-century Paris, whose products survive in great quantity due to their superior materials and craftsmanship. The essays reveal many of the considerations—practical, social, and aesthetic—that inspired their production. By connecting the purposes, function, and beauty of these works of art, the volume makes a fascinating and important contribution to the study and enjoyment of a great period in French culture. The publication coincides with the exhibition *Paris: Life & Luxury* on view at the J. Paul Getty Museum from April 26 through August 7, 2011 and at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, from September 18 through December 10, 2011.

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