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The power of objects: uncovering the emotional power of artworks and artefacts

Objects of luxury

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Lecture summary

In this lecture, we explore a range of sumptuous and extravagant objects – from the Duke of Choiseul's snuff box to Benvenuto Cellini's famous gold saltcellar commissioned by King Francois I of France, and sculptor Damià Campeny's dazzling table centrepiece *Trionfo da Tavola*. We will not only uncover the heights of luxurious living but also place these objects in the context of the anxiety experienced by European elites. What lengths did they go to, to both display and justify their wealth and assuage their guilt?

References

1. Jean-Charles-Simphorien Dubos, Gold Snuff, 1762, 6.8 cm wide, Sotheby's Auction House.
2. Photo: Kim Kardashian's diamond engagement ring
3. Photo: Jeff Bezos and Lauren Sanchez wedding
4. Photo: Protest banner
5. Georges-Marie Butel Dumont's frontispiece for *Théorie du Luxe*, 1771, Paris.
6. Photo : Printemps, Paris
7. Map Renaissance Italy
8. Viking gold treasure from German island of Hiddensee in the Baltic Sea. Discovered in 1873. Museum of the Hanseatic town of Stralsund
9. Photo: Duomo, Florence
10. Abraham Bosse, *Le Courtisan suivant le dernier Édit*, engraving, 1633.
11. Bust of Lorenzo de' Medici, ca1513/1520, painted terracotta, 65.8 x 59.1 x 32.7 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington
12. *Medici Protome*, mid 4thc. BCE Bronze, 85 x 97 x 35 cm, Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale. Donatello, *Carafa Protome* c. 1455, bronze, 176 x 182 x 140 cm, Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale
13. Sandro Botticelli, *Primavera*, tempera on wood, c. 1482, 203 x 314 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence
14. Vase, with arms of Lorenzo de' Medici and his wife Clarice Orsini, c. 1475-85. Height 38.8 cm
Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit
15. Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Presumed Portrait of Clarice Orsini* (1453-1488), 1490s, oil on panel, 75 x 52 cm, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland
16. Tazza Farnese, date either 2nd c. BCE or 100 CE, Sardonyx, agate and cameo, diameter 20 cm, Archaeological Museum, Naples
17. Woven silk and gold thread, 14th century length:70.5cm Width:27cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London
18. Red and green voided silk velvet, brocaded in gold with floral sprigs and pomegranates, 1425-50, Italian, length: 58cm width: 57.9cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London
19. Moretto da Brescia, *Portrait of Count Fortunato Martinengo*, 1540-45, oil on canvas 114 x 94 cm, National Gallery, London
20. Jean Clouet, *Portrait of King Francis I of France*, 1525-1550, 96 x 74 cm, oil on wood, Louvre Museum, Paris
21. Copy of the Spinario, bronze, 72 x 56, Louvre Museum, Paris
22. Benvenuto Cellini, *Salt-cellar*, 1540-1543, 28.5 cm x 21.5 cm x 26.3 cm, gold, enamel, ebony and ivory, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
23. François I's Book of Hours, 150 folios, 16 miniatures, 8.5 x 6.5 x 2.6 cm, paid for in 1538, Louvre Museum, Paris

24. Emanuel de Witte, 1653, *Courtyard of the Amsterdam Stock Exchange*, 49 x 47.5cm, Museum Boijmans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam
25. Frans Franken (II), *The Interior of a Picture Gallery with Connoisseur Admiring Paintings*, oil on panel, 71 x 104 cm, Private Collection
26. Cornelis de Man, *Curiosity shop*, 1600s, 60 x 51 cm, Art Market, Amsterdam
27. Hendrick Goltzius, *Portrait of Jan Goyerts van der Aer* 1603, oil on canvas, 107.5 x 82.7 cm, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam
28. Roemer Visscher's emblem book, *Sinnepoppen* of 1614: *Tis misselijck waer een geck zijn gelt aen leijt* ('it is sickening what an idiot will spend his money on').
29. Ambrosius Bosschaert, *A still life with flowers, shells and insect*, 1621, oil on copper, 35.2 x 25 cm, Sotheby's auction house
30. Balthasar van der Ast, *Still life with Shells*, c. 1640, oil on panel, 30 x 47 cm, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam
31. Georg Hinz, *A cabinet of curiosities*, 1664. Oil on canvas, 127.5 x 102 cm. Bildegalerie am Schloss Sanssouci, Potsdam. © Wikimedia
32. Ottmar Elliger the Elder, *Still Life with Lobster, Fruit and a Nautilus Shell*, 1667, 66 x 54 cm Private Collection
33. Hans Sloane's Nautilus Shell, with detailed engravings by Dutch artist Johannes Belkin, 15.8 x 11.7 cm, National History Museum, London
34. Pieter Claesz, *Still life vanitas painting with sculpture of the Spinario*, 1628, oil on panel, 70.5 x 80.5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
35. Attributed to Adriaen van Utrecht (possibly workshop), *Vanitas: still life with bouquet and skull*, 1642, 67 x 86 cm, oil on canvas, private collection
36. Rosary terminal bead with lovers and death, Northern France or southern Netherlands, 1500-1525, ivory with emerald pendant, 13.6 x 4 x 4.3 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
37. Memento Mori pendant, gold, enamel and rock crystal, 1500s, France, length, 2.80 centimetres, British Museum, London
38. Anonymous, *Memento mori portrait of General Eusebius von Wallenstein*, c. 1634, ivory and gilded metal, 17 cm x 11 cm, Science Museum Group, London
39. Ottavio Leoni, *Pope Paul V with his nephew Scipione Borghese*, oil on slate, 22.8 x 14.7 cm, Sotheby's auction house.
40. J. W. Baur, *View of the Villa Borghese*, 163, Villa Borghese, Rome
41. Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Bust of Scipione Borghese*, 1632, Galleria Borghese, Rome. Marble. Height 78 cm
42. Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Apollo and Daphne*, marble, 1622-5, 243 cm high, Villa Borghese Rome
43. Caravaggio, *David with the Head of Goliath*, 1609-10, oil on canvas, 125 x 101 cm, Galleria Borghese, Rome
44. Raphael, *The Deposition*, 1507, oil on canvas, 184 cm x 176 cm Galleria Borghese, Rome
45. Anonymous, Borghese Windsor cabinet Fir walnut and Chestnut, Lapis, Agate, amethyst, Jasper, silver, ca. 1620, 178 x 126 x 54 cm, Getty Museum, Los Angeles
46. Workshop of Giovanni Battista Gaulli, *Portrait of Pope Alexander VII (Chigi)*, oil on canvas, 90.1 x 76.7 cm, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore
47. Gianlorenzo Bernini, Skull, life-size, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden
48. Johann Paul Schor, ca. 1670, Gessoed and gilt poplar wood, Object: 170 x 224.8 x 84.9 cm, (Footprint): 110 x 63 cm Getty Museum. Los Angeles
49. Galleria Colonna, Palazzo Colonna, Rome
50. Cristoforo Schor, *Apollo Coach*, 1697, gilt wood and bronze.
51. Giuseppe Vasi, *Palazzo Altieri*, engraving
52. Nicolas Tessin, *Sketch of the grotto in Palazzo Altieri*, location unknown.
53. Duke de Choiseul's snuff box, (Tabatière du duc de Choiseul), 1770, gold, gouche miniatures, crystal, 2.4 x 6 x 8 cm, Louvre Museum, Paris
54. Snuff box with views of Chanteloup which was owned by Choiseul. Views by Louis Nicolas Van Blarenberghe, gold, glass, velum, 4.4 x 7.9 x 5.7 cm, Metropolitan Museum, New York
55. Damià Campeny, *Trionfo da Tavola*, Palazzo della Pilotta, National Gallery Parma. Bronze, gilded bronze, marble and hard stone
56. Cartier Gold box or cigarette case, gold, enamel, diamond, ruby, emerald, amethyst, sapphire, silk, wood, 8.9 x 6.2 cm, British Museum, London
57. Peter Carl Fabergé, Enamelled Easter egg (Order of St George), 1916, enamel, jewels, Fabergé Museum, St Petersburg, Russia. Sold 1960 at Sotheby's Auction House
58. Cartier, gold box or cigarette case, gold, rhodonite, tourmalines, garnets, British Museum, London