

Commerce and Traditions

14th Conference of the SIEF Ritual Year Working Group 1 – 4 June 2022, Riga (Latvia)

Theme

The impact of product marketing is visible in everyday life, including a wide range of traditions and festivities, which have lately become highly commercialized. In marketing terms, the values of traditional culture are considered “products” to be branded, marketed and sold. We have all experienced the pre-Christmas gift buying madness and have visited souvenir counters at major historical sites and cultural venues in different countries, each promoting their “brands”. Historically, annual church markets, fairs and pilgrimages attracted people from great distances, providing opportunities to buy, sell, and trade durable goods in addition to food and drink required by pilgrims and merchants. Additional items, such as religious symbols, protective objects, and healing substances were available much as in modern souvenir shops. The means for advertising such objects for sale were, at that time, limited. Today advertising and marketing campaigns appear everywhere. Many people protest against what they perceive as excessive commercialization of their favourite secular or religious festivals. However, marketing practices attract larger crowds and help to preserve and popularize traditions that might otherwise be lost. Commercialization has made the sale of traditional crafts financially viable, preserving them for future generations. Thus, craftspeople can continue practicing their traditional arts and crafts. Not only have the traditional artisans benefited, but religious institutions have witnessed an increase in income, which is needed to maintain the facilities visited by the growing numbers of visitors. New forms of commercialization of rituals with the developing practices of creating new festivals and making them local tourist brands can be seen in many geographical areas.

This conference aims to investigate and evaluate the impact of marketing practices on traditions and rituals, and to consider the changes commercialization has brought about – both positive and negative – in the past, as well as in the present. Applicants are encouraged to focus on the following topics:

- the viability of traditions in terms of economics;
- changes in tradition caused by marketing practices;
- the role of marketing in preserving traditional culture;
- the commercialization of state and national holidays;
- the commercialization of religious celebrations;
- the impact of commerce on holy places and pilgrimages;
- the marketing of ritual and magical practices and objects;
- annual fairs and markets past and present;
- the commercialization of the intangible cultural heritage;
- changes in traditional rituals and celebrations due to marketing;
- changes in interrelations of commerce and traditions of the ritual year caused by Covid-19;
- any other subject related to the ritual year (i.e., to calendar or life cycle celebrations and rituals).

Paper submission

Please submit the title of your paper, an abstract of 350 to 450 words, together with your name, academic affiliation, and e-mail to <https://ej.uz/RYRIGA2022>.

As this conference has been postponed from 2020 due to the Covid-19, for those who have registered participation for the 2020 conference we kindly ask to do it again with the same, improved or new presentation. The previous registration will not be valid.

The papers must be written and presented in English.

The conference papers will be published in a volume, as part of The Ritual Year WG's yearbook series; abstracts will be published in a separate electronic volume before the conference.

Deadline for proposals – 25th February 2022.

Organizers

Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia

<http://lulfmi.lv/en/about-us/lfmi>

Archives of Latvian Folklore

<http://en.lfk.lv/lfk/our-days>

SIEF The Ritual Year Working Group <https://www.siefhome.org/wg/ry/index.shtml>

Conference venue

The conference will take place in Riga as an in-person event and a vaccination certificate of Covid-19 for participants will be required. The option for virtual presentations will be ensured.

National Library of Latvia

Mūkusalas iela 3, Rīga

<https://www.lnb.lv/en>

Programme

1 June: Opening of the conference

2 – 3 June: Presentation of papers. Presentations should not exceed 20 minutes followed by 10 minutes of discussion.

3 June: Dinner

4 June: Excursion and visit to the annual craft fair at the Latvian Ethnographic Open-Air Museum (<http://brivdabasmuzejs.lv/en/>)

Fees

Conference fee: 90 Euros

Excursion: 20 Euros

Covid-19

For participants, a Covid-19 vaccination certificate, RNA test taken within 72 hours before entry into the country, or an antigen test was taken within the past 48 hours before entry into the country will be required. As the situation related to Covid-19 is varying, please follow to updated information about traveling to Latvia on the website:

<https://www.airbaltic.com/en/travelling-to-latvia>.

All persons traveling to Latvia must fill out an electronic form on the [Covidpass.lv](https://www.covidpass.lv) website not earlier than 48 hours before entering Latvia and provide the requested information concerning vaccination, testing, or recovery from COVID-19.

The vaccination, testing, or recovery from COVID-19 is confirmed using the digital [EU Covid certificate](#) (in a smart device, or paper format), accepted by many third countries.

For more information on the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Latvia homepage](#).

The organizers do not provide any transportation, accommodation, or preferential registration fees.

