

Commerce and Traditions

14th Conference of the SIEF Ritual Year Working Group 3 – 6 June 2020, 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, it is possible for craftspeople to 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.

The aim of this conference is 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;
- any other subject related to the ritual year (i.e. to calendric or life cycle celebrations and rituals).

Paper submission

Please submit the title of your paper, an abstract of no more than 250 words, together with your name, academic affiliation, and e-mail to <https://ej.uz/RYRIGA2020>

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.

Deadline for proposals – 30th November 2019.

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>

Conference venue

National Library of Latvia

Mukusalas iela 3, Riga

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

Programme

3 – 5 June: Presentation of papers. Presentations should not exceed 20 minutes followed by 10 minutes of discussion.

5 June: Dinner

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

Fees

Conference fee: 85 Euros

Excursion (optional): 20 Euros

Dinner (optional): 25 Euros

The organizers do not provide any transportation, accommodation, nor preferential registration fees.

