

BEYOND SWEETNESS: NEW HISTORIES OF SUGAR IN THE EARLY ATLANTIC WORLD

October 24-27, 2013

John Carter Brown Library

October 24, 2013



The centrality of sugar to the development of the early Atlantic world is now well known. Sugar was the ‘green gold’ that planters across the Americas staked their fortunes on, and it was the commodity that became linked in bittersweet fashion to the rise of the Atlantic slave trade. Producing unprecedented quantities of sugar through their enforced labor, Africans on plantations helped transform life not only in the colonies but also in Europe, where consumers incorporated the luxury into their everyday rituals and routines.

“Beyond Sweetness: New Histories of Sugar in the Early Atlantic World” will evaluate the current state of scholarship on sugar, as well as move beyond it by considering alternative consumer cultures and economies. Given its importance, sugar as a topic still pervades scholarship on the Americas and has been treated in many recent works about the Caribbean, Brazil, and other regions. This conference thus will serve as an occasion for the assessment of new directions in the study of sugar.

Funded in part by the Center for New World Comparative Studies (JCB), the Almeida Family Fund (JCB), and a generous pledge by a JCB Board member; co-sponsored by Brown’s Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, and Departments of History, English, and History of Art and Architecture.

The conference has been planned to coincide with the JCB’s fall 2013 exhibition, *Sugar and the Visual Imagination in the Atlantic World, c. 1600-1860*; **K. Dian Kriz** (Professor Emerita of History of Art and Architecture, Brown University), guest curator, with assistance from **Susan Danforth** (Curator of Maps and Prints); **Elena Daniele** (JCB Stuart Fellow 2012-13), curatorial assistant.

PROGRAM

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24

4:00-5:30 p.m. **Registration**, John Carter Brown Library, Main Green, Brown University

5:30 p.m. **Stuart B. Schwartz** (Professor of History, Yale University), “Hot Lands and Cold Lands. A Caribbean Search for the New Brazil in the later 17th century.” Salomon Center, Room 101 (De Ciccio Family Auditorium). Reception to follow at John Carter Brown Library. **Free and open to the public.**

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, Alumnae Hall Auditorium, 194 Meeting Street, Brown University

8:30-9:00 a.m. **Registration and Coffee with light morning snacks**

9:00-9:15 a.m. **Welcome and Introductory Remarks.** **Neil Safier** (Director and Librarian, John Carter Brown Library), **Margot Nishimura** (Deputy Director, John Carter Brown Library), and **Julie Chun Kim** (Assistant Professor of English, Fordham University)

9:15-10:45 a.m. SESSION 1: THE ARCHIVE OF SUGAR

Philip Gould, *chair* (English, Brown University)

Kim F. Hall (English and Africana Studies, Barnard College), “‘That Clyme richly rewards a little Care’: Georgic Invention in the Early Modern Caribbean”

Lauren F. Klein (Literature, Media, and Communication, Georgia Institute of Technology), “Sugar, Slavery, and the Sense of Taste”

Cristobal Silva (English, Columbia University), “Writing Sugar: On the Formal Limits of Sugar Knowledge”

10:45-11:00 am Break

11:00 am-12:30 p.m. SESSION 2: EARLY MODELS OF PRODUCTION

Harold Cook, *chair* (History, Brown University)

Wim Klooster (History, Clark University), “Cultivating the Transnational Sugar Business: The Dutch in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic”

Bertie Mandelblatt (History and Caribbean Studies, University of Toronto), “‘À la façon du Brésil’: The Dutch Model of Sugar Plantations in the Anglo- and Franco-Caribbean and the Circulation of Knowledge in Overlapping Atlantic Worlds”

James Robertson (History & Archaeology, University of the West Indies, Mona), “Seventeenth-Century Jamaica’s Shift to Sugar: Causes and Consequences”

12:30-2:00 p.m. Lunch

2:00-3:45 p.m. SESSION THREE: EXPERIMENTATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Joyce E. Chaplin, *chair* (History, Harvard University)

Eric Otremba (History, Macalester College), “Experimental Sugar: The Role of the West Indies Within English Natural Science During the Seventeenth Century”

Rachel Laudan (Teresa Lozano Long Institute for Latin American Studies, University of Texas at Austin), “The Business of Confectionary: Convent Sweets in the Iberian Empires”

Daniel B. Rood (History, University of Georgia), “Fractured Commodities: Sugar-Mills and the Production of Difference in the Atlantic World”

David Roth Singerman (History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology, and Society, Massachusetts Institute of Technology), “Fraud, Suspicion, and Control in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Sugar Trade”

3:45-4:00 p.m. Break

4:00-5:30 p.m. SESSION FOUR: PLANTATION AND MILL

Roquinaldo Ferreira, *chair* (History, Brown University)

John E. Crowley (History, Dalhousie University), "Sugar Machines: Picturing Industrialized Slavery"

Rafael Ocasio (Spanish, Agnes Scott College), "'Unseen' Scenes in a Cuban Nineteenth-Century Sugarmill: Anselmo Suárez y Romero's Black Costumbrista Articles"

Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert (Hispanic Studies, Vassar College), "Bagasse: Caribbean Art and the Debris of the Plantation"

5:45-6:45 p.m. Exhibition walkthrough at the John Carter Brown Library, MacMillan Reading Room

With **K. Dian Kriz**, curator of *Sugar and the Visual Imagination in the Atlantic World, c. 1600-1860*, and **Susan Danforth**, Curator of Maps and Prints, John Carter Brown Library

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, Alumnae Hall Auditorium, 194 Meeting Street, Brown University

8:30-9:00 a.m. Registration and Coffee with light morning snacks

9:00-10:30 a.m. SESSION 5: COMPETING ECONOMIES

Holly Snyder, *chair* (John Hay Library, Brown University)

Juan A. Giusti-Cordero (History, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras), "Sugar and Mules: Contraband Networks of the Insular and Continental Caribbean, Seventeenth through Eighteenth Centuries"

Jennifer Anderson (History, Stony Brook University), "Mahogany Islands in a Sea of Cane: The Challenges of Competing Land Uses in the Eighteenth-Century Caribbean"

Ernesto Bassi (History, Cornell University), "Sugar, Cotton, or Nothing at All: Caribbean Colombia's Failed Efforts to Establish an Economic Base during the Age of Revolutions"

10:30-10:45 a.m. Break

10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m. SESSION 6: SUBSISTENCE AND RESISTANCE

James Egan, *chair* (English, Brown University)

James F. Dator (History and Africana Studies, Goucher College), "The Antigua Conspiracy of 1736 and the Moral Economy of the Gods"

Lauren Derby (History, UCLA), "The Mysterious Murder of Javier: Politics, Sorcery and Cattle in the Dominican Republic"

Michelle Burnham (English, Santa Clara University), "Breadfruit, Plantain, and Sugarcane: Transplantation in Revolutionary Jamaica"

12:15-2:00 p.m. Lunch

2:00-3:45 p.m. SESSION 7: LANDSCAPES OF LABOR

Seth Rockman, *chair* (History, Brown University)

Lydia Mihelic Pulsipher (Geography, University of Tennessee), "The Landscapes of Everyday Life on an Eastern Caribbean Sugar Island"

Louis P. Nelson (Architectural History, UVA), "Improvement and Resistance on Early Jamaican Sugar Plantations"

Francisco A. Scarano (History, University of Wisconsin-Madison), "When Slave-based Sugar Plantations and Free Peasants Coexist: Lessons from Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico"

Evelyn Hu-DeHart (History and Ethnic Studies, Brown University), "Sugar and Coolies: The Use of Chinese Contract Laborers on the Sugar Plantations of Nineteenth-Century Cuba"

3:45-4:00 p.m. Break

4:00-5:30 p.m. SESSION 8: LEGACIES

Linda L. Sturtz, *chair* (History, Beloit College)

Jillian E. Galle (Monticello) and **Suzanne Francis-Brown** (University of the West Indies Museum), "Unraveling the Material World of Enslaved Laborers in Colonial Jamaica"

Miguel Ivan Fernando Pena (The Barbados Museum and Historical Society), "Refining Sugar: The Re-Representation of Sugar as Barbadian Heritage"

Elizabeth Maddock Dillon (English, Northeastern University), "The Cost of Sugar: Narratives of Loss of Life and Limb"

5:30-5:45 p.m. Closing Remarks. Neil Safier (Director and Librarian, John Carter Brown Library), **Julie Chun Kim** (Assistant Professor of English, Fordham University), and **Chris Iannini** (Associate Professor of English, Rutgers)

5:45-6:45 p.m. Closing Reception, John Carter Brown Library, MacMillan Reading Room

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27

10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. OPTIONAL VISIT TO THE JOHN BROWN HOUSE.

Private tour of the John Brown House Museum and presentation on resources for the study of slavery and commerce at the Rhode Island Historical Society by **C. Morgan Grefe**, Executive Director. *Please note there is a \$15 fee for the visit; advance reservation and payment required.* (Limited space still available; please see Margot Nishimura, if interested.)

PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Julie Chun Kim, *chair* (Assistant Professor of English, Fordham University)

Barrymore Bogues (Professor of Africana Studies and Political Science and Director of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, Brown University)

Christopher Iannini (Associate Professor of English, Rutgers)

K. Dian Kriz (Professor of History of Art and Architecture, Brown University)

Jeremy Ravi Mumford (Visiting Assistant Professor of History, Brown University; Academic Projects Associate, JCB)

Margot Nishimura (Deputy Director and Librarian, John Carter Brown Library)