

'Science, Industry and Art': Gottfried Semper and the status of the object in art education

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Although much written about, the figure of Gottfried Semper remains, largely uncontextualised within the socio-economic conditions of his time. The paper addresses this desideratum by questioning the status of the object within Semper's writings in London 1850-1855. Semper's texts from this period will be placed within the intellectual context of the time and place of their production to show how the architect dealt with the challenge presented by industry within theory and history of architecture. Placed within the field of popular arts education due to his involvement with Department of Practical Art, Semper explored the relationship between architecture and industry by theorizing the status of the object in relation to the then-evolving criteria of disciplines of knowledge ('arts' and 'sciences'), simultaneously contributing to the identity of these disciplines. Semper's London work, as will be shown in this paper, theorised industry by expanding the assumed boundaries of art.

Biography:

Elena Chestnova (b. 1986) is a PhD candidate at Accademia di Architettura in Mendrisio. She has graduated as an architect from the University of Cambridge and ETH Zurich and has worked in architecture, history and the non-profit sector in Zürich, London and Jerusalem.