

Books of Secrets: Alchemy, Medicine and Magic - Opening Reception



Beginning on November 18, the Cushing/Whitney Medical Library will host a student exhibit entitled “Books of Secrets: Alchemy, Medicine, and Magic.” An opening reception will be held from 6:00-7:30pm on Monday 18th November.

The exhibit will be the midterm assignment of Professor Paola Bertucci’s undergraduate seminar: Spies, Secrets, and Science (HSHM 459a/HIST 159Ja/HUMS 317a). Books of secrets were cheap publications that divulged medicinal, alchemical, artisanal, and other kinds of “secrets” of nature and the arts. Mostly compilations of recipes or how-to manuals, they met with extraordinary success beginning in the sixteenth century, being translated into several languages and reprinted in various editions up until the nineteenth century. Whether real or imaginary, their authors achieved a remarkable level of authority among the reading public. The legendary “Isabella Cortese” and “Alessio Piemontese” had a lot to reveal about nature and its hidden ways of operating, just as their better known

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near contemporaries Francis Bacon and René Descartes. The exhibit will display a selection of books of secrets from the Medical History Library and will be on view until January 17.

External link: http://www.library.yale.edu/librarynews/2013/11/books_of_secrets_alchemy_medic.h... [1]

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