

Material Matters

The Tenth Annual Material Culture
Symposium for Emerging Scholars

Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library

Saturday, April 14, 2012





welcome

Welcome to **Material Matters**, the tenth annual Material Culture Symposium for Emerging Scholars.

Organized by an interdisciplinary graduate student committee at the University of Delaware and co-sponsored by the Center for Material Culture Studies, the University of Delaware's College of Arts and Sciences, and Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library, the symposium provides graduate students and up-and-coming academics with a venue for cross-disciplinary conversations related to the study of material culture. First held in 2003, this is the oldest conference in the country dedicated to encouraging young scholars in their material culture research.

This year's symposium explores the state of material culture studies today. We asked participants to consider the potential for object-based research to expand and even reinvent our understanding of culture and history. Our program includes twelve papers that approach this theme from the diverse disciplinary perspectives of American Studies, Architecture, New England Studies, Art History, English, and History. We are pleased to welcome commentators Richard Longstreth, Margaret D. Stetz, Arwen Mohun, and Heather Campbell Coyle to this conversation. Kariann Akemi Yokota, who is currently the Dana and David Dornsife Fellow at the Huntington Library and Senior Scholar of the Ivy Scholars Program at Yale University, will deliver the keynote address. Thank you all for being here today. We hope you enjoy the program.

program

8:00am

Registration

8:45am

Welcome

Nalleli Guillen, Alison Kreitzer, and Anne Reilly
Symposium Co-Chairs

*American Civilization Program, Department of History,
University of Delaware*

David P. Roselle

Executive Director, Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library

Deborah C. Andrews

Director, Center for Material Culture Studies

9:00am

Panel 1: Private Places and Contested Spaces

Chair: Amy Powis, *Department of English, University of
Delaware*

"Emily Dickinson and the Poetics of Glass"

Xiao Situ, Yale University (History of Art)

"Ornament and Identity in the Immigrant-Built Tenements
of Boston and New York, 1870-1920"

*Zachary Violette, Boston University
(American and New England Studies)*

"The Materiality of Privacy: Private Spaces in Public Places
at the Turn of the Twentieth Century"

*Laura Walikainen, University of Delaware
(American Civilization)*

Commentator: *Richard Longstreth, Director of the Graduate
Program in Historic Preservation and Professor of American
Studies, George Washington University*

10:30am

Break

*Please join us in the Visitor Center Garden Café
for light refreshments.*

10:45am

Panel 2: Debating Body Politics

Chair: *Shoshana Resnikoff, Winterthur Program in American
Material Culture, University of Delaware*

"Consuming Bodies: Irish Slave-Ownership in Early New
Orleans, 1780-1820"

Kristin L. Condotta, Tulane University (History)

"Art Deco Sartorialism in America: Persian Urban
Turbans and Other Versions"

Jaimee K. Comstock-Skipp, Williams College (History of Art)

"Limitation Order L-85: Creating and Consuming Women's
Fashion during World War II"

Melissa Ann Peck, Purdue University (American Studies)

Commentator: *Margaret D. Stetz, Mae and Robert Carter
Professor of Women's Studies and Professor of Humanities,
University of Delaware*

12:15pm

Lunch

*Please feel free to take this time to explore Winterthur's
exhibition galleries and gardens.*

1:15pm

Keynote Address

Introduction: *Wendy Bellion, Associate Professor of Art
History, University of Delaware*

Speaker: *Kariann Akemi Yokota, the Dana and David Dornsife
Fellow at the Huntington Library and Senior Scholar,
Ivy Scholars Program, Yale University*

2:00pm

Panel 3: Consuming New Technologies

Chair: Nicole Belolan, American Civilization Program,
Department of History, University of Delaware

"Pocket Wireless and the Shape of Media to Come,
1899-1922"

Grant Wythoff, Princeton University (English)

"Reanimating Slavery: Memory, Automation, and the
Alabama Coon Jigger"

Chris Dingwall, University of Chicago (History)

"Materiality and Meaning: AstroTurf, Progress, and the
Postwar American Stadium"

Benjamin Lisle, Colby College (Visiting Assistant Professor of
American Studies and Integrated Studies)

Commentator: Arwen Mohun, Associate Professor of
History, University of Delaware

3:30pm

Break

3:45pm

Panel 4: Creating and Interpreting Images

Chair: Lee Zelewicz, Department of Sociology,
University of Delaware

"Anti-material Culture"

Jason LaFountain, Harvard University
(History of Art and Architecture)

"Bringing the Master-Slave Relationship into Focus:
Photographic Slave Portraits in the American South,
1839-1861"

Matthew Amato, University of Southern California (History)

"More than a Song: Photography and the Visuality of
Musical Objects in the Early Twentieth-Century South"

Andrew Nelson, University of Maryland (American Studies)

Commentator: Heather Campbell Coyle, Curator of
American Art, Delaware Art Museum

5:15pm

Closing Remarks

Nalleli Guillen, Alison Kreitzer, and Anne Reilly
Symposium Co-Chairs

American Civilization Program, Department of History,
University of Delaware

5:30pm

Tours of the Winterthur Collection

If you have pre-registered for a tour, please meet our
guides at the front of Copeland Lecture Hall.

6:30pm

Dinner

Please join us for an informal meal at the Visiting Scholars
Residence. Exit via the main gate, turn left onto Kennett Pike,
and reenter the Winterthur estate via the gate on your next
immediate left.



commentators

Richard Longstreth

Dr. Longstreth is the Director of the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation and a Professor of American Studies at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. He received his Ph.D. in architectural history from the University of California, Berkeley. He has written extensively on the history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century architecture in the United States. Most recently his research has focused on the development of retail centers in major metropolitan areas and the reshaping of the American landscape since 1920. His *City Center to Regional Mall: Architecture, the Automobile, and Retailing in Los Angeles, 1920-1960* (1997) and *The Drive-In, the Supermarket, and the Transformation of Commercial Space in Los Angeles, 1914-1941* (1999), won four national awards in the fields of architectural history, urban history, and historic preservation. His most recent work is *The Department Store Transformed, 1920-1960*, published by Yale University Press in 2010. In addition to these scholarly endeavors, Professor Longstreth has also been involved in the preservation field at the national, state, and local levels and in the public and private sectors. He has figured prominently in efforts to save numerous mid-twentieth-century sites and was a founding member of the Recent Past Preservation Network.

Margaret D. Stetz

Dr. Stetz is the Mae and Robert Carter Professor of Women's Studies and a Professor of Humanities at the University of Delaware. After receiving her B.A. from Queens College in New York, she completed an M.A. at the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom and her second M.A. and Ph.D. at Harvard University. Her research focuses on women and material culture, women's comedy, women's representations in war, and late-Victorian feminism. Her publications include *Facing the Late Victorians* (2007), *Gender and the London Theatre, 1880-1990* (2004), and *British Women's Comic Fiction, 1890-1990* (2001), and co-edited volumes such as *Michael Field and Their World* (2007). She has also curated or co-curated several major exhibitions on late-Victorian print culture, at venues such as the Henry B. Plant Museum in Tampa, Florida, the National Gallery of Art Library, the University of Virginia, and Harvard's Houghton Library. She has published more than 100 scholarly articles, and her next publication related to the politics of fashion history will be "Dressing the Aesthetic Woman," a chapter in the forthcoming volume *Reading Fashion* (University Press of New England).

Arwen Mohun

Dr. Mohun holds a B.A. in music from the University of California, Santa Cruz, an M.A. in History from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a Ph.D. in History from Case Western Reserve University. She is an Associate Professor of History at the University of Delaware and specializes in the social and cultural history of technology. Her publications include *Steam Laundries: Gender, Technology, and Work in Great Britain and the United States* (1999) and two co-edited volumes, *Gender and Technology: A Reader*, with Nina Lerman and Ruth Oldenziel, and *His and Hers: Gender, Consumption, and Technology*, with Roger Horowitz. Her most recent book project, *Risk: Negotiating Safety in American Society*, is forthcoming from the Johns Hopkins University Press in 2013. This summer Professor Mohun will be co-leading the Delaware Public Humanities Institute (DELPHI), which provides summer research stipends and a two-week seminar about public engagement to University of Delaware graduate students pursuing material culture research.

Heather Campbell Coyle

Dr. Campbell Coyle holds a B.A. in American Studies from Georgetown University and a Ph.D. in American Art from the University of Delaware. Her dissertation is entitled, *Laughing Matters: Caricature and Criticism in American Art, 1878-1918*. She has taught classes in art history and photography for the University of Delaware's Continuing Education program. From 1999 to 2004, she served as editorial assistant for *The Art Bulletin* published by the College Art Association. A member of the Delaware Art Museum staff since 2003, she has served as Curator of American Art since 2009. During her time at the Delaware Art Museum, she has curated several exhibitions, most recently the spring 2012 installation, *Painted Poetry: The Art of Mary Page Evans*. Her publications include two co-authored volumes, *John Sloan's New York* (2007) and *Consuming Desires: Modern Marketing Posters, 1880-1918* (2005). In the past year, she has edited and written for catalogues on Howard Pyle and Mary Page Evans. With support from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, she is currently researching photographer Scott Heiser (1949-1993), best known for his innovative fashion photographs that appeared in *Interview* magazine.

keynote speaker

Kariann Akemi Yokota

Dr. Yokota is currently the Dana and David Dornsife Fellow at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, and Senior Scholar of the Ivy Scholars Program at Yale University. She received an M.A. in Asian American Studies and an M.A. in History from the University of California, Los Angeles, where she also completed her Ph.D. in History in 2002. She has been a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. From 2000 to 2011 she served as an Assistant Professor of History and American Studies at Yale University. Her research focuses on colonial and early American history. She has explored topics such as trans-Atlantic exchange, the globalization of American Studies and the significance of Pacific Studies, the role of material culture in post-colonial theory, and issues of race relations and ethnicity. She is currently a member of the Program Committee for the Organization of American Historians. Her first major publication, *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became a Postcolonial Nation*, was published in October of 2011.



history of the symposium

At the conclusion of the first Material Culture Symposium for Emerging Scholars in 2003, J. Ritchie Garrison remarked that when he was an "emerging" scholar of material culture in the late 1970s, "material culture seemed like a warm spring day." The scholarship presented at this symposium over the past ten years embodies the spirit of that statement: material culture scholars continue to probe what scholar Thomas J. Schlereth called the "culture behind the material" in new and exciting ways for their colleagues and the public alike.

Zara Anishanslin, Assistant Professor of History at The College of Staten Island, CUNY, spearheaded the first Material Culture Symposium for Emerging Scholars when she was a Ph.D. candidate in the American Civilization Program at the University of Delaware. She recently remarked that "Nothing prepares... junior scholars for the rigors of academic public performance like presenting papers, and one of the ideas behind our symposium was to allow grad students to present their work in an environment expressly made for them, and thus less fraught with pressure." Here, emerging scholars and their work take center stage, and their peers and established scholars in the field listen, respond, and draw inspiration for their own work. As Anishanslin suggested, symposia such as this one not only provide a "refuge," but also room to grow.

As the presentations given here today attest, the day is still warm.

reflections

Good ideas sometimes arrive quietly. Starting small, they seem manageable, unthreatening. The Emerging Scholars Conference began when friends decided to enlarge their conversations about people and their things. They simply invited others to join them. With next to no budget and limited experience, they offered hospitality for honoraria, trusting that it would turn out well. They had some help from faculty but it was their show and they did it brilliantly, right from the start.

The connection to Winterthur made it special, not only because the grounds are bewitching, but also because the collections located here represent an interdisciplinary cross road that continues to inspire and confound. Henry Francis DuPont set high standards and opened his private world to the public. It was not enough to gather or entertain (although he had fun doing both). He challenged scholars, emerging or established, to find meaning in the human uses of objects.

Ten years later, students continue to invite others to share in that task; we are better for their efforts.

J. Ritchie Garrison

Director, Winterthur Program in American Material Culture
Professor of History, University of Delaware

As others have noted, this symposium had its home in a home, through conversations among friends and future friends as they shared good food and insights into things. Since then, the event has expanded its range nationally and internationally, enhanced the visibility and viability of material culture studies at the University of Delaware and beyond, and welcomed increasing numbers of colleagues into those conversations. The things talked about have been diverse: baby books and autograph albums, stuffed pets, African-American funeral programs and memorial art, odor-suppressing objects, smiling fish, pelletized iron ore, space toys and dolls, feedsack fashion and feather coats, Crisco, church organs, steampunk, cigars. And more. Presenters have made objects come alive in ways that encourage everyone to take another look around them and know how to take that look. These ten years have been a great ride, with more to come.

Deborah C. Andrews

Director, Center for Material Culture Studies
Professor of English, University of Delaware



where are they now?

In honor of the tenth anniversary of the Material Culture Symposium for Emerging Scholars, the History Committee reconnected with previous presenters to highlight their professional progress and to gather their thoughts on current trends in material culture scholarship. Emerging scholars who presented papers at this symposium are now professors, museum professionals, and independent scholars. Many are still students. Here is what some of them have been doing since their presentations.

Ethan Lasser (2004)

Curator, The Chipstone Foundation, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Ethan Lasser presented his paper, "To Go 'Round the World on a High Chest: Japanned Furniture and the Enlightened Home in Eighteenth-Century Boston," at the second Emerging Scholars Symposium. He completed his Ph.D. at Yale University in 2007. Since then, he has served as Curator at the Chipstone Foundation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. There, Lasser curates a collection of early American furniture and British ceramics. His recent work has involved developing new and innovative ways to exhibit these objects. These imaginative interpretative techniques are inspired by what Lasser celebrates as curators' "ability to make visitors think in new ways about the material world that surrounds them outside the museum." To learn more, visit www.artbabble.org/partner/chipstone.

Christina Hodge (2006)

Senior Curatorial Assistant, Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Christina Hodge presented her paper, "A Middling Gentility?: Status, Consumption, and Taste in a Newport, Rhode Island, Household, ca. 1720-1750," at the fourth Emerging Scholars Symposium. She received her Ph.D. in 2007 from Boston University's Department of Archaeology. As the Senior Curatorial Assistant at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University, Hodge undertakes original scholarship on the museum's material culture collections and collaborates with other museum staff to support University-wide instructional initiatives using the Peabody's diverse

ethnographic and visual collections. She also co-directs the Harvard Yard Archaeology Project, which provides student and professional researchers with access to over six million collection objects and assists in repatriation cases under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. During the spring of 2011, Hodge returned to Winterthur as a short-term visiting scholar and worked to revise her dissertation, *A Genteel Revolution: Practical Refinements of New England's Middling Sorts*, for publication.

Rebecca Onion (2008)

Ph.D. Candidate in American Studies, University of Texas, Austin

One of the highlights of the sixth Emerging Scholars Symposium was Rebecca Onion's presentation "Reclaiming the Machine: Steampunk Practice and the Humanization of the Technological Object." Following the symposium, Onion published her work in *Neo-Victorian Studies* (Autumn 2008). She is currently working on her Ph.D. at the University of Texas at Austin. Her dissertation focuses on the promotion of science play for children in twentieth-century America. She notes that "many of the theoretical questions about vernacular responses to changing technology that played a role in my work on steampunk also apply to my dissertation research." Onion utilizes various material culture methodologies in her research, particularly in the study of scientific toys. While examining antique chemistry sets at the Chemical Heritage Foundation, she "had to think hard about how to interpret these objects, made up of old chemicals, printed ephemera such as instruction manuals, lab books, and posters, and the boxes themselves." Onion identifies her introduction to co-presenter Juliette Kristensen as one of the most fruitful outcomes of the 2008 Symposium. Onion and Kristensen collaborate on a broadsheet entitled *Paperweight: A Newspaper of Visual and Material Culture*. The third issue is currently in press.

Bess Williamson (2009)

Assistant Professor of Design History, Columbia College, Chicago, Illinois

After co-chairing the fifth Emerging Scholars Symposium, Bess Williamson presented her paper, "Doing It Themselves: Gadgets for and by People with Disabilities, 1945-1970," at the seventh Emerging Scholars Symposium. Since then, she completed her Ph.D. in American Civilization at the University of Delaware and accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Design History at Columbia College, an undergraduate art and design school in Chicago. There Williamson enjoys expanding her design history perspective alongside colleagues in other disciplines such as the fine arts. She notes that "material culture theories and approaches" continue to "drive" her research but that she is "also considering the ways in which an emphasis on the visual and aural, in addition to or alongside the material, can expand my understanding of the mediated meanings of design." As reflected in her research, Williamson stresses the need for material culture scholars to continue to push for greater scholarly exploration of "the material experience of race, class, gender, sexuality, disability." In addition to teaching and researching, she is an active member of the Material Culture Caucus of the American Studies Association.

Natalya (Hopper) Buckel (2010)

Conservation Assistant, Smallhythe Place, Kent, England

Natalya Buckel lost no time after presenting her paper, "Feedsack Fashion in Rural Appalachia: A Social History of Women's Experiences in Ashe County, North Carolina, 1929-1956," at the eighth Emerging Scholars Symposium. A version of this research will be published in the Fall 2012 edition of *Oral History in the Visual Arts* (Berg Publishing and the Victoria & Albert Museum). Since attending the symposium, she earned her M.A. in Public History from Appalachian State University and began working in Kent, England, as a conservation assistant at Smallhythe Place, an Elizabethan farmhouse once owned by Victorian actress Ellen Terry. There, she works with theatrical memorabilia and with Arts and Crafts furniture designed by Terry's husband, Edwin Godwin. Buckel's research features oral history, which she believes is an important emerging mode of inquiry within the field of material culture. She believes that using oral history methodologies will help scholars "explore the relationship between users and makers of material culture objects."

acknowledgements

The continuing growth and success of this symposium would not be possible without the hard work, creativity, dedication, and generosity of many organizations and individuals. We wish to acknowledge the generous support of Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library and the following groups at the University of Delaware: the Center for Material Culture Studies, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Center for Historic Architecture and Design (CHAD), the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture (WPAMC), the Museum Studies Program, and the departments of Art History, English, and History. This symposium is also partially funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Many people contributed their time and energy to this symposium, and we are grateful for their help. Deborah C. Andrews, our faculty advisor and Director of the Center for Material Culture Studies, deserves special thanks for facilitating and promoting this symposium. The faculty vetting committee—Wendy Bellion (Art History), Rosemary T. Krill (WPAMC), and David Suisman (History)—kindly read all of the proposals and narrowed the selection to those that were the most innovative, compelling, and appealing. We thank them for their work. We are grateful to Becky Worley (English) for keeping our website accurate and up to date and to Sandy Manno (WPAMC) for handling the financial end of things. Thank you also to J. Ritchie Garrison, director of the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture, for his guidance and assistance. We offer special thanks to Richard Longstreth, Margaret D. Stetz, Arwen Mohun, Heather Campbell Coyle, and Kariann Akemi Yokota for their commitment to new research and to the next generation of scholars in material culture studies. We also thank Katie Yoder, an undergraduate student majoring in Visual Communications, for designing the program and promotional materials in collaboration with Professor Ashley John Pigford (Art).

Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library deserves special thanks for generously donating the use of Copeland Lecture Hall and waiving admission fees for all conference participants. We are grateful to the many Winterthur staff members who assisted us throughout the planning of the conference. We are particularly pleased to acknowledge the assistance of Janis Kraft, Ellen Hughes,

Greg Landrey, and the Office of Academic Programs, as well as Winterthur's Director, David P. Roselle. We must especially thank Rosemary T. Krill for keeping us on track. We would also like to thank Hagley Museum & Library for housing three of our speakers on their property.

And finally, we would be remiss if we did not thank our fellow students who have given so freely of their time and energy to make this symposium a success. We could not have organized this symposium without the help of graduate students from across the University. Special thanks goes to our committee chairpersons: La Tanya Autry (Art History) organized the faculty vetting process; Shoshana Resnikoff (WPAMC) oversaw the student vetting process; Lee Zelewicz (Sociology) coordinated the publicity effort; Nicole Belolan (Am. Civ.) led the effort to reconnect with former presenters and compile the symposium's history; Liz Jones (Am. Civ.) organized registration; Amy Powis (English) headed fundraising; Amy Torbert (Art History) organized transportation; and Tori Pyle (WPAMC), Abbey Chamberlain (History) and Alyce Graham (Am. Civ.) scheduled tours, arranged for speaker hospitality at Winterthur, and organized the potluck dinner. Thanks also to the fellows of the Winterthur Program who have volunteered to lead tours of Winterthur's collection today. Thank you all for making this a truly interdisciplinary event.

Throughout the planning process we have felt a great debt to the previous co-chairs of this symposium. Our sincere thanks go to them for their vision and dedication.

Nalleli Guillen, Alison Kreitzer, and Anne Reilly

Symposium Co-Chairs

American Civilization Program, Department of History, University of Delaware

closing thoughts

Thank you for attending the tenth annual Material Culture Symposium for Emerging Scholars. The abstracts for today's presentations are available online at http://www.udel.edu/materialculture/emerging_scholars.html.

Please complete your evaluation form and hand it to one of the graduate students collecting them at the door following the closing remarks or to your tour guide following your tour.

An international call for papers will go out in the fall of 2012. Please visit the symposium website at that time for more details.

We hope you will join us again next spring as we embark on a new decade of material culture studies. Onward!



image credits

The image of a window that appears on the inside cover of the program is taken from Xiao Situ's presentation, "Emily Dickinson and the Poetics of Glass." This photograph, captured by Paul Strand in 1944, demonstrates the visual effects produced by nineteenth-century New England glass in windows like those in the Dickinson home.

The black-and-white photograph of three men holding a fiddle, a rifle, and a gramophone, comes from Andrew Nelson's talk, "More than a Song: Photography and the Visuality of Musical Objects in the Early Twentieth-Century South." Taken by an unknown photographer around 1906, this photograph shows Pete, Paris, and Neal Hammons in front of Neal's home in Webster County, West Virginia. The image appears in Gerald Milnes' *Play of a Fiddle: Traditional Music, Dance, and Folklore in West Virginia*.

In her talk, "Consuming Bodies: Irish Slave-Ownership in Early New Orleans, 1780-1820," Kristin Condotta discussed the porcelain figurine which appears on page 10 of the program. The figurine, produced by the Derby porcelain factory in England around 1775, depicts Field Marshal Sir Henry Seymour Conway. It is part of the Victoria and Albert Museum's collection.

Melissa Ann Peck displayed the Claire McCardell wrap dress in her presentation, "Limitation Order L-85: Creating and Consuming Women's Fashion during World War II." The top for this 1945 outfit could be worn in different ways and illustrates how mid-century American women created their own style and identity.

Zachary Violette discussed the contrast between reform and non-reform housing in his presentation "Ornament and Identity in the Immigrant-Built Tenements of Boston and New York, 1870-1920." The photograph on the opposite page is of the heavily ornamented tenement at 68 Prince Street in Boston's North End, built in 1895 by Etta Lebowich to the designs of Charles A. Halstrom.