

Center for Material Culture Studies
Fall 2020 Faculty & Staff Affiliate Meeting
October 8, 2020

MEETING MINUTES

In Attendance: Wendy Bellion, Sarah Wasserman, Kristen Nassif, Joyce Hill Stoner, Jaipreet Viridi, Laura Schmidt, Debra Hess Norris, Nina Owczarek, Lowell Duckert, Tom Guiler, Mark Samuels Lasner, Martin Bruckner, Jesse Erickson, Chandra Reedy, Sandy Isenstadt, Lu Ann DeCunzo, Julian Yates, Jocelyn Alcantra-Garcia, Curtis Small, Catherine Roeber, Zara Anishanslin, Kenneth Cohen, Monica Dominguez Torres, Laura Helton, Jennifer Van Horn

Welcome and introductions

- Happy 20th Birthday CMCS!

Update on CMCS activities

- New CMCS leadership and Advisory Committee
- Bylaws and Black Lives Matter statement
 - Bylaws put together by Martin and Wendy to clarify the goals and structure of CMCS, including new roles of Director, Associate Director, and Advisory Committee.
 - BLM statement drafted by Martin, Wendy, and Sarah; details commitment to anti-racism practices and the material ways the Center is supporting this commitment (e.g. new grant opportunity for graduate students: The CMCS Graduate Research Fund in Black and African American Material Culture Studies and the working group in Blackness and Publicness)
- Budget Update
 - There was a major cut to the FY21 S&E budget, meaning that CMCS can no longer fund faculty subventions, undergrad research, teaching support, and conference or research travel for graduate students. Given budget forecasts, it may be several years before we see these allocations again.
 - However, CMCS will continue supporting working groups, thanks to matching support from the CAS Humanities portfolio funding to help support faculty working groups.
- Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 grant cycles / Budget update
 - CMCS has received a spending exception approval to draw on income earned by our NEH and Unidel endowments to fund our fall and spring grant cycles
 - In addition to our new grant in Black and African American MCS, the Center has made some creative changes to existing grants for current AY
 - Deadline for fall grants is Nov 1 – check website for more information
- Emerging Scholars Symposium, April 25, 2021
 - This will now be a one-day, virtual event. The graduate student planning committee are working to explore alternate digital formats for panels and discussion
- CMCS Biennial Symposium, April 2022: “The Disability Gaze” (co-chairs Jaipreet Viridi and Jennifer Van Horn)

- DELPHI 2020
 - 14 fellows, 6 programs, 17 guest speakers, 2 weeks
 - OLLI talks for spring 2021 course in material cultural studies will be virtual
 - Unclear at this point whether DELPHI 2021 will be in person or virtual
- Drexel University Lenfest Center for Cultural Partnerships
 - Grant by Collegiate Academic Association for Drexel to acquire collection of Atwater Kent Museum/Philadelphia History Museum
 - CMCS and William & Mary participated in a multi-day workshop last month, where we learned about the shape the project will be taking and what Drexel hopes to do with the collection. CMCS conducted a workshop on best practices in teaching with objects and training students in public engagement. Drexel hopes to develop a teaching toolkit for working with public collections.
- New faculty and graduate student Working Groups
 - Pedagogy Group first meeting 10/22 at 4:00pm, more info TBA
 - Will discuss future events and scheduling during the first meeting
 - Blackness and Publicness: Contact Tiffany Barber (tebarber@udel.edu) for more information or to join the first meeting on Friday, October 9 , 12-2pm. Reading for first meeting provided upon RSVP.
 - Grad student working group
 - First meeting took place on Sept 28th
 - Event on Oct 28th: emerging professional Q&A with UD Alumna Nalleli Guillen, Brooklyn Historical Society
 - ThingStor
 - Conducted a self-study with the help of the library
 - Organizers are thinking about where they want to take project and what they want it to be (e.g. they have decided to only include 19th century objects)
 - Participation from Art History grad students was very high, especially since the datathons
 - ThingStor has a GA that is co-sponsored by English and CMCS. The GA will be tackling the data input going forward.
- Material Culture Perspectives book series (editors Sandy Isenstadt and Martin Brueckner)
 - *Elusive Archives* is in production at the UD Press– 2 dozen essays, highlights work in MCS, centered with own grad student research at UD
 - *Modelwork: Material Culture and Modeling in the Humanities* is forthcoming in 2021 with University of Minnesota Press

New initiatives

- Website and social media
 - Please send any updates to materialculture@udel.edu – CMCS is in the process of revamping our social media presence on Twitter and Instagram
 - CMCS is exploring possibilities for new web templates to update the website
- CMCS minor
 - Currently only one declared minor. In light of the budget forecast, Dean Pelesko has encouraged CAS units to take a hard look at status of majors and minors.

- Challenges facing the continuation of the minor include the availability of courses and faculty to teach them, as well as funding cuts to support undergraduate students.
- Discussion explored the advantages and disadvantages to sustaining the CMCS minor
 - In general, faculty expressed enthusiasm about the minor. It is important to further interest in material culture studies and to show undergraduates a path forward in continuing their studies. The minor is also advantageous for undergrads on the job market.
 - There was discussion about possibly revising the minor in collaboration with programs such as Global Studies, Anthropology, Art & Design, or Art Conservation, with an interdisciplinary approach.
 - Lu Ann DeCunzo pointed out that there has been a substantial increase in students in her intro to MCS class (60 this fall)
 - If there was no CMCS minor, is there another way to signpost to interested students that there are offerings with MC aspects to expose them to public facing interaction with objects?
 - Art & Design students frequently did the minor because it helped fulfill many of their major course requirements
 - Art Con has 21 new students this year, and there may be an opportunity to collaborate with Museum Studies to generate interest in MCS

Open discussion

- Announcements, ideas, suggestions
 - Nov 6th 11-3pm: 2020 IHRC Public Humanities Symposium, “*If I Had Known*”: *Education, Performance, Activism*
 - Virtual symposium, registration required (<https://udel.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUqdeGorDsuGtIXFpTN8jzQN4l3j1P2G2gz>)
 - Digital exhibition opens October 20th (<https://rosenbach.org/visit/exhibitions/alicedunbarnelson/>)
 - Nov 10th: Jason De Leon virtual visit to UD, Bordering program, Materiality of immigration across our southern border
 - November: Graphics Medicine workshop for undergrads organized by Jaipreet Virdi and Ian Sampson (funded by IHRC)
 - Website is forthcoming

Further information:

- Fall grant deadline: November 1
- Teaching a spring 2021 course with material culture content? Let us know about it! Send info to materialculture@udel.edu
- New research, publications, lectures, or public engagement projects? Send updates and photos for our website and social media to materialculture@udel.edu.
- Follow us on Instagram @udcmcs and Twitter @UDMatCult