

Center for Material Culture Studies

Fall 2022 Faculty & Staff Affiliate Meeting

October 11, 2022

## AGENDA

### Welcome and introductions

- Directors: Sarah Wasserman, Carla Guerrón Montero
- GA Meghan Angelos (PhD Art History)
- Advisory Committee: Ken Cohen, Joceyln Alcantara-Garcia, Lance Winn, Meghann Matwichuk
- Thing Tank Director Kedron Thomas
- Thing Tank GA Mikayla Harden (PhD History)

### In Room (with notes about current material culture projects)

- Jenn Van Horn: Disability Gaze volume with Jai Virdi
- Mark Samuels Lasner: Beardsley exhibition
- Martin Bruckner: ThingStor
- Arwen Mohun: research on history of smell
- Debbie Norris: working on book on preservation of photographs with 90-some contributors [we'd love to host a book launch]
- Laura Helton: Co-facilitator of DELPHI this year

### On Zoom

- Meghann Matwichuk
- Kaitlyn Tanis: new liaison librarian for the center; please reach out ([kltanis@udel.edu](mailto:kltanis@udel.edu)) if any questions about collections; happy to take suggestions for books to order
- Kelly Cobb: Thing Tank; Working Group; working with textiles
- Jai Virdi: Disability Gaze volume with Jenn Van Horn
- Julie McGee: research project about HBCUs
- Kedron Thomas: Thing Tank; book examining relationship between maker movement and efforts in the fashion industry to reduce environmental impact of the clothes we wear
- Monica Dominguez-Torres: finishing book *Pearls for the Crown* [another future book launch]
- Sandy Isenstadt: book about the use of marble in modern architecture
- Jocelyn Alcántara-Garcia: article on Spanish illuminations + their materials
- Joelle Wickens: Working Group
- Alison Parker: Museum Studies celebrating 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary
- Joyce Hill Stoner

## Announcements

- Update faculty/staff bios on website – and send news of publications, talks, exhibitions, etc. to [materialculture@udel.edu](mailto:materialculture@udel.edu)
- Awaiting UNIDEL: Final round; hope to scale up to Institute; interdisciplinary connections across colleges; lending library. Also awaiting space decision
- Fall Grants deadline November 1, including faculty subventions! (*Also funds to support class field trips on a rolling basis*)
- Seventeenth Material Culture Symposium for Emerging Scholars
  - From Hogarth to Hypebeast: The Materiality of Popular Cultures
  - April 21–22, 2023
  - Organizers: Ethan Snyder and Grace Ford Dirks from Winterthur, Britt Henry from English and Sydney Ratliff-Phillips from History/Hagley
  - Please circulate the CFP and encourage your grad students to apply
- Changing conference cycle/year 3 to highlight Thing Tank or possible state of field hands-on consortium (Chipstone sponsored) in Spring 2024; Thoughts?
  - Main reasoning: current cycle demands a lot of labor from faculty every year (and especially every other year)
  - New proposal: 2 years on (Emerging Scholars, biennial), 1 year off
  - Disadvantage: means that Winterthur students might not have an opportunity to be involved in Emerging Scholars, but they could be more heavily involved with the biennial conference
  - Chipstone is interested in co-sponsoring a meeting on the state of material culture and how institutions could support that work
  - Feedback (generally all in favor)
    - Debbie: Thinks it's a great idea, as everyone is overextended; attendance is another thing to consider; suggested highlighting work of faculty members at UD (some short/lightning talks and then a reception) during off year
    - Laura: A great idea, especially as we move into the hybrid conference realm (bar set high with Disability Gaze, which should become the new standard for CMCS conferences; even more work to do that format well)
    - Jenn: Also in favor; tremendous amount of work; this might give us more space to figure out what it means to be hybrid

## Announcements from the Library (Meghann and Kaitlyn)

- 2020–2021: Library had a significant budget reduction (1/4 of materials budget), so they are unable to provide access to new subscription resources at this time; however, they can still get things that can be purchased individually (books, media, etc.)
- Reach out to Meghann, Kaitlyn, or other liaisons (e.g., Special Collections) about procuring materials, getting support, etc. (willing to work one-on-one with faculty to collaborate)

- Upcoming events (<https://library.udel.edu/events/>)
  - Curator talk on recent additions to the arts collection: October 20, 5pm
  - Curator talk for Special Collections: October 27, 4:30pm
- Film & Video Collection at the Library: <https://library.udel.edu/filmandvideo/>
- Reach out to Meghann Matwichuk ([mtwchk@udel.edu](mailto:mtwchk@udel.edu)) with media-related needs

### **Thing Tank updates by Topic Director Kedron Thomas**

- Theme is Material Futures: current thinking and theorization across the academy regarding the future, futurity, futurism
- Group of 12 Thing Tankers (grad and faculty fellows); GA; meet twice monthly for works-in-progress presentations
- Already hosted 2 special events on campus:
  - Roundtable on Afrofuturism and the Black Speculative Arts Movement: Audience of around 250 people (virtually and in person)
  - Mimi Sheller: “Aluminum Futures: A Material Cultural History”
- Upcoming in March 2023: Talk by Stuart Kirsch on the future of concrete
- Opportunity to think about the relationship between Thing Tank and the Institute if UNIDEL funding comes through
- Stay tuned for a call for next year’s director in the winter

### **Working Groups**

- ThingStor updates from Martin Brückner (<https://thingstor.org/>)
  - Developed out of an interdisciplinary seminar seven years ago to deal with objects in textual and visual form
  - Over 50 grad students have been involved over the past seven years; GA line for the last four years
  - Datathons with up to twenty people attending
  - Collaborative, creative opportunity, professional training, opportunity to see intellectual labor in a different format
  - They’ve done all that they can do from within at this point
  - MB will cycle out or find a collaborator at the end of the year; grateful for the support he’s received for this project and feels that they’ve done a lot
  - MB is looking for collaborators/would love to talk more individually
  - Platform is Airtable: a for-profit platform, so it requires a fee
- Grad Working Group – Abi Lua (Winterthur) and Gretchen Von Koenig (History/Hagley)
- Fiber, Textiles, and Apparel Working Group (Kedron Thomas and Kelly Cobb)

- In conjunction with DENIN
  - Last March: quick launch meeting to gauge interest/build; pleased to have about 20 people express interest then
  - Over the summer, worked with 2 DENIN undergrad fellows to do lit reviews and background research on particular issues about sustainability and fiber, textiles, and apparel
  - October 21: First interest meeting; full agenda; get everyone communicating effectively/sharing a similar language for discussing these things
- Developing New Methodologies for Cultural Heritage Conservation (Joelle Wickens)
    - JW, William Donnelly, and Rosie Grayburn are still in the process of developing and launching the working group
    - Victoria Sunnergren is their RA
    - Summer meeting: 41 people, 21 departments at UD, 9 institutions outside UD
    - Joelle is working through the notes from the summer meeting and about to send out condensed notes to the 41 people from the summer, as well as the CMCS lists to gauge interest
    - 2 themes that emerged; can either tackle them together or just choose one; both cross-disciplinary and would engage contributors within and outside of the university
      - Conservation of Art and Nature: Are they really part of the same thing?
      - Community and Conservation: What is the relationship?
    - Initial interest meeting scheduled for Oct. 28 (announcements forthcoming)

## **DELPHI Update**

- DELPHI 2022 (May 31-June 10)
- Hybrid format, 12 fellows 7 programs. Helton shadowed; will lead with SW in 2023
- DELPHI 2022 OLLI course planned
- Stay tuned for announcement info session in December
- Laura: Incredible interdisciplinary space where grad students build a cohort with students whom they might not otherwise encounter; great mechanism to support student research

## **Undergrad Initiatives**

- Partnerships with McNair and Research Office: to expose underrepresented groups at UD to the center, material culture, etc.
- Discussion:
  - There was talk of a subcommittee that never formed (didn't want to overburden core group of faculty); new approach is to work towards 1–2 good ideas with center support

- Debbie: Do the McNair scholars still all come together? (No) Used to host a morning session talking about material culture with the McNair students that was really great
- Kedron: conversation about space for CMCS: could lending library also be a material culture lab space for faculty to make use of with undergrad students
- Because we don't know what the space will be or when we'll have it, it's difficult to determine if the "Makerspace" aspect will work
- JW: Winterthur is working with Katya Roelse in Fashion using the Makergym
- MB: Also a space in Allison Hall; already designed as a storage space for objects; can we use that space?
- JV: Noted that there used to be a makerspace at Lerner with exactly what we're discussing here, including objects for (design) students to create prototypes. Not sure if it's still there, as she visited it in 2018 during her campus visit.
- Question about undergraduate courses/programming: Is there a list of undergrad classes that fit within material culture? Difficult to advise interested students without one; "Intro to Material Culture Studies" intro course for the minor was transformative for the students. This course will continue to exist, but there is no master list of undergraduate courses; something we can work on putting together and circulating. Honors course for undergrads still happening in the spring (MCST label)
- Directors will look into cross listing to confirm

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