

CFP - Thinking with Things, 1500-1940

Date : February 19, 2014

Call For Papers

Thinking with Things, 1500-1940:

An interdisciplinary material culture workshop for graduate students

25th April 2014

Deadline for abstract submission: 3rd March 2014

Keynote speaker: Dr Spike Bucklow, Hamilton Kerr Institute, Cambridge

Closing Remarks: Dr Katy Barrett, Royal Museums, Greenwich

Thinking with Things is a one-day workshop to be held on Friday 25th April, 2014 at the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH), at the University of Cambridge. Research students from any discipline within the arts, social sciences, and humanities are invited to submit proposals for papers, and/or panels of three papers, that consider how 'things' can put a new perspective on the past. This workshop is affiliated with the 'Things: Comparing Material Cultures' seminar series at CRASSH <http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/programmes/things>

Over the past thirty years, the 'material turn' has reformed the way in which many historians approach the past, but attention to the 'stuff' of history has concerned archaeologists, art historians, anthropologists and sociologists for some time. From shoes to anatomical specimens, from people to paintings, from durable glass and porcelain to fragile fabrics and ephemeral foodstuffs, a vast array of 'things' are now subject to the researcher's gaze, offering valuable windows into the experience of historical actors and the objects that mediated past social and cultural interactions.

The recognition that material objects are worthy subjects of scholarship is the premise of the successful CRASSH Graduate Seminar 'Things'. Now in its third year, 'Things' began life as a series whose primary object was the study of material culture in the so-called consumerist 'long eighteenth century', taking the format of regular sessions of two papers on related themes and/or objects presented by scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds. Today, the series incorporates a longer chronological span, but retains its original focus on the material lives of the past and continues to attract scholars of all stripes to speak on

a range of topics.

The aim of this workshop is to give graduate students (at both PhD and Masters level) and early career scholars a chance to present their work and to participate in discussion in the lively, welcoming and highly interdisciplinary space that 'Things' has created. Following the model of the 'Things' series, the conference will be structured around a series of panels that focus on particular types of objects or particular thematic questions (such as issues of methodology or themes like industrialisation).

We encourage applications for 20-minute papers (or panels of 3 such papers) along the following themes (broadly construed) in relation to the period 1500-1940:

- Methodologies of material culture
- Material culture and modernity
- Print and advertising: books, newspapers, posters, magazines, packaging and ephemera
- Material culture of religion: art, icons, buildings
- Objects of desire: fashion, clothing and luxury
- Eating and drink: festivals, cooking, eating paraphernalia, and food itself
- Scientific and medical objects: tools, images, teaching materials
- Industrial objects: mass production machines and the objects they make
- War: memorials, diaries, uniforms
- Gendered things
- Cultures of collecting & travel

Abstracts of no more than 300 words, accompanied by a brief biographical note of no more than 100 words stating degree status and any institutional affiliation, should be sent to ThinkingThingsCRASSH@gmail.com by 3rd March 2014. This conference is being organised by Lesley Steinitz, Michelle Wallis and Mike Ashby (University of Cambridge).

This workshop has been made possible due to funding from the University of Cambridge History Faculty, and organisational assistance and facilities from CRASSH. We are unable to cover travel or accommodation costs for speakers, though we are happy to help book affordable accommodation for those participants that require it. We would encourage participants to request accommodation early, as college guest rooms are in high demand.

Material World

A Global Hub for Thinking About Things

<http://www.materialworldblog.com>

We look forward to hearing from you,
Lesley Steinitz, Michelle Wallis and Mike Ashby
University of Cambridge