

## MATERIAL CULTURE IN THE HUMANITIES

Universiteitsbibliotheek, Potgieterzaal, Singel 425, Amsterdam  
Friday December 2, 2011, 13.00 - 18.00

### Workshop and discussion

During this workshop, researchers who are interested in material culture will discuss relevant classic and theoretical texts. The main objective is to initiate a trans-disciplinary conversation in order to discover new connections and discuss different approaches connected with the study of materiality. One important aim is to bring together scholars whose research covers a wide range of historical periods and cultural settings. The other is to position the Faculty of Humanities and its research in the ongoing theoretical and methodological discussions about 'materiality' in different fields. As such, workshop participants are invited to contribute perspectives from history, media studies, art history, archaeology, literary studies, philosophy, but also sociology and anthropology, as especially the latter has played a crucial role in recent debates.

**The first session, "From Objects to Things,"** will centre on key concepts and debates about material culture in the humanities. During **the second session, "Making Sense of Things,"** three guest speakers will present their approach to a chosen case study, followed by a closing discussion and drinks.

13.00-13.30                    **Opening and welcome, Carolyn Birdsall (ASCA) and Natalie Scholz (ICG)**

13.30-15.30                    **From Objects to Things**

Chair-led discussion about key concepts and debates about material culture in Humanities research, based on the following texts:

- Auslander, Leora, 'Beyond Words', *American Historical Review* 110 (2006) 4, 1015-1045.
- Brown, Bill, "Thing Theory", *Critical Inquiry* 28 (2001) 1, 1-22.
- Böhme, Hartmut, *Fetischismus und Kultur. Eine andere Theorie de Moderne* (2006)[excerpt]
- Beek, Gosewijn van. "On Materiality," *Etnofoor* IX (1996) 1, 5-25.
- Miller, Daniel, 'Why It's Safer to Build on Concrete than Epistemology. A Comment on "On Materiality" by Gosewijn van Beek', *Etnofoor* IX (1996) 1, 25-27.
- Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich, 'A Farewell to Interpretation', in: Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and K. - Ludwig Pfeiffer ed., *Materialities of Communication* (Stanford 1994), 389-402.
- Hoogsteijns, Maartje, "Artefact mens: Een interdisciplinair onderzoek naar het debat over materialiteit binnen de material culture studies". PhD dissertation, UvA (2008). [excerpt]
- Latour, Bruno, "The Berlin Key or How to Do Words with Things," trans. Lydia Davis, in: P. M. Graves-Brown ed., *Matter, Materiality, and Modern Culture* (London, 2000), 10-21.

15.30-16.00                    **Coffee break**

16.00-17.30                    **Making Sense of Things: Approaches and Case studies**

Guest speakers to give a short presentation of a case study, each followed by discussion: Joyce Goggin, Guy Geltner and Milena Veenis.

17.30                            **Closing discussion, followed by drinks/borrel**

To register, please email: [asca-fgw@uva.nl](mailto:asca-fgw@uva.nl). All participants will receive access to the pdf files upon registration.