

Tradition, Influence, and Persistence in Modern Craft (New Haven, 20 Oct 17)

Yale Center for British Art, Oct 20, 2017

Deadline: Jun 15, 2017

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Graduate Student Symposium

Long Shadows: Tradition, Influence, and Persistence in Modern Craft

Friday, October 20, 2017

In his 2003 article “The Long Shadow of William Morris,” Edward S. Cooke Jr. argued that “American scholars of twentieth-century material culture remain mired in the celebration of either individual craftspeople or designers and emphasize historical narrative at the expense of critical analysis or interpretation.” Cooke ascribed this limited view, in part, to the influence of the Arts and Craft movement advocate William Morris, whose emphasis on individualism discouraged an understanding of craft’s true social and economic role.

In the years since Cooke’s article, a new generation of scholars has begun to construct an alternative map of modern craft—one in which the idealistic figure of the solitary studio craftsman has been displaced from the center, making way for a multidimensional account of skills at work in myriad kinds of situations. Building on these new approaches, this symposium looks at some of the questions that remain. One of these is the proper understanding of what Cooke called “historical narrative” in the analysis of modern craft. Should we resist conceptions of tradition as inherently vague and mystifying? Or does tradition still have an important role to play, as an anchor and binding agent? How should we understand the phenomenon of knowledge transmission, once guild-based apprenticeships began to decline drastically in the nineteenth century? Most generally, what role does the past play in contemporary making?

For this graduate student symposium, we invite papers based on history, theory, and practice. Proposals might include specific case studies, in which the persistence of making traditions is at stake; methodological papers, which propose models for the analysis of craft’s past and present in relation to one another; and historiographies, which examine current scholarship or primary texts in relation to the symposium’s theme.

We are accepting proposals for twenty-five-minute papers from graduate students working in any discipline and MFA students whose work addresses the symposium themes are also eligible to apply. Travel and accommodation costs will be covered by the organizers. Please apply online at (<http://britishart.yale.edu/research/research-programs/call-papers-long-shadows-tradition-influence-and-persistence-modern-craft>) by uploading an abstract of no more than three hundred words along with a one-page CV. The deadline for applications is June 15, 2017.

The symposium is inspired by the exhibition “Things of Beauty Growing”: British Studio Pottery, on view at the Center from September 14 to December 3, 2017. The keynote lecture will be given by Jenni Sorkin, Associate Professor of Art History, UC Santa Barbara, and author of *Live Form: Women, Ceramics, and Community* (University of Chicago Press, 2016).

Reference:

CFP: Tradition, Influence, and Persistence in Modern Craft (New Haven, 20 Oct 17). In: Arthist.net, Apr 30, 2017 (accessed Jun 25, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/15378>>.