Animaterialities (Delaware, 24-25 Apr 20)

University of Delaware, Apr 24–25, 2020
Deadline: Dec 5, 2019

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Call for Papers:
Animaterialities: The Material Culture of Animals (including Humans)
Sixteenth Material Culture Symposium for Emerging Scholars

The Center for Material Culture Studies at the University of Delaware invites submissions for graduate student papers that examine the relationship between material culture and animal studies for its biennial Emerging Scholars Symposium (April 24–25, 2020). This symposium merges the interdisciplinary study of animals—and the related critical conversations surrounding animality, species, agency, objectivity, and subjectivity—with material culture studies.

Five years after the Audubon Society's startling Birds and Climate Change Report, we continue to hear about the prices non-human animals pay for human choices: extinction, loss of habitat, and poisoned food sources. The present moment begs, more than ever, critical questions about the intersections between the material world and the (fellow) animals with whom we share it. We thus propose the theme "animaterialities," a term which acknowledges the constant presence of other-than-human animals as physical bodies entangled in various anthropocentric systems, whether political, economic or cultural. Animaterialities encourages participants to consider animals not as passive forms of matter for human use, but as active beings capable of resilience in the face of humans' material domination and exploitation. Finally, it recognizes the necessary turn material culture studies must take when applied to other-than-human animals, as opposed to artificial, vegetal, or mineral subjects/materials.

Generative questions might include:
- How do material objects define or challenge the boundaries between humans, animals, and objects?
- How are animals transformed into material forms?
- How are animals made visible or invisible in the built environment, text, image, material goods, the archive, and the museum?
- How do animal materialities cut across, complicate, and generate global, hemispheric, and imperial worlds?
- How can we re-conceptualize materialities and animalities as active agents in their worlds, rather than passive participants?

Contributions to this theme may take, but are not limited to, the following forms:
- The production and conservation of animal materials

- Materials that imitate animals
- Animals as objects, the "thingness" of animals, and defying objective treatment
- The materialities of animal labor
- Experimentation with animals and animal materials
- Animal classification, collecting, and display
- Material culture of living history farms, zoos and zoological gardens, and preserves
- Visual culture and representation of animal materials
- The social life of animals
- The material aspects of animal abuse

Submissions: Proposals by current graduate students and recent graduates (May 2019 or later) should be no more than 250 words. Up to two relevant images are welcome. Send your proposal and a current c.v. (two pages or fewer) to emergingscholars2020@udel.edu.

Deadline: Proposals must be received by December 5th, 2019. Speakers will be notified of the committee's decision by the end of January 2020. Confirmed speakers will be asked to provide digital images for use in publicity and are required to submit their final papers and presentation-s/slide decks ahead of the conference. Travel grants will be available for participants.

Reference:

CFP: Animaterialities (Delaware, 24-25 Apr 20). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 6, 2019 (accessed Nov 21, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/21740>.