

## Objects in Distress (online, 5 Jun 24)

Online / Design History Society

Deadline: Mar 1, 2024

[www.designhistorysociety.org/news/view/call-for-papers-objects-in-distress-a-dhs-online-seminar-series](http://www.designhistorysociety.org/news/view/call-for-papers-objects-in-distress-a-dhs-online-seminar-series)

Dr Artun Ozguner

From the ongoing tensions in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, to the rising peril on women's rights, contemporary media abounds with political turmoil and conflict. Yet, from an historical point of view, the emancipatory promise of liberal capitalism, where the free circulation of objects was thought to advance a safer world has been impartially granted. Objects have had their share from the conflicts that agonise the human individual, they have equally been distressed. Conflicts place objects in strict binary narratives, dichotomies of gender, race, religion, politics, or hard-boiled nationalisms. This monopolises the more fluent and personal interpretations, meanings, and functions of objects and serves the normative views of increasingly authoritarian discourses. The repressed, oppressed, restricted and distressed object reflects our own troubled world.

This DHS online seminar series seeks to explore the change in our approach to objects in times of political turmoil and conflict today or in the past. It aims to focus on the restrictions on uses and interpretations of objects and images triggered by conflict. It is also interested in how individuals and communities use objects, images to construct their identities or to reminisce in times of turmoil. Contributions are invited from around the globe to explore how meanings and functions of objects and images are contested, as well as how individual actors use history and design practice to assert themselves into or challenge oppression.

The call for papers for Objects in Distress seminar series are invited on, but not limited to:

- Agency of objects in mediating political turmoil and conflict
- Restrictions on uses and interpretations of objects triggered by conflict
- Use of objects and/or design practice to confront oppression (in mediating collective identities or to reminisce in times of turmoil)
- Delegation of objects and/or design practice in asserting oppression
- Gendered, racialised and/or politicised aspects of objects in times political turmoil
- Design writing approaches on transgressive objects
- The impact of conflict for design practice
- New meanings that are attributed, lost, or transmuted by oppressing or liberating objects

Please submit two documents via email to the DHS Administrator, Jenna Allsopp at [designhistorysociety@gmail.com](mailto:designhistorysociety@gmail.com) by 11:59pm GMT on Friday 1 March 2024:

- an anonymous proposal of a maximum of 300 words in English

- a 100-word speaker biography

The event will take place in early June 2024 (tentatively June 5th). Selected speakers will be expected to give a 10–15-minute PowerPoint presentation via Zoom, followed by a group Q&A discussion. In the aftermath of the event, a selection of presented papers will be collated in a proposed edited volume, subject to publisher approval.

Applications from around the globe are encouraged to apply. We welcome a diverse range of speakers at any stage of their academic careers, with wide-ranging design disciplines.

This seminar series is convened by Dr Artun Ozguner (University for the Creative Arts).

Reference:

CFP: Objects in Distress (online, 5 Jun 24). In: Arthist.net, Feb 23, 2024 (accessed Jul 4, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/41206>>.