

(Im)Materiality and the Art of Migration (Dallas, 13–14 Mar 26)

Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, Mar 13–14, 2026

Deadline: Dec 15, 2025

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Anchored Elsewhere: (im)Materiality and the Art of Migration.

We invite proposals that explore the complex relationships between materiality, migration, and identity formation, with particular attention to how artworks and cultural practices, both physical and ephemeral, mediate experiences of displacement, belonging, memory, and transformation. The title *Anchored Elsewhere* evokes the paradox of migration: the search for stability amid movement, and the forging of identity in unfamiliar or impermanent terrain. It also speaks to the nature of the art object, which may be materially grounded yet shaped by immaterial forces such as memory, trauma, diaspora, and ecological change.

We invite scholars to consider how material and immaterial dimensions of art, including medium, substance, durability, transience, and conceptual frameworks, reflect and reshape the lived realities of migration. How do the physical materials of art and cultural production, such as soil, textiles, stone, wood, metal, or pigment, function as agents of memory, resistance, or transformation? How do immaterial elements like time, movement, ritual, or digital presence interact with material forms to construct or destabilize identity?

The Rhetorics of Art, Space, and Culture (RASC/a) program at Southern Methodist University invites graduate students to submit paper presentations for its 2026 symposium, *Anchored Elsewhere: (im)Materiality and the Art of Migration* taking place on March 13-14, 2026. The keynote speaker will be Leslie King Hammond, PhD, Professor Emerita, Maryland Institute College of Art.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

How do the sourcing, movement, and contextualization of materials reflect the politics and poetics of migration?

In what ways do ephemeral or performative practices such as ritual, oral tradition, or performance express the instability and resilience of migratory identity?

What roles do archives, ruins, and digital technologies play in preserving or transforming the material and immaterial legacies of displaced peoples?

How do artworks, through their media, form, and institutional framing, carry, shift, or obscure histories of trauma, place, and cultural continuity across borders?

How do artworks evolve physically, semantically, or affectively when uprooted from their original contexts or relocated across time and space?

We seek contributions from current graduate students in art history, archeology, Native American and Indigenous studies, African and African Diaspora art history, anthropology, material culture studies, and other related disciplines to submit abstracts of no more than 250 words and a CV by December 15, 2025 here: <https://tinyurl.com/SMU-RASCA-Graduate-Symposium>

Reference:

CFP: (Im)Materiality and the Art of Migration (Dallas, 13-14 Mar 26). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 3, 2025 (accessed Dec 22, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/51052>>.