

## Stuff (New York, 28-29 Apr 2011)

Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York, NY, Apr 28–29, 2011

Deadline: Feb 22, 2011

Ethan Robey, New York

### First Call

The Parsons/Cooper-Hewitt Graduate Student Symposium on the Decorative Arts and Design

April 28 and 29, 2011, Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, New York

The theme of this year's symposium is "stuff"

We invite papers dealing with what things are made of. How is meaning resident in materials? We especially seek papers that explore the uses of engineered materials or the dialectic of the natural and the artificial.

The symposium will feature a keynote address by Dr. Christopher Wilk, of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London: "Thinking about Materials: A Case Study in Plywood"

Materials can signify a connection to a long tradition or a break from the past, a hand-worked substance or an industrially produced one. They speak to design ethics and the relationship between makers and their environments, between production and natural resources. A designer or artisan can choose to be guided by the natural quality of a material, or to flout it. Some materials have invariable properties and forms, others are infinitely malleable. Man-made material can be camouflaged as imitations of natural materials, or celebrated for their unique properties.

Possible areas of exploration might include:

- Materials analysis in connoisseurship
- Guilds, guild rules and boundaries between materials
- Materials and national self-image
- The Rhetoric of "honesty" or "dishonesty" in design
- Inexpensive substitutes
- Plasticity, form and formlessness
- Ecological damage or its mitigation
- New museological approaches to the exhibition of materials

Sponsored by the MA Program in the History of Decorative Arts & Design offered jointly by Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum and Parsons The New School for Design

Send a two-page abstract, one-page bibliography and a c.v. to:

Dr. Ethan Robey, Associate Director MA Program in the History of Decorative Arts & Design

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Reference:

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<<https://arthist.net/archive/694>>.