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The Fluid Archive

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taot

Thinking About 'Things'



5th-7th May 2009

Venue: UCD Health Sciences Building

(Sessions: C004) (AV Support C117)

Kindly sponsored by:

UCD Material Culture Research Strand
UCD Graduate School of Arts and Celtic Studies
UCD John Hume Institute for Global Irish Studies

ABSTRACTS

Welcome

Dear TAT 2009 participants,

We are proud to welcome you all to Dublin for what promises to be an outstanding, diverse and stimulating conference. We sincerely hope that you will enjoy the conference, and that it will foster many new connections, ideas and collaborations.

We would like to sincerely thank our sponsors: the UCD Research Strand in Material Culture, the Graduate School, UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies and the UCD John Hume Institute. Without these bodies TAT could never have happened.

We have also been fortunate in having at our disposal the advice and support of a number of people including Dr. Joanna Brück, Prof. Gabriel Cooney, Dr. Marc Caball, Dr. Graeme Warren, Dr. Aidan O'Sullivan, Dr. Rob Sands, Angela McAteer, Conor McDermott and Barbara Gannon. Thanks also to Karina Bracken for help with the venue, to our interdisciplinary committee, to Dr. Paul Graves-Brown for his keynote address and to our mini-army of volunteers and helpers for generously giving up their time. Finally thanks to our diverse group of speakers and chairs for helping to make TAT2009 such an exciting conference.

Brian Dolan, Terry O'Hagan and Emmett O'Keeffe.

Information for Participants

Venues

All of the conference sessions will be held in Theatre C004, UCD Health Sciences Building. On Tuesday evening the keynote address and free wine reception will be held in the Clinton Auditorium, UCD, a five minute walk from the Health Sciences Building (see map on next page).

On Wednesday evening a space has been booked for conference participants in the Porterhouse (<http://www.porterhousebrewco.com/templebar.html>), Parliament Street in Dublin city centre.

The final night party will be held in the UCD Student Centre Club which is adjacent to the main Conference venue (Health Sciences Building).

Enquiries

General enquiries for the duration of the conference can be directed to the organisers: Brian Dolan, Terry O'Hagan or Emmett O'Keeffe, specific registration enquiries should be directed to Kim Rice, registration supervisor.

The Registration desk is located in the concourse area outside C004 and is open from 9.30am Tuesday 5th and will remain open for the duration of the conference.

Breaks

Tea/Coffee will be provided in the concourse area outside the theatre on Wednesday and Thursday mornings. Alternatively there is an O'Briens coffee shop/sandwich bar in the Health Sciences building (where the conference is being held).

Lunch is not provided but there are a number of different on-campus options. O'Briens has already been mentioned and across the car-park from the conference venue, in the Student Centre, good value food is available from Café Brava, The Grind sandwich bar and the Centre Club.

See www.ucd.ie/catering/facilities.html for more details

Internet Access

There is free open wifi access throughout the UCD campus and you should be able to connect using your laptop or internet device without any password.

TatArt

TatArt consists of non-traditional (i.e. video, slideshows etc) presentations about material culture. TatArt presentations will be shown during lunch, between 14.00 and 14.30. Feel free to pop in and out, discuss, debate and consider the presentations in whatever way you would like.



Belfield Campus Map

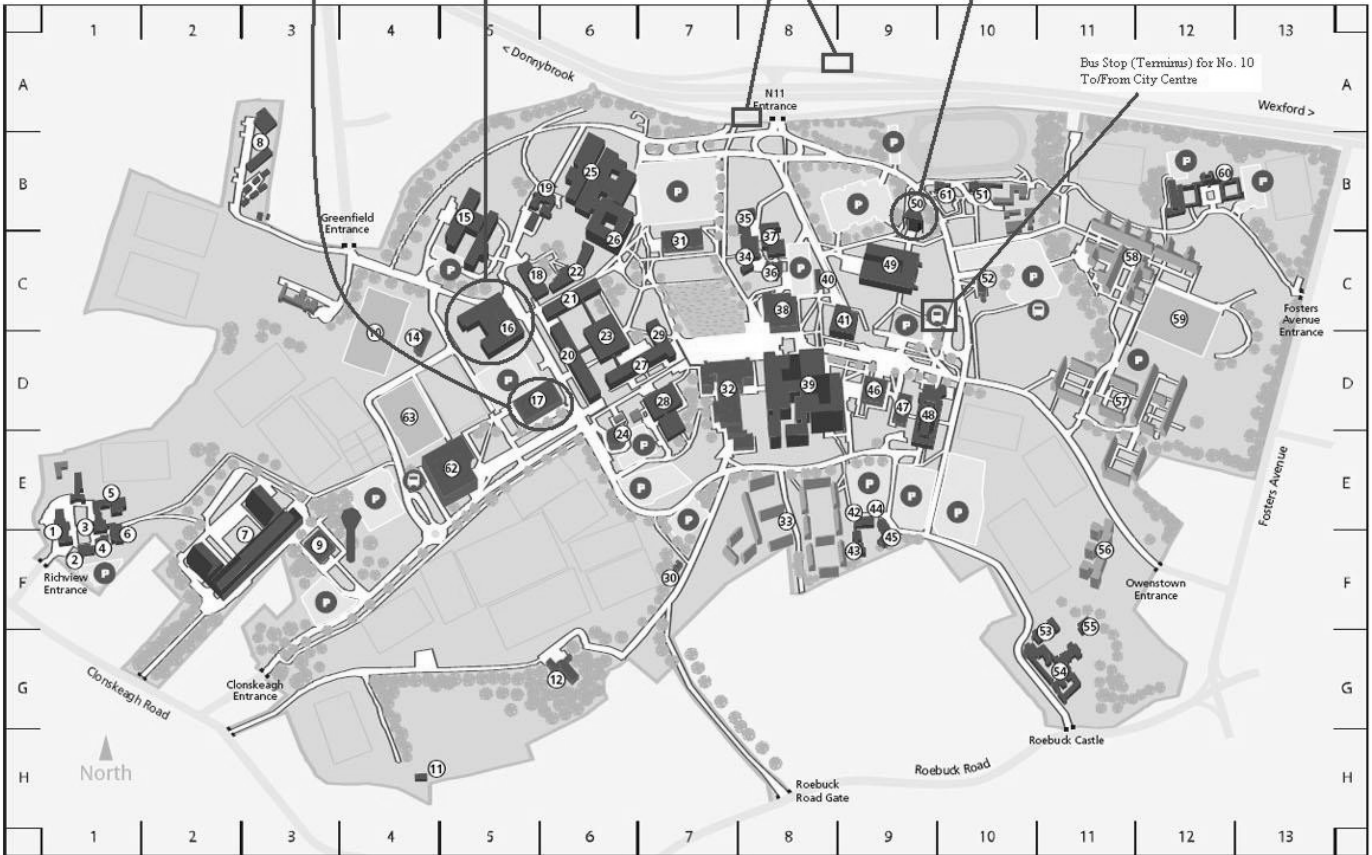
Student Centre: Forum Club
(Last Night Social Venue)

Conference Venue:
Health Science Building
Th: C004

Bus Stops: To/From
City centre/Airport

Global Irish/John Hume Institute
Venue: Keynote & Opening reception
(First Evening)

LEGEND
■ General Building
■ Academic Building
■ Residential Building



Building Index

Building Name	No.	Grid
Agnes McGuire Social Work Building	42	E9
UCD Agriculture and Food Science Centre	28	D7
Architecture	1	E1
Ardmore House	36	C8
Bank	40	C8
Belfield Bowl	10	C4
UCD Clinton Centre for American Studies	51	B10
Belfield Park	59	C12
Belgrove Student Residences	33	E8
Bicycle Shop	61	B10
UCD Centre for Research in Infectious Diseases	35	B8
Centre for Synthesis and Chemical Biology	29	C7
UCD Computer Centre	18	C5
UCD Computer Science and Informatics Centre	22	C6
UCD Conway Institute	15	B5
Daedalus Building	41	C8
Energy Centre	9	F3
UCD Engineering and Materials Science Centre	49	C9
Former Philips Building (under construction)	7	E3
UCD Geary Institute	45	F9
Glenomena Student Residences	58	C11
Global Irish Institute	50	B9
Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington Building	44	E9
UCD Health Sciences Centre	16	D5
Humanities Institute of Ireland	43	F9
Industrial Microbiology	37	C8
Lecture Building, Richview	4	F1
UCD Legal Education Centre	55	F11
Library, Richview	3	E1
UCD James Joyce Library	32	D7
Memorial Hall, Richview	2	F1
Merville Student Residences	57	D11
National Hockey Centre	63	E5
National Virus Reference Laboratory	34	C8
Newman Building	39	D8
NovaUCD	60	B12
UCD O'Keane Centre for Film Studies	30	F7
O'Reilly Hall	31	C7
Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Church Pavilion	14	D4
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UCD Quinn School of Business	48	D9
UCD Restaurant	46	D9
Roebuck Castle	54	G11
Roebuck Hall	53	G11
Roebuck Hall Residence (under construction)	56	F11
Rosemount	11	H4
Rosemount Creche	12	G6
UCD Science Centre (Hub)	23	D6
UCD Science Centre (North)	21	C6
UCD Science Centre (South)	27	D6
UCD Science Centre (West)	20	D6
UCD Sports Centre	62	E4
St Stephens	52	C10
UCD Student Centre	17	D5
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Thomfield	8	B3
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	UCD School of Art History and Cultural Policy	39		
	UCD School of Classics	39		
	UCD School of English and Drama	39		
	UCD School of History and Archives	39, 32		
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	College of Business & Law	UCD School of Business	48	
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Campus Information

Facility	No.	Grid
Catering Facilities		
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Nine One One	32	D7
O'Brien's Sandwich Bar	62	E5
Perk	15/48/60	85/D9/B12
Science Centre Restaurant	23	D6
UCD Restaurant	46	D9
UCD Student Centre	17	D5
UCD Student Club	47	D9
Sandwich Hub	54	G11
Services		
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Campus Bookshop	32	D7
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Student Union Shop	32	D7
Student Health Service	17	D5
Pharmacy	17	D5
Copi-Print	32/39	D7/D8

Traffic Calming Programme

Traffic Restrictions in Operation	Mon-Fri
07.00-10.30	
16.00-19.30	

Gates Opening Times

N11 Entrance	24 hours
Clonskeagh Entrance, (Mon-Sun)	07.00-00.00
Owensstown Entrance, (Mon-Sat)	07.00-00.00
Fosters Avenue Entrance	07.00-00.00
Richview Entrance, (Mon-Fri)	07.00-00.00
(Sat)	07.00-18.00
Roebuck Castle, Pedestrian Route	24 hours
Greenfield Park, Pedestrian Route	24 hours
Roebuck Road Gate	07.00-16.00
Pedestrian Route, (Mon-Fri)	

Location Map



Belfield Campus Map



UCD, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland.

UCD Buildings and Services

January 2006

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Schedule

Tuesday, 05 May, 2009	
09:30 to 11:15	Registration
11:15 to 11:30	Opening Remarks
11:30 to 13:20	Session 1: Digital Material Culture
13:20 to 14:30	Lunch + TatArt
14:20 to 16:50	Session 2: The Material Art of Culture
19:00 to 21:00	Keynote Lecture and Wine Reception sponsored by the UCD John Hume Institute
Wednesday, 06 May, 2009	
09:00 to 11:10	Session 3: Material Culture and Theory
11:10 to 11:30	Break
11:30 to 13:30	Session 4: Materialities: Objects and Texts (1)
13:30 to 14:30	Lunch + TatArt
14:30 to 16:50	Session 5: Materialities: Objects and Texts (2)
	Informal drinks in Dublin City Centre
Thursday, 07 May, 2009	
09:00 to 11:00	Session 6: Material Culture and Space (1)
11:00 to 11:20	Break
11:30 to 13:30	Session 7: Material Culture and Space (2)
13:30 to 14:30	Lunch + TatArt
14:30 to 16:50	Session 8: Material Culture and the Self
19:00 to Late	Final night party

Tuesday

Session I: Digital Material Culture

Chair: Brian Dolan, University College Dublin, Archaeology

Noel Loble, University of Oxford
Ethnomusicology/Anthropology

Shifting sound material in and out of the archive: Hugh Tracey's Sound of Africa Series and The International Library of African Music.

This paper will examine the contemporary relevance of the field recordings made by Hugh Tracey and the International Library of African Music. I will consider how ethnomusicological field recordings from previous eras can be used to construct and circulate knowledge about music and societies today.

Ethnomusicologists have historically favoured the accumulation and collection of ethnographic field recordings, whether for transcription, analysis or demonstration purposes. However, to date there have been no ethnographies of these recordings, and academic presentations still privilege the written word over the audio. Consequently, sound archives and private collections of recordings can remain full of material that is often unknown and even unknowable. The current archival focus on digital preservation and Internet publishing often brings recordings to new and broader audiences, but it also frequently serves to further divorce sound recordings from the communities and contexts that made them.

I will present an archival analysis of Hugh Tracey's recording aims and methods and then consider the relevance of his recordings today to the changed social and political realities of the communities that were recorded. I will consider the validity of 'sound elicitation' work whereby recordings of Xhosa music from the 1950s were circulated among Xhosa communities in South Africa today, in order to gather responses. Local responses to an archival project may well offer new, creative and ethical approaches to the construction, curation and circulation of recordings of musical material.

Lisa Hudgins, SC Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina
Library Science/Art History

Documenting the commonplace: images of material culture in photo-sharing communities.

For decades, historians and anthropologists have utilized primary source documents to study material culture. Probate inventories, diaries, photographs, and art have been the source for identifying patterns of other worlds. Archaeologists have conducted similar studies by looking at the artifact record in the ground. While we peruse documents and sift the past, modern culture is quietly being documented and preserved by photographers from around the globe.

This paper looks at the way that online photo communities such as Panoramio, Flickr, and Picasa are documenting 21st century material culture. Museums and archives have been uploading thousands of historical images to the web each week. Daily, the community of amateur and professional photographers captures images from the alleyways and backyards of world communities, offering glimpses of life that would otherwise not be available.

These images point to economic, social, and cultural elements which were heretofore ignored by anthropologists and professional researchers. The advent of low-cost digital photography has resulted in documentation of a wider range of images, and the development of online photographic communities has provided access to anyone within range of a computer and the internet. The availability of this cultural data suggests new ways that images can be used in the classroom; however, the magnitude of these collections raises important issues about how these images can be utilized, and points to the difficulties involved in trying to preserve them for future research. The

potential for use and preservation are considered here.

Theodore Triandos, University of Delaware
History of Art

Dressing on the Internet: "American trad" and the performance of self-representation

The clothes we select are coded with socio-historic meaning, which we enact through our bodies and daily activities. This is especially true for an Internet community known as “trads.” On an online forum, trads share photographs of themselves performing (staged) daily narratives in their clothes. Trads derive their sartorial mode from an historic style they identify as the “American Ivy-League Look.” In conversation and through photographic comparisons, they connect their exclusive style and the leisurely and professional activities they perform in dress with a history of elite men whose American legacies of success they continue. I argue, for many individuals, to learn the language of trad activates new trajectories for personal achievement and identity. Others, I argue, *perform* “trad” with a sense of irony, in ways that subvert some of the problematic social and racial underpinnings of the notion and its practice.

To explore this new genre, my paper synthesizes a number of methodological approaches. Like Bernard L. Herman’s study of *narrative* enacted through the evocative arrangement of cultural objects, I understand the composition of trad-photography as works of *bricolage*. I interpret clothing choices as selections of historic materials, and I interpret “posing” as the powerful arrangement of meaningful codes. I employ art historical formal analyses of these visual narratives, and I explore the historic photographic sources the trad community *appropriates* in the production of collective artistic and social vocabularies. I then trace the service of this lexicon to the establishment of what vernacular architectural historian Dell Upton has described as a *mode*, or a style *re sourced* to express a group’s cultural exclusivity. Ultimately, trads desire to align themselves with *conventional* American iconography, while positioning themselves *outside of* mainstream American culture, thus producing a mode subject to constant flux.

Lisa Stansbie, University of Huddersfield,
Visual Arts

The Fluid Archive

In Hal Foster’s essay *The Archival Impulse* (2004) he suggests that contemporary art is fused with individuals’ desire to arrange and juxtapose. He also describes how practitioners elaborate on ‘the found object, image and text’. In considering the notion of ‘fluid archives’ I will pose questions around the use of objects and text in artists’ digital and material archives within contemporary art practice and how archive narratives are created by the presence of an author. This will also involve an interrogation of the fictional archive and how objects, texts and images are utilised to generate fictive approaches, which impacts upon the continually shifting ‘fluid’ relationship of an audience/user/viewer in the reception of such work.

My own digital archive will be discussed and the methods of construction which include appropriating objects, imagery and text using the mechanised logic of search engines who are ‘co-authors’ in the process, enabling a connection of seemingly random text and information. The archive has recently developed into a research tool and continuing associations are made from its contents meaning that the archive itself functions as the starting point for a variety of separate material art work/objects.

Session 2: The Material Art of Culture

Chair: Stephen Cadwell, University College Dublin, Philosophy

Lena Pellandini-Simanyi, London School of Economics and Political Science
Sociology

Shifting Meanings, Evolving Practices

In recent years theories of practice have received a renewed attention. This attention is due to that fact that theories of practice promise an alternative to a set of unfruitful dichotomies - structure vs. agency, subjectivity vs. the material world, intentional expression vs. manipulation - that previously dominated consumption studies. This alternative consists of seeing practices as routinized forms of using objects and bodily activities on the one hand, and ways of feeling and thinking on the other.

The paper addresses this argument by looking at generational changes of practices, based on an ethnographic research with two and three generations of families in Budapest. The analysis consists of two parts. Firstly, I trace different scenarios of continuity, change and appropriation of practices from one generation to another. Secondly, I look at different ways of making sense of practices by people living in the same household. The analysis suggest a substantial variety, instability and ambiguity over the different – material and subjective – elements of practices. Based on the findings I will argue that practices cannot be handled as integrated body-mind-object units, but exhibit a large degree of diversity and to some extent conceal -by their relative uniformity of bodily and material forms – misunderstandings, disagreements and changes. The paper concludes by exploring the implications of the findings for theories of practice.

Valerie Moffat, National College of Art and Design, Dublin
Design History and Material Culture

Material Culture and Motherhood in Late Eighteenth-Century Dublin: the Case of Mrs. Meliora Adlercron

A general reassessment of the subject of female consumption and material culture in the eighteenth century has been taking place in recent times. The work of social and economic historians such as Amanda Vickery, Hannah Barker and Olwen Hufton has challenged many of the Veblenesque assumptions that have previously characterized female consumption of goods in the eighteenth century. The work of Lorna Weatherill and Davidoff and Hall has also gone some way in addressing the area of domestic material culture that had up until recently, been consigned to the arena of female vanity.

To date however, very little research taking a design historical/material culture approach has been carried out specifically on women and goods in an Irish context. This paper will centre primarily on the close observation and analysis of the domestic account books of an eighteenth-century Dublin gentlewoman, Mrs. Meliora Adlercron. Using the records of her everyday purchases, the paper will reflect on Mrs. Adlercron's role as a mother, her relationship with her children and the way in which goods were used in the establishment of her children's social identity and community membership.

In doing so, this paper will reveal some of the unobserved intimate rituals of eighteenth-century everyday life that required self conscious and emotional investment, where a diverse range of skills were quietly played out, contributing a valuable material culture perspective to the body of literature on woman's history in Ireland and to the broader critique on the nature and kind of parenthood in the early modern period.

Marina Dobronovskaya, University of Delaware
Preservation Studies

Urban reconstruction in the Soviet Union after WW II: Creating a new Soviet identity

By examining cities and buildings as historical artifacts and as material culture, I want to show how Soviet authorities used post-war reconstruction, architecture, and urban design to form a new Soviet national identity. This was an identity based not on the original communist ideals of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, but on the power of the Soviet state as the victor over fascism, an emerging superpower, and as an increasingly Russian dominated state.

Although propaganda portrayed Soviet urban style as historically unique, I will show how Soviet architects and political leaders combined a complex set of architectural elements, domestic and foreign, and from different historical periods. The new Soviet identity, as expressed through urban design style was, in fact, a pastiche of styles: ancient-Greek architecture, European Renaissance and Russian Classicist traditions of urban planning, and even the American concept of the City Beautiful movement of the early twentieth century. I will examine how these often conflicting elements were put together and presented ideologically, and I will examine the discrepancies between the ideology of reconstruction and everyday practice. I will argue that the main goal of Soviet urban planning was not to reconstruct functioning cities, as in other European countries, but to use architecture and city design to create cities as works of art, as monuments to glorify the “Great Victory” of the war, to emphasize Russia’s historical heritage, and to legitimize the Stalinist totalitarian regime.

Barbara Kutis, University of Delaware
Art History

The Private Performances and Narratives of Morton Bartlett

Between 1936 and 1963, the self-taught artist Morton Bartlett drew upon iterations of fashion, art, popular culture and childhood found in magazines such as *Life* and *Look* in order to sculpt fifteen half-life-size bodies of children (twelve girls and three boys). With each meticulously crafted body, Bartlett attributed it with a certain age and nationality, creating a so-called archive of childhood development and identity formation. In addition, Bartlett consulted popular pattern-making designs, such as those by *Simplicity* and *Vogue* to inspire his designing, knitting, and sewing of dozens of outfits, socks and shoes for his half-scale creations. These items, however skillful and impressive, were not the final product. They were all fashioned for the camera, as Bartlett would pose, dress and photograph each doll approximately fifteen times in various staged settings. Each body became a vehicle by which Bartlett commented upon popular iterations of childhood, tracing the events of a single identity through various bodies and poses, as well as the single doll’s search for self-identity through various costumes and guises.

It is these images that Bartlett would make into small roughly three-by-four prints and which evoke his unique perspective on the popular conceptions of family and childhood. As a single man without any children, Bartlett carried these images on his person and created a sort of family album through the performative act of selecting, arranging, and sharing his images with friends and family. This paper will show how Bartlett’s photographic, sculptural and crafted creations draw upon the process of *bricolage* and demonstrate how an individual’s conception of childhood and family is not determined by the institution, but rather by the individual selection of certain elements and traits. As my paper will show, Bartlett was able to construct what family and childhood meant *for him* through the *bricolage* of fashion, art, craft and popular culture.

Mylene Mizrahi, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro/University College London
Anthropology

A Pair of Dancing Trousers: materiality and personhood in a Rio de Janeiro's Funk Ball

The paper focuses on the aesthetics choices of the attendants of a Funk Dance in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, by contextualizing their materializations at the party, apprehending them both through their relations as by their agency and materiality. By the intermingled relations set between clothing, body and dance we will discuss to what extent taste is attached to corporeality, gender relations and personhood.

The taste formed by the *Funk Wardrobe* leads to other logics governing the party and must be understood within an ambience of seduction where male and female have well defined roles. The seduction is carried out within an atmosphere of provocation that both strengthens and refers to the rivalry between the sexes, turning the festival into an arena where two antagonistic groups attract each other by opposing themselves. The complementary opposition between boys and girls observed in the ballroom – objectified by dance, clothing and body aesthetics and echoed by the song lyrics and professional artists' performances – leads to their cosmologies and suggest the presence of two different ways to understand the world. A Rio Funk Dance is an event where youngsters, mostly from the popular classes and slums of the city, enjoy themselves dancing swayed by an electronic and contemporary musical rhythm known as *Funk Carioca*. The rhythm, derived from North-Americans *Soul* and *Miami Bass*, has been turned it into a new trend through a resigning process started on the 1980's.

Sarah Conrad Gothie, University of Michigan
American Studies

Unexpected Antlers: Stag Décor and Domino Magazine's Postfeminist Aesthetic of Balance

Ornamental antlers and horns have traditionally adorned rustic hunting lodges and other masculine-coded spaces, yet in recent years they have gained surprising popularity as a trendy accent in urban homes of the American upper middle class. In this paper I examine textual and visual rhetorics of antler- and horn-bearing animals in *Domino*, a U.S. women's style magazine with a readership of 4.1 million whose editors' fascination with stags complicates conventional notions of antlers as hunting trophies or symbols of masculinity. Between 2005 and 2009, preserved heads, faux replicas of heads, and real and faux antlers and horns appeared in more than one hundred images in this magazine. *Domino's* relentless endorsement of antler and stag décor provides an excellent case study for investigating mechanisms of meaning-making in contemporary consumer culture.

Writing from the interdisciplinary space of American Studies, I consider the rhetorical strategies through which traditional stag and antler narratives are revised to appeal to the magazine's female readers, who have ostensibly achieved the postfeminist fantasy of "having it all" via consumer practices. This interrogation of *Domino's* antler discourse seeks to explain why a women's magazine would fixate on antlers as a style motif for domestic spaces at the start of the 21st century and demonstrates how a cultural artifact may be appropriated for new uses by new consumer publics via mass-mediated narratives.

Wednesday

Session 3: Material Culture and Theory

Chair: Maureen Doyle, University College Dublin, Archaeology

Ian Ewart, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Oxford
Anthropology

Walking into a Lamppost: Actor-Network Theory and Relational Anthropology

The literature on ANT (especially Bruno Latour's 2004 book *Reassembling the social*) has led to a burgeoning interest in so-called 'relational anthropology' – in which the various participants are seen to create a locus of activity, whether through intentionality (i.e. human), or causality (i.e. non-human). If we accept this as a valid description of the basis and manner of relationships generated by practical interactions in the world, then can we assume those relationships are social? If not social then are they material? If neither (or both) then how can we describe them?

This theoretical conundrum will be examined using the example of a minor accident in which the author walked into a lamppost, whilst looking over his shoulder at a new art installation. How do we characterise this human-lamppost relationship? To what extent is it conditioned by the materiality of the lamppost? And how far does the 'network' extend? Should it include the artwork? Or the Artist? (but does that depend on his intentions when placing the sculpture!?)

Les Loncharich, Michigan State University
Rhetoric and Writing

Gum and Roses: Materiality and Compositions of the Mundane

Arranging ordinary flowers or food on a plate, organizing a work space, expectorating chewing gum onto a walkway: such mundane acts are compositions because they are arrangements of information for meaning (Selfe). These quotidian compositions are material in origin; everyday composition practices begin with the material choices of constructing daily life that inform others about us, situate us socially and culturally, reveal negotiations with power and strategies for coping with post-modern consumer culture.

In a paper presentation, supported by a concurrent Flash animation, I will present a sequence of composition practices performed in the course of a day, to reveal the material origin, the arrangement for meaning and the rhetoric inherent in each everyday composition practice. Drawn upon and integrated into the animation, is the scholarship of Warner, De Certeau, Barton and Hamilton, Kress, Ingold and others, that help to inform of the ways these ordinary and ubiquitous practices demarcate our relations with the world.

From this presentation, attendees will take awareness of the scholarship of everyday life and of a paradigm of everyday life composition that extends and complicates earlier work in everyday studies, materiality and visual rhetoric.

Alison Hulme, Goldsmiths' College, University of London
Cultural Studies

On the Trail of the China Price: Value, Innovation and Potency in the £1 commodity chain

The story of the 'China Price' is the story of the fastest industrial (industrious?) revolution in the history of the planet. Its commodities are those most subject to the raw edges of material culture, yet those that seem most resilient to both local circumstances and global economics. Its players range from global entrepreneurs to dump-dwellers. Its places include international hub cities, multi-million dollar virtual trade fairs, and crumbling urban quarters. Its path uncovers the most volatile yet

versatile of capitalisms.

To follow low-end commodities from China to the UK, is to witness the un-doing of many assumed theoretical understandings of commodity chains, and the creation of many alternative strategies for the survival of both people and things. In a commodity chain where a £1 price tag is pre-determined, ought we to think outside traditional economic and moral paradigms of value? What implications do strategies of agglomeration and wealth-sharing have for how we think about connections along the chain? These issues will be broadly explored through Stephen Gudeman's ideas on tactical reciprocity, David Graeber's theory of value as action, and in the context of recent fieldwork in Chinese 'peddling' communities and the 'small commodity city' of Yiwu. Is what emerges an unusual picture in which the potency of certain objects confers upon those who come into contact with them a greater ability to become tactical players? What potential in the £?

Sinéad Quirke, University College Dublin

Archaeology

'We have all the time in the world...'

We are humans caught in time. *Tempus vitam regit*: many of us only think of time purely in the sense of where am I to be at what time: work, school, dinner, hobbies, a bus stop and so on. Time for us is a 'deep habit' (Landes 2000). We are so used to being Modern Time-Conscious Beings that time seems to hold no mystery for us any longer: 'we have tested and tasted too much lover/through a chink too wide there comes in no wonder' (Kavanagh) but what does 'Time' mean? How did modern time-consciousness develop? How do we measure Time?

Of all the houses of plantation-era Cork only one is alleged to have had a clock on its façade: Mallow. No trace of a clock stands today. Was there once a clock at Mallow? At first analysis it is a simple question with a simple answer: yes or no or we do not know. But the question 'was there once a clock at Mallow?' opens the way to many other questions. Some material and practical: if the answer is yes what type of clock was it? Where was it? What did it look like? Some ideological: if the answer is yes why did Mallow have a clock? Who could read it? And some philosophical: if the answer is yes what does that say about time and Mallow's time?

Mallow is a place of time: its possible timekeeping clock, its contemporary plantation time, its life time, its time as an archaeological monument. Mallow is multi-temporal.

Ian Magee, University College Cork

Osteoarchaeology

Are age labels blinding us to the materiality of the body in the past?

Age is, essentially, a dichotomy of socially defined hierarchies and chronological measurement. On the one hand an individual is labelled according to a socially defined passage of time (e.g. infant, adult etc...) which reflects their level of participation within the community and on the other according to a chronologically measured passage of time. Whilst these elements are mutually exclusive in their construct, they are, to varying degrees, dependent on each other for their definition. It is the variation in these definitions that has established an osteological paradox, one whereby the labels of one element have been borrowed by the other resulting in semantic confusion of social and metric labelling. This has negatively impacted on any attempt to answer one of the most basic of osteological inquiries, age-at-death estimation.

The social labelling of hierarchical age is based on loosely defined groups. 'Infant', 'youth', 'juvenile' and 'adult' are all terms without clearly defined parameters, dependent on arbitrary interpretation and which are to a large degree informed by social expectation. By applying our own social definitions of age in our study of sub-groups of the past, particularly in prehistory, we not only rob our ancestors of part of their identity, but at best confuse, at worst negate fundamental aspects of our understanding of our ancestors.

Within osteoarchaeology avoidance of this can be achieved through the bio-cultural interface between the mechanics of growth and development in the human biological experience, and the

cultural and social experiences that fashion that development.

Session 4: Materialities: Objects and Texts (I)

Chair: Emmett O'Keeffe, University College Dublin, Archaeology

Ann Wilson, National College of Art and Design, Dublin/Gradcam
Visual Culture

The material culture of Catholic images in Ireland between 1879 and 1922

Cheap, mass-produced, and imported statues and pictures of sacred figures were a central focus of Irish Catholic devotional practice in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These objects have not been generally considered either valuable or worthy of study, but they proliferated in churches, homes, and other interior and exterior spaces during this period. Advertisements in the *Irish Catholic Directory* indicate that they were available to buy in a variety of sizes, media and price ranges, and that their distribution and sale must have been a significant part of many thriving businesses. This paper looks at the role of these objects in Ireland between 1879 and 1922.

My theoretical framework comes from material culture and anthropology, particularly ideas developed by Alfred Gell as an anthropological theory of art. Gell argued that art is not primarily about aesthetics, nor about representation, but about *doing*. He claimed that some objects cause things to happen in certain social situations. They have 'agency', because the impact they have on a viewer evokes certain states and ideas (which he terms 'enchantment'), and these states and ideas in turn lead the viewer to take social action. The aesthetic effect of a work of art can generate this, but other types of objects, such as religious images, can also do so.

In this paper I will attempt to assess what sort of agency was granted to Catholic devotional images in Irish society during the period 1879-1922, using a range of sources including the 'objects themselves', primary texts and images, and contemporary popular Catholic fiction.

Kate Smith, University of Warwick/University of Wisconsin-Madison
History

Sensory Texts: Reading Objects in Eighteenth-Century Britain

This paper explores the role played by the senses in navigating material culture. The sound produced by tapping a bowl, the texture of silk, or the sight of polished metal glinting in the sun, all contribute to our understanding of objects. This paper argues that the text associated with objects reaches beyond the written word. Description can also be generated by sensual interactions, which produce somatic memories – the feel of an object becomes a meaningful embodied experience.

To explore this process, it looks to the activity of shopping in late eighteenth-century Britain. Customers handled multiple objects in order to ascertain independent information about the goods on offer, potentially leading to a purchase. Touching, seeing, hearing, and even tasting, allowed contemporaries to develop a catalogue of sensory information.

Adopting a framework developed by proponents of the anthropology of the senses, which sees the senses as culturally and historically contingent, this paper considers the complexity of this seemingly simple process. Touch, in particular, was represented as a contentious sense in eighteenth-century Britain, and thus shoppers were forced to employ it strategically. In this context, handling an object to discern its quality is no longer a simple act.

By exploring the relationship between the senses and objects in eighteenth-century Britain, this paper illuminates the complexity surrounding the study of things and the multiple descriptions they generate. How can we 'read' the texts produced by objects? In what way are those readings cultural contingent? Finally, how can we write about the unwritten?

Kelly Kirby, University of Michigan
Anthropology/Museum Studies

Changing values and transformations of bazin riche.

People's relationships with 'objects' condition their production and consumption, and by extension greatly influence desires, demands, and attributions of value. My paper is grounded in the investigation of a textile, known in Dakar, Senegal as *bazin riche*, which is mass produced in Austria, Germany, and Asia for West African consumption. Bolts of the highest quality un-dyed *bazin riche* arrive in West African cities to be subsequently customized in accordance with local aesthetic preferences: colors and textures are manipulated and dimensions are converted from two to three. The wear and display of brilliantly colored, starched, and embroidered garments made of this particular textile has become increasingly fashionable over the last several years, in Senegal, as well as in many other cities and towns across West Africa. What makes this 'object' especially interesting as a locus of study is its exceptional trans-national trajectory from raw material to finished product, and how each step of the finishing process, created and carried out in most cases through the execution of individual artistic mastery, augments its value and desirability.

My paper examines these processes and transformations of value through inquiry into relationships and interactions as they relate to *bazin riche*.

Nathania Girardin, University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland
Art History

Object as Text, or re-membering Charles the Great in Medieval France, 9th to 13th century

Since the 10th century objects and texts intertwine in the legend's making of Charles the Great. The extension of the emperor charismatic *figure* has developed through two *media* and reinforced by them. Objects materially reflect privileges of a passed glory as texts engage the reader in memorial reconstruction. Both texts and objects are indeed activated by abbeys and monasteries to legitimate ancient privileges (supposedly) given by the ruler. Attempting to increase their prestige or their antiquity, the communities involved create stories including Charles the Great, and at the same time they foster his growing legend with objects. Thus we perceive memorial construction by the use of both textual and material witnesses.

This text-object's interaction confronts us directly to issues of the object's materiality and of its expression: how do they authenticate a narration or acknowledge the construction of a singular *memoria*? More particularly, how do texts and objects fit in a coherent discourse? In this paper, I shall look carefully at text and objects' disparity in the discourse on Charles the Great, looking after the discontinuous development of the legend as well as the difference of the geographical elements that are part of it. I shall look in the artistic and textual production of Carolingian and Capetian's rulers and of abbeys and monasteries to understand the usage of Charlemagne's figure in the Frankish kingdom.

Karina Bracken, University College Dublin
Media and Conflict

Cartoonpolitik: Bell on Bush and the art of visual satire

Darwin may have stumbled across the theory of evolution, but *The Guardian's* Steve Bell was the first person to depict George W. Bush as an ape. Many artists have since painted the former U.S. president as a figure with the mental capacity of a chimp; a malevolent creature whose stupidity led a nation into a calamitous war in Iraq. This paper will trace the journey of that inarticulate, misguided and unprepared 43rd President of the United States from real man to cartoon monkey.

Steve Bell's cartoons are not just simple portrayals of the former president. Bell's vast knowledge encompasses politics, history, art history and cultural sensitivities. Combined with an in-depth analysis of contemporary events and an undisputed artistic talent, Bell creates images that are

informative, humorous and opinionated. His satire constantly indulges in low brow toilet humour. This interdisciplinary approach means that Bell's work transcends the material: each editorial cartoon is a text that can be read in different ways.

Furthermore, Bell toes the journalist/artist line like no other editorial cartoonist. His art appears daily in the editorial page which is buried deep within the paper. Nevertheless Bell's work has surpassed the pages of the *Guardian* and become a "thing" for us to look at, laugh at, "get" or "not get" the joke, agree nor not agree with the sentiment expressed.

The particular character of George W. Bush has undeniably entered into material culture; both posters and books of so-called "Bushisms" are available world-wide; video games of shoe throwing appeared days after Bush was targeted in Iraq; and Steve Bell's cartoons can now be bought as postcards in art galleries.

This paper will explore how the editorial cartoon functions and using examples I will show how its components come together to be read as a single text.

Session 5: Materialities: Objects and Texts (2)

Chair: Kim Rice, University College Dublin, Archaeology

Sonja Laus, University College Dublin
Archaeology

Lithic technology at the transition to farming: Similar material culture, different expectations

Chipped stone tool technologies, a body of evidence abundant on both Mesolithic and Neolithic sites, link across the transition, genuinely allowing a study of continuity and change. A PhD project undertaken at UCD (School of Archaeology) aims to address these issues through the analysis of several lithic assemblages from the eastern Irish lowlands. Based on quantitative and qualitative criteria chipped artefacts from this study area have tremendous potential to document the full range of lithic reduction strategies and the technological changes happening during the Late Mesolithic and Early Neolithic. Extremely detailed macroscopic analyses of chipped lithics from sites for which radiocarbon dates and/or clear stratigraphic sequences are available will enhance our current understanding of the production strategies on both sides of the transition. The observed changes/continuous manufacture techniques will not only enlighten the nature of the transition but will also allow stonecraft to be seen as an expression of technological knowledge as well as economic and social constraints.

Notwithstanding the fact that chipped lithics from the Late Mesolithic as well as from the Early Neolithic generally form a rather similar material culture, assemblages from either side of the transition are commonly examined at vastly differing levels of detail. Not only the methods of investigation, the selection, quantity and definition of attributes but also the expectations and research questions shift and complicate comparisons between Late Mesolithic and Early Neolithic manufacturing techniques. This presentation will highlight the difficulties, opportunities and aims with regards to identifying changes in the primary technology across the transition to agriculture.

Bridget Keating, University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada
Art History/ Indigenous Studies/ Media Studies

Raping Pocahontas: History, Territory and Ekphrasis in the Representation of an Indigenous Girl

In September of 2001, three white men from Tisdale, Saskatchewan drove a bleeding and intoxicated 12-year-old Indigenous girl to her friend's home in a nearby rural municipality. She had been, in the course of the evening, sexually violated and needed medical attention. After Dean Edmondson, Jeffrey Kindrat and Jeffrey Brown were charged with three counts of sexual assault, both provincial and national news media outlets eagerly reported the story, as its salacious narrative provided fodder for front-page news articles. As part of reporting the story, a ban prevented media outlets from publishing the girl's name and any information that might lead to her identification. Despite this court-ordered protection, however, reporters constructed her image using description or enactments of naming, which, in essence, framed a textual photograph of the girl. In the first national story written about the incident, reporter Krista Foss of the Globe and Mail describes the 12-year-old as a "Cree version of Jennifer Lopez" and that the men saw her as a physical manifestation of the cartoon, "Pocahontas" (2001, November 12). Such descriptors, which derive from her marked or signified position as an Indigenous girl, situate her as a debased "Indian Princess" and a "sexual aggressor", a sexualized Lolita responsible for the men's downfall.

Thus, journalistic construction sexualizes and denigrates the 12-year-old girl through, for example, the use of language to represent or describe her body, enactments of naming, such as titles or descriptors, and the reiteration or reproduction of colonial mythologies within the textual account of the trial. Language constructs potent evocations and images that not only manifest discursive positions but also incite injurious action. As a result of journalistic naming, her ekphrastic body, a

textual rendering representative of the visual, emerges within news narrative. Using this instance as a case study as well as an entry point into a larger discursive formation, *Raping Pocahontas: History, Territory, and Ekphrasis in the Representation of an Indigenous Girl* examines how news media represent Indigenous women in a proscribed and pre-formulated manner that reflects racial bias and the influence of colonialism in Canadian history. The thesis also explores how certain injurious images of Indigenous women appear in news text, as historical representation recurs and informs contemporary constructions of Indigenous women. As part of this analysis, the research draws upon the genre of ekphrasis, which melds visual culture with textual culture.

Jen Smith, National University of Ireland, Galway
English

A Brief History of Artefact Books: Paul Salt's York

Artefact books arise from a collision between the fields of art, craft, publishing, and literature, resulting in a material embodiment so essential to their existence that they cannot be translated to any other medium without losing integral aspects of their meaning. This paper will introduce and analyse the artefact book *York*, published by Paul Salt in 2006, and will demonstrate that the advent of digital media is not a death knell for all physical books. In fact, it is precisely this remediation that has revitalised the industry, refocused attention toward materiality, and made artefact books crucial to our understanding of ourselves.

York is the third book in a trilogy that explores the spaces used for commerce, specifically the interaction between the historically associated cities of Amsterdam (*Amstel Dam*, 2003), Manhattan (*Manna Hata*, 2005), and York. While all three pieces maintain the external appearance of a standard codex format, the copper, gold, and silver leaf on the spines suggest the artistic and materialistic intentions underpinning the project as a whole. Indeed, to capture the fleeting moment that is monetary exchange, Salt has physically trapped a snowball from each location within the covers of his books. This feat of bookbinding craftsmanship and engineering has ramifications for the rapidly evolving field of publishing in the 21st century.

Supported by a close reading of the text itself, this paper will reveal the rewards awaiting readers who are willing to invest the time and energy that artefact books demand.

Claire Feeley, University College Cork
Contemporary Art

On Vocabularies: or how I learnt to overcome my fear and love knowledge objects.

The theme of 'vocabularies' stems from the fact that the way in which we arrange phenomenon, collate things, determines in part our capacity to understand the world and act in it. Vocabularies is understood not merely as a list of words but as a *repertoire* of communication- like the dancer's repertoire, or the barman's. The more limited your vocabulary the more limited your capacity to do and to think. Learning new vocabularies, like learning new skills, opens up new possibilities. But, at the same time, the endless proliferation of new names and categories, our fetish for taxonomies, is equally limiting, creating boundaries around objects, people and ideas.

The systematic erasure of old vocabularies, however, means we lose these relationships to the world. The end of tradition may be part of 'general progress' but it would be wrong to think there is not a wealth of knowledge, useful and productive, which disappears as vocabularies disappear- for every word or practice that disappears so too does an alternative potential for relating to the world.

Understanding contemporary phenomenon, and thus affecting them, is limited by the inadequacy of the terms of communication. How for instance, do we understand capitalism, communism, heritage, experience and creativity when this vocabulary becomes over-determined? Terms exist like artefacts, or shells, without potency or flexibility. The motivation behind this presentation is to identify the urgency within contemporary society to treat knowledge as a 'thing' whilst also addressing practices of resistance against the commodification of language.

Presented by Claire Feeley, Lewis Glucksman Gallery, and Patrick Bresnihan, TCD, the talk will also refer to para-educational projects happening in Cork. Most people do not have access to

academic conferences, not because of explicit restrictions but because of a sense that academia is for people who 'know' about things. It is about an inequality of perceived capacities. Similarly, art, science and practical crafts often feel beyond people, beyond their capacities. Drawing upon ideas developed by Jacques Ranciere, although not relying upon theoretical frameworks, *On Vocabularies* will discuss the state of language and how we act within it.

Mhairi Maxwell, University of Bradford
Archaeology

Things and Objects/ craftworks and artworks: contextual materiality in archaeology

This paper takes a particular approach to materiality in the archaeological record. Materiality, when taken from a 'Damian Hirst' stance (where anything has the potential to be art, even a pickled shark), has great implications for interpreting how people valued materials in the past. Results from my research into contemporary craft and art are applied to archaeological case studies from prehistoric Britain.

It is argued that an artefact can be valued as a thing/ craftwork or as an object/ artwork according to situation. Things are defined as associated by familiarity; that is artefacts acting in assemblages and not individualised. Objects are defined as associated by difference; they are framed as individualised and separated from assemblages. This requires a biographical approach when, interchangeably, things become objects and vice versa when removed or included within assemblages. This is not an issue of semantics, but is an argument for how material value is not innate (not necessarily based on material quality, labour input or skill) but is primarily contextual. An attempt at studying different pragmatic and abstract values of things and objects in prehistory is presented.

Thursday

Session 6: Material Culture and Space (I)

Chair: Neil Carlin, University College Dublin, Archaeology

Chiara Garattini, National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Anthropology

Materialising People: material culture, infantile death and identity in contemporary Ireland

This paper is an exploration of the role that objects play in the lives of parents who survive the death of a baby. One of the most striking aspects of infantile funerary practices in Ireland is in fact the overwhelming quantity of objects left on the graves. While walking through Glasnevin cemetery it is impossible not to notice the striking difference between the area dedicated to small infants, known as the Angels' plot, and the rest of the cemetery's landscape. This space defies our expectations of how a cemetery should look like with its toys, cards and teddy bears, and provokes different reactions in people who often describe it as 'the saddest place in the world.'

However, some of the parents who decided to bury their children in the Angels' plot have described the place differently, as 'alive', 'peaceful' and 'lovely'. Both perspectives, of seeing the place as 'lovely' or 'sad', find their origin in the presence and interpretation of the objects on the graves. To understand this final material 'residue' it is necessary to look at how material culture is involved in the existence of infants before they are born and after they died. This paper is therefore an attempt to understand the relationship between objects and other aspects of infantile death, such as memory and parental identity formation, and ultimately to show how objects are involved in 'materialising people'.

Michelle Hughes, Rutgers University, New Jersey
Public History

War Monuments and Memorials: Commemoration and Public Space in Twentieth-Century America

In the words of cultural historian Michael Kammen, "diverse ideological persuasions have suggested that societies in fact reconstruct their pasts rather than faithfully record them, and that they do so with the needs of contemporary culture clearly in mind, manipulating the past in order to mould the present." This paper explores Kammen's thesis through the lens of one important type of public artefact: sculptures that commemorate war. Every generation of Americans has been involved in a major war or conflict. How those conflicts have been remembered and memorialized has played a crucial role in shaping American national identity. The iconography of monuments has changed over time to create a collective memory. "Monuments" have depicted early twentieth-century wars, while later conflicts are commemorated with "memorials."

What is the distinction between monuments and memorials? Monuments reflect a remembrance of a significant event or person by the society or a social group that may or may not have connections with the event or person being commemorated. Memorials have a different relationship to those that erect them and those that view them. They are associated with memory and memories of the viewer and are meant to preserve remembrance.

This presentation will examine the shifting mode of war commemoration—the shift from monuments to memorials—through a case study of public sculpture in the state of New Jersey. When monuments and memorials are read as texts, they reflect the changing attitudes toward war and culture, roles and obligations of citizenry, definitions of citizenry, and roles and obligations of a society or government. Monuments and memorials of war have evolved from passive venerated objects to sites of interactive mourning and self-reconciliation. In tracing the iconography of

monuments and memorials over time, this presentation demonstrates how the monuments themselves have changed from “cultural hardware” to “cultural software.”

Ana S. Tejada, Northwestern University, Illinois
Anthropology

A Look Into the Past: Landscape as Material Culture – Pacific Coast of Guatemala

The countryside along the Pacific coast of Guatemala is home to a variety as well as an incredible density of man-made earthen mounds that date back to the Preclassic period (1650 B.C.). While the vestibules of public and household structures have been obliterated by time, modern-day urban development, agricultural practices, and climatic change the footprint of human occupation is undeniably present in the material remains left behind.

This paper examines the landscape and prehistoric settlements, as material representations of culture, in the Rio Icán region of Suchitepéquez, Guatemala. From the monumental public architecture to the small scale household platforms, earthen mounds represent tangible products that encode forms of culture. They are imbued with information about social relationships and human behavior across time and space. The landscape of the Rio Icán region is a palimpsest of interlocking relations between daily life, politics, and social constraints.

Maya Rae Oppenheimer, Royal College of Art, London
History of Design

Leisure in Period Dress: From Revival to Re-enactment and the Drawing Out of Historical Play, 1910-1980

This is a study of the modern predisposition to entertain nostalgic urges for the past, and the reverberating effects of historic explorations beyond traditional mimetic forums.

British popular interest in its chivalric past is manifest in the expanding popularity of historical re-enactment in which traditions and objects, as representations of the past, are arranged into a design of modern making that satisfies contemporary needs and wants.

British re-enactors favour Tudor history. The history of Tudor re-enactment as leisure practice involves gradual, experiential interaction with nostalgic notions of history. Individuals throughout the twentieth century were exposed to participatory forms of history ranging from revivals and pageants to amusement parks and historic live-ins. I argue that Tudor re-enactment underwent multiple developmental spatial phases, each articulating how participants and observers navigated the motives and rewards for play.

The underlying theme in this paper is the individual's engagement with, and production of, material space in an attempt to formulate a relationship with history via standards of authenticity. Case studies include revivals such as the Eglinton Tournament (1839) and the Earl's Court Tournament (1912); various reproduction Tudor utopias known as Merrie England villages (1910-1980); and recent re-enactment societies or living history spaces such as Kentwell Hall (1978-present). This cluster of examples narrates a progression from isolated, utopic revivals to semi-permanent, inhabitable spaces. There is also a social change at hand where working classes, rather than wealthy aristocrats, are able to enliven the emerging place-myths.

These idyllic Tudor-style enclaves offer a platform from which to consider issues of social spatialization, materiality and authenticity as they contribute to a communal standard of proficiency in leisure. The resulting narrative is not a definitive history of re-enactment, but it does provide a design historical account of performed history and craftsmanship.

Lin Chang, University College London
History of Art

Seeing is Believing: Landscape Imagery of Newly-Built Industrial Suburbs

Industrialisation, a fundamental process that provides material base to our Modern world, has greatly changed our landscape, especially in the suburban areas.

This paper explores what changes industrialisation brings to local suburbs (factories, chimneys,

canals and railways) and how artists respond to such changes through media (drawing, printing, oil- and water-colour).

My research shows an intriguing fact that while a city and its suburbs undergo industrial developments, local artists at first tend to look beyond the 'ugly' and 'polluted' suburbs and rather seek pictorial beauty from local rural areas; afterwards, when the industrialisation reaches a certain degree and brings considerable prosperity, artists seem to find a reason to gaze straight at the industrialised landscape again and produce visual images of it.

As well as artists who represent three-dimensional landscape onto two-dimensional paper, the viewing public also learn to appreciate the three-dimensional industrial reality with the beauty and aesthetics they are provided with by the two-dimensional images. The interrelationship between pictorial and spatial recognition of industrialised landscape signifies a struggle we have with the material world.

There are two cases. The first is 1780-1850 Birmingham, England because it is a city emerging just during British Industrialisation and its background of manufacturing forms an important theme to local artists. The second is a twentieth and twenty-first century Science Park in Taiwan. The Hsin-chu Science Park was described as the best science park in Asia (*Wall Street Journal*) and its manufacturing of high-tech products makes it a contemporary equivalent to Birmingham, which is regarded as the world's factory of the nineteenth century (Hopkins). Through juxtaposing the two cases, their suburbs and their landscape imagery, this paper will bring insights of the relation between material and visual space in the context of industrialisation.

Session 7: Material Culture and Space (2)

Chair: Terry O'Hagan, University College Dublin, Archaeology

Corina Cimpoiu, National School of Political Sciences and Public Administration,
Bucharest
Sociology

Objects and everyday life in communist Romania: a material and visual history

Objects index past experience and are endowed with particular meaning in the making and remaking of history. The standing point of the present account is the exploration of the relationship between objects and people, memory, history and materialism in the context offered by the communist lived experience in Romania. The study will be focused on the role of both the material and symbolic component of things that provide a link to the recent past. A particular emphasis will be given to the “dialogic encounter” between objects and people in the process of remembrance.

Taking as a case study a recent exhibition on daily life of communism in Romania, this presentation will address a range of issues including the making, using, consuming, recycling or exhibiting the objects of the communist everydayness. The research for the exhibition was based on oral history interviews, audio and video recorded (particularly on the theme related to the social and biographical life of objects), collecting objects, diaries, personal photos and reviewing the newspapers from the period.

Challenging visibility, I will try to show through the way in which the materiality of the everyday life in communism can be integrated into the social and cultural history of Romania.

Eoin O'Donoghue, National University of Ireland, Galway
Classical Art and Archaeology

Who's the fairest of them all? The function and iconography of Etruscan engraved mirrors

This paper will examine Etruscan mirrors, and the association between their function and the engraved decoration that appears on their reverse. There are at least 3,000 Etruscan mirrors in private and public collections, providing us with a class of objects that represent a distinctive aspect of the material culture of a civilization. Mirrors were highly personal possessions, being specifically designed and decorated for individual use; indeed in some cases they were customized for particular individuals. The primary function of these objects is accepted to be that of the reflection of its user, to assist practically in the adjustment, improvement, and admiration of the appearance of the viewer. But it will be argued that mirrors had other symbolic, ritual, and personal uses. Their survival in funerary depositions suggests that mirrors carried a profound social and cultural value.

The iconographic decoration of the mirrors was an integral part of the mirror, but not an apparent aspect of its functionality. Building on the recent scholarship of Vedia Izzet, it will be shown that the meaning of the decoration, whether depictions of myth or an idealised real-life, was instrumental in using the mirrors. The decoration is a key part of the materiality, as it is symbolically a reflection of what the viewer should aspire to, just as their reflection is an image created by the mirror. Thus, mirrors as a material possession, will be presented to be an extension, and simultaneously, a reflection of the self.

Shannon M. Kennedy, University of Sheffield
Historical Archaeology

'When as in a naturall body': embodied spaces as material culture in the Ulster Plantation

Texts from the Early Modern Anglophone world highlight the importance and meaning of space

and place as physical symbols of abstract concepts. Works such as Robert Underwood's 1605 *A New Anatomie*, which compares human bodies to houses and cities, indicated how settlements and domestic spaces were links to and representations of the human body itself, often relating such issues to religious, social, political, and other hierarchical systems. Such textual evidence of buildings and space as having had a meaning beyond simply providing shelter elevate structures of Early Modern settlements to the realm of material culture that demands interpretation and the social identity of houses that was implicit in the lives of those who inhabited them can serve to inform analyses of Early Modern life.

The rural settlements of the seventeenth century Ulster Plantation, with prescriptive building practices at their centre, present valuable material culture that demands study but that has often been overshadowed by castles. More modest dwellings and their surroundings offer some of the best opportunities to decipher clues as to the social interactions and identities experienced in Plantation villages. Such possibilities are explored by this paper relating to performances and experiences of ethnicity, class, and especially gender, to argue that with investigation of the materiality of structures and spaces, the identities and interactions of their denizens can begin to be seen and understood in contemporary terms rather than imposed from our own period.

Sharon Greene, University College Dublin
Archaeology

A place for Every Thing and Every Thing in its Place –The Role of Artefacts in Understanding Archaeological Landscapes

Archaeological landscape studies represent an attempt to understand how people interacted with places they lived, worked, played and worshiped in the past. Not only are the physical and economic aspects of the landscape considered in attempting to understand this relationship, but also less tangible things (e.g. landscapes of spirituality). Studies of the symbiotic relationship between man and landscape in the past consider the evidence of sites, monuments, 'ecofacts' as well as the physical attributes of the landscape itself; however, for the early medieval period (c.AD 400-1100) in Ireland, artefactual evidence has played a lesser role that it deserves.

The landscape context in which artefacts are found (as opposed to the simple distribution pattern) has the potential to add significantly to our understanding of not only the regions in which the objects occur and the lives of the objects themselves but, more critically to the ultimate aim of archaeology, to our appreciation of the human communities who used them. This paper will look at a selection of artefacts from the western seaboard of Ireland and their role in helping us understand communications and trade in this region in the early medieval period.

Attracta Brownlee, National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Anthropology

The Material Culture Dimension of Irish Travellers' Faith

The aim of this paper is to explore Irish Travellers' material expression of their Catholic faith. The material dimension of Traveller faith has largely been overlooked in studies of Traveller culture. Their relationship with the physical environment and how certain spaces, such as holy wells, are imbued with meaning, their devotion to particular places of pilgrimage such as Knock Shrine, their funerary practices and the material culture on graves, particularly the erection of elaborate graveyard monuments, are some examples of concrete expressions of their belief system. The discourses of a religion are learned, not only by the reading of holy texts, but also by interactions with the material manifestations of that religion. In this paper, particular emphasis will be placed on exploring Travellers' relationships with the material culture of faith such as household shrines, statues, candles, medals, relics and holy water.

The Catholic Church has undergone significant changes in Irish society since the "devotional revolution" of the nineteenth century. The relationship between Travellers and the Catholic Church will be explored in the context of these developments in Irish Catholicism in general. The sometimes ambiguous feelings of Travellers toward the Church is a revealing

aspect of Travellers' own perceptions of their relationship with the Church, and is significant, especially when it is considered that the Catholic Church has traditionally been seen as one of the organisations at the forefront of campaigns for Travellers' rights. These tensions reflect how religious meanings and practices can be contested and will be explored in the context of how material culture functions as a symbol of personal and community identity for Travellers.

Session 8: Material Culture and the Self

Chair: Sharon Greene, University College Dublin, Archaeology

Katherine Tubb, University of Glasgow
History of Art

Objects of Self-Fashioning in the Self-Portraits of Marta Astfalck-Vietz

Marta Astfalck-Vietz counts among many Berlin women, born around 1900, whose Weimar-era photography slipped into obscurity after World War Two, and has yet to receive in-depth academic attention, in either German or English.

This is a cultural loss, because, as both talented practitioner and glittering ‘it-girl’ on Berlin’s arts scene, she embodied the fabled *Neue Frau* who has become a hot historical topic in recent years. Well-educated, financially independent, sharply-dressed, and sexually liberated, Vietz lived the dream that Weimar’s chic magazines promoted.

It was not, however, without difficulties. Weimar’s metropolitan culture ostensibly freed *women* but fixed *woman* as a symbol for the thrills and ills of her time. In her photography, Marta Astfalck-Vietz approaches this symbolism from shifting perspectives which she communicates always through disruptive negotiations with contemporary fashions in clothing.

In a fashion series commissioned by a milliner, for example, Vietz, like her contemporary Gertrud Arndt, expresses an arguably unexpected, and perhaps retrogressive, nostalgia for the nineteenth century, when dress was a principal vehicle of female self-expression. By contrast, her erotic self-portraits turn domestic materials into props for avant-garde masquerades from which Vietz shapes a highly individual, even narcissistic, sexuality.

With comparative references to similar practitioners, past and present, including the Countess de Castiglione, for example, this paper will use an interdisciplinary approach to examine the intersections and tensions between objects of fashion and photographs as objects of self-fashioning in the work of Marta Astfalck-Vietz.

Rebecca Ashley, University of Sussex
Anthropology

Congeaing Ancestry: An Exploration of Bog Body Kinship through Metaphor and Matter

Bog bodies’, the congealed focus of this paper, are the preserved and changed remains of humans, unearthed from raised bogs and fen peatlands across north-western Europe. In highly particular and irreplicable instances, these bog-landscapes are capable of preserving a human body over many centuries. Based on research conducted at the National Museum of Ireland in 2008, my paper explores the routes through which a particular exhibition of bog bodies were presented as the irrefutable ancestors of visitors to the museum.

By investigating experiences of ancestry through artefactual encounterings, my aim is to reinstate a “sense of a dialogue with material things” (Thomas 2006: 54). My emphasis is to re-ground questions of kinship, relatedness and ancestry, in the context of archaeological practices I find to be fundamentally embodied and emplaced. Phenomenological approaches to material culture demonstrate how knowledge arises from a dialectical engagement between people and things. In the context of bog-body archaeology, this engagement actually constructs and legitimises the very notion of ancestral relatedness. As Ingold has suggested, “kinship is geography” (2000: 150), a notion I find appealing in emphasising the dependency of meaning-making upon ‘being’ in place. In investigating the material and experiential contingency of meaning making, I demonstrate that notions of kinship belong not to abstract genealogical structures, but to everyday practices that mediate and communicate meaning through solid form.

Connell Vaughan, University College Dublin
Philosophy

Curating the immaterial: instillation, exhibition and the art institution

If instillation art can be said to make curators of artists then exhibitions can be said to make artists of curators. The position currently enjoyed by graffiti, of increased recognition as art, offers a route for exploring this merging of roles in terms of institutional approaches to the material nature of art.

The material manifestation of graffiti makes it a curious type of object to confer with art status. Unlike the traditional self contained art object, graffiti operates with an essential relationship to its arrangement within its location. As such graffiti offers us the features of instillation art; namely site-specificity, destructibility, scope for embodied experience. These immaterial qualities appear to render the notion of an exhibition, in the sense of being the arrangement of art objects by the curator, a dubious proposition.

However this prospect is contrary to the experience of institutional recognition achieved by graffiti. Significantly graffiti has achieved art status not as instillation art but as street art. The practice of street art has been one centred on increased materiality and self-contained meaning. For example the increased use of stencils, wheat paste-ups, stickers, wood blocks and even tiles are easily transferable for the curator into the standard exhibition.

Be it as instances of exhibition or instillation the material nature of art is central to its institutional operation. Using the relationship of graffiti and street art to the art institution I will outline the challenges of curating the immaterial.

Adrienne Brown, University College Dublin
Musicology and Dance

Performing Musician as Dancing Text: Yo Yo Ma Plays Bach

Is music, the most abstract of all the arts, used to soften dance, making it more acceptable as an art statement? Looking at Mark Morris's choreography *Falling Down Stairs*, to J.S Bach's Cello Suite No. 3, this paper will show how musician Yo Yo Ma, is both conduit of musical text (the score) and moving performer within the dance text.

For some choreographers, although the body is the medium of their art, music may be said to be its heart and soul. Music makes the dancer and musician want to move: there is an increase or decrease in muscle tone, respiratory rate, blood pressure and heart rate. This physical response is the first step towards the moving performer.

After performance, the dance disappears leaving behind little document, yet during performance, dance has been afforded structural, thematic, motivic, narrative, poetic and performance status - equal to that of literature and music.

Music occupies a privileged place within the arts in that its written scores (texts) both allow the preservation and reproduction of works. An artform where its artefact is rendered only by the experience of sound, music is served but not limited by its texts. This paper will show how parallel texts of movement and music embody the art experience.

Maureen Doyle, University College Dublin
Archaeology

Dressed to express - but do first impressions deceive? Material forms of identity in early medieval Ireland.

Nowadays we take it for granted that what we wear says something about us – our personality, our style, our fashion sense, and where we (would like to) fit into society. TV style gurus advise us on how to dress so as to look younger, to express our personalities, or to suit our careers and/or lifestyles. In an era of mass-produced clothing and chain stores, they encourage us to express our individuality by mixing styles or labels, through judicious choice of accessories, and various other ways of 'personalising' our outfits. But can we look at what people wore in early medieval Ireland (c. AD 400-1200) in a similar light? In the absence of contemporary fashion magazines and style

mavens, can the material culture of dress, ornaments and accessories tell us about what people were communicating to others through their clothing and bodily adornment?

Given the paucity of clothed burials from the period, there are few examples of costume directly associated with particular men, women or children. This paper will therefore focus on dress itself, particularly on ornaments such as brooches, pins, bangles and beads, and consider how people used this material culture to express themselves. Living within the constraints of a regulated, hierarchical society, what options did they have, and what did these choices communicate? Can we see specific aspects of identity such as gender, age and ethnicity being conveyed through dress? And can we understand what the material culture of dress and ornament may have meant to its wearers?

