

Call for Papers:
**From Hogarth to Hypebeast: The Materiality of Popular
Cultures**

Seventeenth Material Culture Symposium for Emerging Scholars

University of Delaware

April 21–22, 2023

Submit by: December 5, 2022

The Center for Material Culture Studies at the University of Delaware invites submissions for papers by graduate students that examine the relationship between material and popular cultures for its biennial Emerging Scholars Symposium (April 21–22, 2023). This symposium will trace the materiality of popular culture from earlier periods to the present in order to think expansively about long historical arcs, key differences over time, and the historical intersections of the popular and material. We are especially interested in popular culture's materiality, which persists even digitally. What does it mean to be a *viral* material in the past, present, and future? By merging the interdisciplinary study of popular media with material culture studies, we invite participants to reflect on the intersections of sociopolitical and sociocultural climate; cultural trends and material practice; and virtual space and mass media technology.

How do cycles of popularity allow us to re-evaluate and negotiate the historical significance of material cultures as they move through our collective consciousness? We now navigate trends, fads, and shifting popular markets at unprecedented rates, but have yet to understand fully how this shapes and changes our perception of the offline material world. The volatility of the present demands that we look backwards to consider how popular and material cultures have shaped our societies and that we look forward to imagining what the future might bring.

This symposium will explore the dynamic relationship between popular and material cultures across time, place, and medium. By emphasizing the fluidity between material and popular cultures, we encourage critical thinking about the ways people have shared their ideas and cultural fascinations. This conference suggests that “popular culture” is a cumulative archive of human experience. In this way, popular culture is always material, even when it appears otherwise.

In addition to exploring the materiality of historical and contemporary popular culture, we aim to consider how the discipline of material culture studies can illuminate our present cultural environment, from porcelains and scrapbooks to Pyrex and slime. How does popular culture inform the stories we tell about our material past? How can those stories shape our understanding of the present and future? We look forward to exploring the distinctions and ambiguities between the popular and material that inform our current moment.

Generative Questions May Include:

- How can studying popular culture as material, and material culture as popular, shape our understanding of both?
- How do popular material cultures reach across, complicate, and generate global systems, digital landscapes, and new worlds?
- How does studying popular material cultures influence our understanding of decorative arts in the modern age?
- How do popular digital practices intersect with materiality? How far can we (or must we) expand our definition of the material?
- How can we understand our popular material lives as both a product of, and a challenge to, global capitalism?
- How is our experience of the past rendered virtual through the staged presentation of historical materials?

Contributions to this theme may take, but are not limited to, the following forms:

- Digital humanities and material culture studies
- Histories of mass media events
- Ephemeral media across time
- Influencer culture
- Material futurism
- Objects in literature and popular media
- Popular media in popular memory
- Focuses on a singular material (digital or tangible)
- Popular media and objects in museum studies

Submissions: Proposals by current graduate students and recent graduates (Degree from May 2022 or later) should be no more than 250 words. Up to two relevant images are welcome. Please send your proposal and a current c.v. (two pages or fewer) to emergingscholars2023@gmail.com.

Deadline: Proposals must be received by December 5th, 2022. Speakers will be notified of the committee's decision by the end of January 2023. Confirmed speakers will be asked to provide digital images for use in publicity and are required to submit their final papers and presentations/slide decks ahead of the conference. Travel funding will be available for participants.

The Center for Material Culture Studies works to generate and support innovative material culture research by engaging the leadership and participation of faculty in a variety of disciplines and fields at the University of Delaware.