

Binocular Conference 2016 – “Looking at Junk”

Hosted by: York University STS and University of Toronto IHPST

Pre-Conference Registration & Film screening - April 28th, 7-9pm Robarts Library Media Commons, University of Toronto

Screening of “Trash Dance” (2012) - Directed by Andrew Garrison

Choreographer Allison Orr finds beauty and grace in garbage trucks, and in the unseen men and women who pick up our trash. Filmmaker Andrew Garrison follows Orr as she rides along with Austin sanitation workers on their daily routes to observe and later convince them to perform a most unlikely spectacle. On an abandoned airport runway, two dozen trash collectors and their trucks deliver — for one night only — a stunningly beautiful and moving performance, in front of an audience of thousands.

Day 1 - April 29th - York University 203 Bethune College (Norman's)

Welcome Message/Introduction (9:00-9:15)

Junked Perspectives (9:15-10:15am)

Touch my Junk: Masturbation in the Renaissance

Kacper Niburski (IHPST, University of Toronto)

Touch your junk - the Renaissance wants you to. Banned art, butchered saints, outright nudity - we'll uncover the private social and medical customs surrounding masturbation in the early modern period.

Discarded Perspectives on Darwinism in India

Sarah Qidwai (PhD, IHPST, University of Toronto)

The reception of Darwinism in India is relatively ignored or disregarded even today. This presentation will seek to both address this issue and present an account of the reception in Colonial India.

Break (10min)

Books and Junk (10:25-11:25am)

A View from the Chemistry Library

Amy I. Gilson (PhD, Chemical Physics, Harvard University)

Digital technologies are transforming libraries. Step into Harvard's chemistry library, where journals are for decoration, not information.

Science in Junkyard – Absence and Omnipresence of Science in an Anthropology Textbook

Fan Zhang (MA, IHPST University of Toronto)

What's the relationship between anthropology and science? Is anthropology a science? I will visit this contentious issue by examining an undergraduate cultural anthropology textbook.

Lunch (11:25-12:15pm) – provided in Bethune 214

The Power of “Junk”(12:15-1:45pm)

Speak Up or Pass the Mic: Hip-Hop, Popular Culture and Black Women in the Liberation Movement

Kina Collins (Louisiana State University)

I will be discussing the pivotal role that Black women in the USA play in the rise of the Black Lives Matter Movement and how their contribution is shaping popular culture in America and around the globe.

Smelly Hippies: The Performance of Filth, Crust Punk and Hygiene

Angela Cope (PhD, STS, York University)

The performance of an authentic existence through dumpster diving?

Discipline and Rubbish: The Making of (In)formal Subjects Around Waste in Chennai, India

Ashwini Srinivasamohan (PhD, University of Minnesota)

(In)formality of waste work and subject formation in the context of financialization in urban India.

Break (10 min)

Cold War Junk (1:55-2:55pm)

One Man's Trash Becomes Another Man's Treasure: Mathematical School Reforms in Post-War America and the Soviet Union

Mariya Boyko (PhD, IHPST, University of Toronto)

Math education reform of the 1960's in Russia was dismissed as 'junk' at the end of the 1970's. We'll discuss primary sources, attitudes of educators, international influences, etc.

The 'Discarded' Early Warning Line: Radar Stations in the High Arctic

Michael Laurentius (MA, STS, York University)

Examining how disregarded radar stations influenced Canada's sovereignty, infrastructure, narrative, and relationship with the High Arctic.

Break (5 min)

University of Toronto Scientific Instruments Collection (3:00-4:00pm)

Scavenging Heritage and Repurposing Trash: Scientific Instruments Made in Toronto

This panel explores how the University of Toronto Scientific Instrument Collection (UTSIC) is composed of materials that were being thrown away by science departments, labs, etc. It will also consider how scientific instruments and apparatuses are re-purposed from parts, materials, and other "trash," citing examples from UTSIC's own collection.

Tinkering and Re-purposing in the Making of Scientific Materials at the University of Toronto

Sophie LeBlanc (IHPST, University of Toronto)

What to do With Old Stuff? The Promise of Pitfalls a University Collections Policy

Erich Weidenhammer PhD (UTSIC, University of Toronto)

& Victoria Fisher (PhD, Museum Studies, University of Toronto)

**Conference Reception 7-9pm
Victory Café - 581 Markham Street**

*Food and drinks provided.

**Day 2 - April 30th - University of Toronto
323 Victoria College**

Welcome Back Message (9:00-9:15)

Making and Designing Junk (9:15-10:15am)

Post-its in the Trash: Disposability in Design Thinking

Darcy Bender (MS Design and Urban Ecologies, Parson's School of Design Studies)

Unpacking the material and social implications of embedded disposability in design.

Kipple: A Field Guide to Useless Objects

Hillary Predko (Independent)

Explorations in the tension between utility and entropy in objects, and dreams of resource stewardship in material culture.

Break (10 min)

10:25-11:25am

Constructing Junk: Towards an Ontology of Waste Through Engineered Infrastructures

Travis Hnidan (PhD, STS, York University)

This paper presents an ethnographic account of landfill construction to explore how junk comes into being. Engineering and infrastructure are used to investigate junk's temporal boundaries.

Becoming-Junk

Jon Cantin (MA, Humanities, York University)

Reflecting on the concept of junk, I ask what is junk? How is junk different from trash? How does the idea of junk relate to time, society, and the notion of use-value? (How) does the idea of becoming-junk work as part of the Deleuzio-Guattarian conception of becoming, and is it different from the colloquial sense of something transforming into junk?

Lunch (11:25-12:30) - provided

Keynote Address (12:30-2pm)

“Theorizing Externalities: 185 Pieces of Junk Walk into a Bar...”

Max Liboiron

(Memorial University, Sociology; Environmental Sciences)

Break (10 min)

Junk DNA (2:10-3:10pm)

'Junk DNA' and the Emergence of the Post-Genomic Genome

Felix Walpole (PhD, IHPST, University of Toronto)

This talk will explore the changing conceptualization of 'Junk' DNA and the very nature of genome itself. I will argue that such a transition merits a reevaluation of the genomic sciences such as genomic medicine.

Discursive Formations in the Junk DNA Debate

Jen Marshall (PhD, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Toronto)

This presentation is based on preliminary findings from a critical discourse analysis examining academic, media, and blog texts about the junk DNA debate and aims to explore the power of foundational genetic discourses.

Break (10 min)

Junk in the Academy (3:20-4:50pm)

Eddington Slips, Kafka's Eclipse, and Benjamin's Dialectical Disruption

Haritha Popuri (MA, Theatre and Performance Studies, York University)

In which Walter Benjamin divines the post-quantum world through the Kabbalistic whispers of Franz Kafka's stories, and I bravely attempt to constellate this view across his collected ephemera.

Trash Talk: Self-Defeating Tendencies in Devaluing the Work of Others in Scientific Research

Vladislav Sekulic (PhD, Department of Physiology, University of Toronto)

There is a tendency in scientific research for critique to extend into harsh criticism. What are the ways in which mistakes can creep into one's work when we throw that of others onto the trash heap?

How to Intelligently Ignore Almost Everything: The Finitary Predicament for Academics

Cory Lewis (PhD Candidate, IHPST, University of Toronto)

How do academics manage to intelligently ignore almost everything? Who knows!? But let's talk about it anyway, because we all have to cope with the problem somehow.

Closing Remarks & Thank you (4:50-5:00)