

CULTURES OF OBSOLESCENCE IN NORTH AMERICA: AESTHETICS, MATERIALITY, HISTORY

The conference is concerned with a wide array of phenomena and questions regarding the aesthetics and historical dynamics of obsolescence in North America: consumerism and commodity culture, object culture and theories of materiality and trash, architecture and urban culture, literature and the book market, technological development and media history, as well as the accelerated living conditions and short-lived e-technologies in the age of the digital. We consider obsolescence a governing principle of production and consumption that developed under modern capitalism and characterizes not only economic developments but cultural dynamics and values as well.

Hosted by:



SEMINAR FÜR ENGLISCHE PHILOLOGIE

Lichtenberg-Kolleg
THE GÖTTINGEN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY



Zentrum für Theorie und Methodik der Kulturwissenschaften

CONTACT AND REGISTRATION

27–29 June 2013, University of Göttingen

Venue: Historic Observatory
Geismar Landstraße 11, 37083 Göttingen

Conference registration is required; to do so please email Emily Petermann:
emily.petermann@phil.uni-goettingen.de
by June 13, 2013 at the latest.

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Further information and directions are available on the conference website:
www.amstud.uni-goettingen.de

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GEORG-AUGUST-UNIVERSITÄT
GÖTTINGEN

CULTURES OF OBSOLESCENCE IN NORTH AMERICA: AESTHETICS, MATERIALITY, HISTORY

International Conference: 27–29 June 2013
University of Göttingen, hosted by the
English Department and the Lichtenberg Kolleg
Venue: Historic Observatory



GEORG-AUGUST-UNIVERSITÄT
GÖTTINGEN

THURSDAY, JUNE 27

17:00 Conference Opening, Greetings

17:30 Baerbel Tischleder
University of Goettingen
Introduction

18:00 Keynote Lecture
Bill Brown
University of Chicago
»**The Obsolescence of the Human**«

19:30 Reception

FRIDAY, JUNE 28

Session I:
**HISTORY, OBJECT CULTURE,
AND THE EPHEMERAL CITY**
Chair: Michaela Hampf (FU of Berlin)

9:30 Susan Strasser
University of Delaware
»**Rags, Bones, and Plastic Bags:
Trash in Industrial America**«

10:30 Daniel Abramson
Tufts University
»**Architectures of Obsolescence:
Lessons for History**«

11:45 Sarah Wasserman
Princeton University
»**Fun with the Future-Past:
Amusement and Obsolescence
in 1930s New York**«

Session II:
**IMAGES OF THE OBSOLETE: PAINTING,
PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE MODERN TEXT**
Chair: Emily Petermann
(University of Goettingen)

14:30 Miriam Strube
University of Paderborn
»**Recycling and Surviving: Screening Junk
in Beasts of the Southern Wild**«

15:30 Jani Scandura
University of Minnesota
»**Barely There: Remnants of Hiroshima**«

17:00 MaryAnn Snyder-Körber
Free University of Berlin
»**American Modernism Before Nostalgia,
After the Avant-Garde**«

SATURDAY, JUNE 29

Session III:
**TEXTUAL MATERIALISM AND
LITERARY PRACTICE**
Chair: Brigitte Glaser (University of Goettingen)

9:30 Kathleen Fitzpatrick
Modern Language Association, New York
»**Social Networks and Literary Circuits**«

10:30 Alexander Starre
FU of Berlin
»**Wove Paper, Deckle Edges, Gorilla Glass:
Tethering Literature to Material Production
Cycles**«

11:45 Hanjo Berressem
University of Cologne
» **»Zero History:« The Poetics of Patination
in the Work of William Gibson**«

Session IV:
**OLD AND NEW MEDIA: HISTORICAL
DYNAMICS IN THE DIGITAL AGE**
Chair: Daniel Stein (University of Goettingen)

14:30 John Durham Peters
University of Iowa
»**Proliferation and Obsolescence of the
Historical Record in the Digital Era**«

15:45 William Uricchio
M.I.T./University of Utrecht
»**Replacement vs. Displacement:
Obsolescence and the Redefinition
of Media Practices**«

**FINAL PANEL DISCUSSION:
FOLLOWING THE OBSOLETE**
Chair: Baerbel Tischleder
(University of Goettingen)

17:30 Speakers: Bill Brown, Kathleen Fitzpatrick,
John Durham Peters, and Jani Scandura

19:00 Concluding Remarks

19:30 Conference Dinner