



Call for Participation

Technologies of Turning

An Exploration of Making and Meaning

May 20-22, 2014

Harvard University

Sponsored by the American Art Workshop Fund and the Dept. of American Art, Harvard Art Museums

Organizers

Jennifer L. Roberts

Elizabeth Cary Agassiz Professor of the Humanities, Harvard University

Ethan W. Lasser

Margaret S. Winthrop Associate Curator of American Art, Harvard Art Museums

Eligibility To Apply

current graduate students in any discipline

send a CV and a short statement explaining your reasons for wishing to participate in the workshop to both roberts6@fas.harvard.edu and elasser@fas.harvard.edu

Due

March 18, 2014, 5pm. Selected participants will be notified by March 25.

Space in this workshop will be limited to nine students

This workshop is the second in a new annual series focusing on processes of making in the fine, decorative, and industrial arts. The workshops will bring together faculty, artists, museum professionals, and graduate students for demonstrations, hands-on exercises, and discussion. Each day will combine instruction in historic techniques with the close analysis of related historic objects. One of the features that will differentiate this workshop from others like it is that it will include time for extensive discussion about the merits of bringing technical and artisanal knowledge into the historical and interpretive disciplines in a conceptually rigorous way.

Rather than focus on a specific medium or type of object, each workshop is organized around a single species of physical operation that cuts across multiple media and can also be evocatively transposed into cultural and theoretical dimensions.

This year we will concentrate on “turning.” From the lathe to the spindle to the potter’s wheel to the turntable, rotational dynamics sit at the heart of multiple mechanical and artisanal practices. The workshop will trace processes of turning through pottery throwing, textile production, and media playback and projection. What modes of thinking and approaches to materials link these processes? How have makers across time conceptualized working “in the round” and how might such modes of embodied making inform our understanding of the creative process? What are the implications of turning’s intricate relationship to control in artisanal and industrial settings? How does turning engage with problems in programming, tacit knowledge, and automation?

Each participant will be expected to complete a short list of preliminary readings and to attend all portions of the workshop.

The workshop is organized by Americanists and will focus primarily on American material, but students in all fields are encouraged to apply. Lodging for four nights and most meals will be provided for selected participants. Participants will be responsible for supporting their own travel to and from Cambridge.

Preliminary Outline of Schedule

Tuesday, May 20

CERAMICS

AM: Demonstration and hands-on studio session, Harvard Ceramics Studio (Allston, MA)

PM: Handling session with historic material

PM: Debriefing and reflection

PM: Dinner

Wednesday, May 21

TEXTILES

AM: Demonstration and hands-on session with early machinery, American Textile History Museum (Lowell, MA)

PM: Handling session with historic material

PM: Debriefing and reflection

PM: Dinner

Thursday, May 22

MEDIA

AM: Demonstration and hands-on session, Harvard Film Archive

PM: Final debriefing, workshop conclusion