

MOVEMENT, AESTHETICS, ONTOLOGY

IV Annual Conference on the New Materialisms

16-17 May 2013, School of History, Culture and Arts Studies, University of Turku, Finland

New materialist approaches are increasingly announced, articulated, exercised and contested across a gamut of often entwining research fields from art theory, media studies and feminist philosophy to sociology, gender and sexuality research, and science and environmental studies. In addition to the cross-evolving discussions in these areas, there is growing need to consider the connections but also specificity of new materialisms in relation to many contemporaneous intellectual developments, such as new forms of realism or post-human(ist) thought. Given these conditions, the fourth international conference on the new materialisms suggests that it is crucial to steer clear of “a manifesto quality” when arguing for the distinctiveness and cutting-edge relevance of new materialist approaches, a risk perceptively noted by Barbara Bolt (2013). Instead, theorists and practitioners involved in this endeavour need to inquire with insistence, rigour and creativity what might be the distinguishing *concepts* of new materialisms, accompanied by associated problems, theoretical inspirations, methodological choices, and socio-political, ethical significances.

To encourage inquiries of this kind, the conference at the University of Turku invites scholars and postgraduate students of wide (trans-)disciplinary diversity to submit proposals for 20 minute presentations and for panels of maximum four papers in reference to *three concepts*. Variations of them seem to inform much of the research done in the name of new materialisms or linkable with these approaches. The concepts are *movement*, *aesthetics*, and *ontology*. Far from serving as prescriptive closures to what new materialisms involve, the concepts are offered here as condensation points of concerns that incarnate very differently depending on the context in which they are engaged. Yet, they are among the notions that arguably bring substance and consistency to new materialist modes of thinking and intervention – in ways both currently manifest and yet to be discovered. Movement pertains, for example, to the primacy given in many new materialist pursuits to process, emergence and the vibrancy of matter, whereas aesthetics may refer to the importance of sensation, affect, inter-/amodality or new sense- and feeling-based conceptions of politics. Ontology implicates a range of neomaterialist themes and affiliations from nature–culture continua to non-representational thought.

We look forward to receiving contributions of theoretical, empirical, practice-based and activist orientation that somehow explore, assess, elaborate or connect these concepts with regard to the formative stages, recent actualizations and future potential of new materialisms. The work of our distinguished keynote speakers is exemplary of the ways in which movement, aesthetics and ontology matter to and through new materialist examinations of the arts, the body, gender, technology, entanglements of materiality and sociality, and human–non-human relations.

Topics of the presentation and panel proposals may include, as well as go beyond, the following:

- continua of theory and practice; art and philosophy; material and social
- methodologies: how to study processes, relations, affect, the new?
- new or radical empiricism: how to take account of emergence and complexity?
- revisiting aesthetics and politics
- ontologies of art, object, sex, work, medium, etc.
- neomaterialist analysis of social mobilities, activism, and economies
- multisensory/intermodal movements of thinking and knowing

Confirmed keynote speakers

Estelle Barrett (Communication & Creative Arts, Deakin University, Australia)

Barbara Bolt (Victoria College of Arts, University of Melbourne, Australia)

Patricia Pisters (Media and Film Studies, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

Jukka Sihvonen (History, Culture & Arts Studies, University of Turku, Finland)

Iris van der Tuin (Gender Studies, Utrecht University, The Netherlands)

Cecilia Åsberg (The Posthumanities Hub: Gender Studies, Linköping University, Sweden)

Proposals for panels and individual papers

Abstracts should be sent in the following format:

- (1) Title
- (2) Presenter(s)
- (3) Institutional affiliation
- (4) Email
- (5) Abstract (individual proposals: 200-300 words; panel proposals: general description of 150-200 words, 200-300 words for each paper)

Please use your surname as the document title. Abstracts for panels and twenty-minute presentations should be submitted as an email attachment to 4thconference@newmaterialism.eu by **Monday 4 February 2013**. We are happy to consider both established and alternative presentation formats from academic papers to illustrations of artistic research practice, performance-talks, etc. We will advise all proposers of accepted presentations within two weeks of the deadline.

Attendance and accommodation

Attendance at this conference is free of charge. University of Turku cannot provide or book accommodation for presenters, but the conference website at <http://movementaestheticsontology.wordpress.com/> will include information about places to stay and lunch and dinner possibilities in Turku once notifications of acceptance have been posted.

PLEASE NOTE also the possibility to combine participation at the conference with attendance in the following seminar organized likewise in Turku: **MATERIAL CONVERSATIONS: LANGUAGE, NATURE, POWER**, Åbo Akademi University, Department of Social Sciences, May 15th, 2013. There is a separate registration for this event, for more information see: www.abo.fi/institution/en/materialconversations

This conference is associated with the following conference series:

- The international conference series on New Materialisms. The first conference "New Materialisms and Digital Culture" was held at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge in June 2010 and the second "Naturecultures" at the Utrecht University in April 2011. The third conference "Entanglements of New Materialisms" was organized by Linköping University in May 2012. The keynote speakers of these events have included, among others, Stacy Alaimo, Donna Haraway, Vicki Kirby, Adrian MacKenzie and Anna Powell. This event is the 4th New Materialisms conference.
- Rethinking Art Studies (REARS) conference series. The first conference "Regulated Liberties: Negotiating Freedom in Art, Culture and Media" was held at the University of Turku in August 2009. Keynote speakers included Bracha Ettinger, Brian Massumi and Tiina Rosenberg. This event is the 2nd REARS conference.