

Design and Social Seminar Series 2009-2010

THE OBJECTS OF DESIGN AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

4:00pm-6:00pm @ the Interaction Research
Studio, 6th Floor, Ben Pimlott Building,
Goldsmiths, New Cross, London, SE14 6NW.

Common to both design and (parts of) the social sciences is a shared pre-occupation with objects. On the one hand, design is concerned with making and interpreting objects including the finished article (e.g. consumer products), 'experimental' design aids (e.g. prototypes), and projective representations (e.g. scenarios). Recently, design has also begun to re-engage with more speculative objects whose ambiguous functionality contributes to the exploration of the social and the material, the political and the aesthetic. On the other hand the social sciences also work with objects, including categorical objects such as race, gender, and health, empirical objects ranging from the mundane to the exotic, and conceptual objects such as the notions social scientists use to understand and theorize the social. Here, the sociology of science and technology has been especially productive, introducing notions such as boundary objects (Star & Griesemer, 1989), epistemic objects (Rheinberger, 1997), immutable mobiles (Latour, 1990), quasi-objects, black boxes (Latour, 1988) to name but a few. Accordingly, a focus on material, empirical and conceptual objects brings into sharp relief overlaps and disjuncture between the two disciplines and a rich space for dialogue.

This seminar series will seek to bring into view and explore existing objects of both design and social science as well as draw out objects of novelty for both disciplines. In doing so we will seek to engage with emerging issues and topics in both disciplines such as the outputs of speculative and critical design, participation, engagement and publics as well as addressing notions concerning heterogeneity, process and event. This series continues to serve as a platform for opening up interdisciplinary research futures.

Autumn Term 2009

Seminar 1
**Introducing the Objects of Design
and Social Science**
Wednesday October 14th

With: Bill Gaver, Tobie Kerridge,
Mike Michael & Alex Wilkie,
Goldsmiths.

Seminar 2
Buildings as Things
Wednesday November 4th

With: Albená Yaneva,
The University of Manchester.

Seminar 3
Speculative and Critical Objects
Wednesday November 18th

With: James Auger, Royal College of
Art & Jimmy Loizeau, Goldsmiths.

Spring Term 2010

Seminar 4
Objects and Services
Wednesday January 27th

With: Chris Downs.

Seminar 5
From Objects to Issues?
Wednesday February 17th

With: Noortje Marres,
Oxford University.

Seminar 6
Object Fair
Wednesday March 10th

With: Bill Gaver, Tobie Kerridge,
Mike Michael & Alex Wilkie,
Goldsmiths.