Materiality Working Group
Fall 2014

From “material culture” studies in archaeology and anthropology to “thing theory” in literary studies, scholars are increasingly making the material world their object of investigation. The vitalisms and materialisms of Jane Bennett and Timothy Morton have informed ecocriticism; Graham Harman, Levi Bryant, and others continue their philosophical work in “object-oriented ontology”; and anthropologists like Eduardo Kohn and Philippe Descola have led an “ontological turn” that insists on considering nonhuman entities as crucial objects of study. Work on materiality also dovetails with science and technology studies, from Peter Galison and Lorraine Daston’s seminal book, *Objectivity*, to Bruno Latour’s actor-network-theory. The Materiality Working Group fosters interdisciplinary collaboration between scholars whose research interests fall under these categories, while also establishing an institutional hub at Berkeley for new work on materiality.

Week 1: week of 22 September—Materialisms, Dialectical and Otherwise

Possible future topics, with suggested readings

**Actor-Network-Theory**
Benjamin Noys, “The Discreet Charm of Bruno Latour, or the Critique of ‘Anti-Critique’” (2011)

**Art Objects**
Michael Fried, “Art and Objecthood” (1967)

**Ecologies**
Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (2009), selections

**Materiality and Historicism: Methods for Literary Study**
Ontologies
William Connolly, Pluralism and the Universe (On William James),” in Pluralism (2005)
Graham Harman, Guerrilla Metaphysics (2005), selections
Eduardo Kohn, How Forests Think (2013), selections

Rethinking the Materiality of the Sign
C. S. Peirce, Peirce on Signs: Writings on Semiotics, ed. James Hoopes (1991), selections

STS/History and Philosophy of Science
Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, Objectivity (2007), selections

Urbanization and Architecture

Immateriality

Future Meetings
Week of 6 October
Week of 20 October
Week of 3 November
Week of 17 November
Week of 1 December