

CALL FOR PAPERS

CHICAGO DESIGN: HISTORIES AND NARRATIVES, QUESTIONS AND METHODS

Chicago, IL, USA
November 8-10, 2018

Keynote Speakers:

David Brody, Associate Professor of Design Studies, Parsons The New School for Design

Lizabeth Cohen, Howard Mumford Jones Professor of American Studies, Harvard University

This conference proposes design as a timely lens through which to re-examine the history of Chicago, a city whose past encompasses the major national and international themes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and exemplifies how geography, demographics, and politics intertwined to shape the emergence of modern design in an urban environment. Taking a broad view of design, we seek papers that shed light on practices of fashion, graphic design, architecture, interiors, decorative arts, advertising, and industrial design in Chicago between the early nineteenth century and the end of the twentieth century and that represent a diverse range of methodological viewpoints. Moreover, in order to reckon more fully with the complex interplay of grand narratives and complex local realities, we also encourage papers from any discipline that take design, broadly defined, as a lens through which to explore aspects of the city's history not typically considered within the frameworks of art and architecture that have largely defined the history of design in Chicago to date. Fundamentally, this conference aims to consider the prospect of a local design history for a city that has often been outward-looking, and will ask: Is Chicago only a microcosm of broader trends in the nation and world, or are there distinctive aspects of Chicago's design history? Can the city's particular histories of design shed light on developments elsewhere? How might greater understanding of Chicago's design history reveal new insights into the city's larger social, cultural, and economic character? And more broadly, what might exploring the relationship between design and place historically in Chicago suggest for understanding that same dynamic in our current age of globalization?

We request proposals for scholarly presentations of 25 minutes on topics related to any aspect of Chicago's design history. Building on the work of our keynote speakers, who have articulated new lines of historical inquiry into popular culture, labor, and consumption as they shape both local communities and the very notion of American culture, we particularly invite proposals from scholars in related fields, such as the history of art, labor, urbanization, technology, business, literature, performance, geography, sociology, and anthropology. Topics and themes of interest include:

- Who made Chicago: design's role in such historical phenomena as the Great Migration and other waves of immigration and gentrification;

- What Chicago made: histories of industry and craft and their markets within or beyond the city;
- What Chicago bought and sold: histories of retail/wholesale trade, advertising, and mail-order businesses with respect to local, national, and international markets;
- Who learned and taught in Chicago: schools of art, architecture, and design or other sites of training, as well as the role of educators and institutions in related disciplines such as theater, dance, and film.

Please submit proposals comprising an abstract of no more than 500 words and a 2-page CV by May 15, 2018 via email to jmekinda@gmail.com and swilliamson1@saic.edu. Participants will be notified by June 30, 2018 of their acceptance. Funding will be available to support participants' travel and accommodation.

"Chicago Design: Histories and Narratives, Questions and Methods" is organized by Jonathan Mekinda (Assistant Professor, Art History and Design, University of Illinois at Chicago) and Bess Williamson, (Assistant Professor, Art History, Theory, and Criticism, School of the Art Institute of Chicago). The conference is part of Art Design Chicago, an initiative of the Terra Foundation for American Art, dedicated to helping people in Chicago and around the world experience, understand, and enjoy Chicago's extraordinary artistic legacy. The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation is the Presenting Partner of Art Design Chicago. Additional support for the conference is provided by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, the Art Institute of Chicago, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and the University of Illinois at Chicago.