

## Call for Papers

*Feminist Media Histories: An International Journal*

### Special Issue on Craftwork within the Digital

Guest Editors: Christina Corfield & Whitney Trettien



Much has been written about the creative and feminist histories of craft, from Rozsika Parker’s historical reclamation of embroidery and needlework as feminist praxis in *The Subversive Stitch* (1984) to the global view adopted by Julia Bryan-Wilson’s *Fray* (2017), which centers issues of race, class and queerness as driving forces within situated craft practices. More recently, Glenn Adamson’s *Craft: An American History* (2021) argues that Black and indigenous artisans played a critical and central role in the economic and social development of the United States, ending with the assertion that craft still carries the possibility, through digitally mediated platforms, to “save America.”

At the same time, media scholars often draw on the language and imagery of crafting to articulate something specific about digital media. For instance, in her work on “critical fabulations,” Daniela Rosner challenges designers to think about their approach in terms of feminist fabrication and even employs the word “craftwork” to frame her study. Similarly, Stephen Monteiro, in *The Fabric of Interface* (2017), uses metaphors like “stitching,” and “weaving,” to describe digital interfaces, tapping into a tradition that reaches back to Sadie Plant’s *Zeros and Ones: Digital Women and the New Technoculture* (1997). While this language is provocative, the substance of this work rarely engages the field of craft studies or crafters themselves explicitly.

The expansiveness of the label “craft,” just like the label “media,” has meant that a consensus on definition remains elusive. Yet the slipperiness of these terms has also conferred a certain productivity and generativity to them as concepts, as makers and scholars have taken up and twisted notions of “craft” and “media” across various disciplines. Rather than articulate specifically what “digital craft studies” is, we aim to map the complex and shifting relationship between the digital and the handmade, between visible craftwork and invisible media infrastructures, and between empowered feminist making and exploited global craft labor. It is our contention that bringing craft studies into conversation with digital studies will reveal a different view on the materiality, feminist histories, and political implications of our current media moment.

This special issue is designed to stage a conversation between crafters, artists, digital media scholars, designers, and historians and scholars of craftwork. We want to ask: What is the place of craft's feminist legacies, its emphasis on handwork and physical making, in an era when so much creative artifice takes place on screens, with data held on very distant servers? What might digital crafting look or feel like (and what is the difference between looking and feeling through craft)? Also, what is the role or use of crafting in the digital "smart" era in which "smart" does not indicate critical thinking but rather the networked intelligence of contemporary technologies of surveillance? How might a focus on craftwork decenter industrial-capitalist and western, Eurocentric genealogies of the digital?

Possible topics may include:

- The use (and elision) of craft to make physical components used in digital technologies, especially the role of global labor in hand-making electronic machines and networks
- The role of the hand and handicraft in digital practices like programming and web design
- The craft of building digital tools like mesh networks or interactive and physical computing systems
- Art that brings into relief the crafted materiality of digital media
- Imbrications of traditional and digital craft in the Global South
- Cultural histories of digital craft within global regions that are not defined by western conceptions or standards of "innovation"
- Celebrations of the mundane and the everyday in quotidian practices of craft during the digital era
- Feminist interventions that decenter the digital through handicraft
- Digitality and craft practice as embodiments of political ideologies or identities
- Alternative or radical conceptions of "makers" and "maker spaces / labs"

Along with traditional scholarly essays, we are interested in short film, digital media, documentation of a physical project or process, or other craft genres, like patterns. We also invite submissions that partner artists and practitioners with historians and critical theorists for interviews or other formats that generate a dialogue between practice and scholarship.

Interested contributors should contact guest editors Christina Corfield and Whitney Trettien directly, sending a 500-word proposal and a short bio no later than **February 15, 2025** to [ccorfiel@buffalo.edu](mailto:ccorfiel@buffalo.edu) and [trettien@english.upenn.edu](mailto:trettien@english.upenn.edu). Contributors will be notified by **March 21, 2025**; article drafts will be due by **Sept 5, 2025** and will then be sent out for peer review.

*Feminist Media Histories* publishes original research, oral histories, primary documents, conference reports, and archival news on radio, television, film, video, digital technologies, and other media across a range of historical periods and global contexts. Inter-medial and trans-national in its approach, *Feminist Media Histories* examines the historical role gender and sexuality have played in varied media technologies, and documents the engagement of women and LGBTQ communities with these media as audiences, users and consumers, creators and executives, critics, writers and theorists, technicians and laborers, educators, activists, and librarians. *Feminist Media Histories* is published quarterly by the University of California Press. More information is available here: [online.ucpress.edu/fmh](https://online.ucpress.edu/fmh).