
Shelter in Text

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"The sentence is a terrain along which experience and thinking occur [...] Ellipses are windows. Each word is an architecture." — Renee Gladman

Against the horizon of the pandemic, but also looking beyond it, this panel examines the now familiar idea of "shelter in place" by investigating the relationship between shelter and narrative. We invite academic and creative papers from all disciplines that probe the relationship between literature and shelter — interpreted as a noun or verb, as material or metaphor, from the micro (domestic) to the macro (environmental catastrophe).

In dialogue with feminist scholarship on the affective, spatial, and political dimensions of the everyday and the intimate (Lauren Berlant; Sianne Ngai; Sara Ahmed; Rita Felski, Kathleen Stewart; Susan Fraiman), we are animated by the following questions: How has the experience of radical domesticity challenged or (re)shaped our interiorities, imaginations and reading habits? How has immersion within the home or within a vastly altered public sphere, changed the way we think of plot and genre? How do spatial metaphors and spatial plots reconfigure ideas of literal space, inscribing the abstractions of power and racial and gender inequality onto the hard structures of the city? What are the ways in which we find we are sheltered — or unsheltered — by narrative in the context of the housing emergency, encampments, mass dislocation, and other late Capitalist crises of domesticity?

Possible topics include:

- Literature of/in the pandemic & dystopian writing
- Domestic spaces/ domesticity/ writing the ordinary or everyday
- Gothic legacies: Inhospitable houses in literature
- Writing about/from within encampments, shelters, and other marginalized spaces
- Depictions of forced or voluntary migration
- Indigenous approaches to land and space
- Ecocriticism, eco-poetics, and other land-based approaches to writing
- Surveillance and policing of space
- Writing from the bunker
- The aesthetics and politics of architecture
- Literature/teaching as "safe" (or unsafe) space