

The Meaning of Materials

A New Art History Seminar, Spring 2017

ARHS 6812

Prof. Michelle Foa



Edgar Degas, A Cotton Office in New Orleans, 1873

In this course, we'll explore a range of materials, substances, and everyday objects that have altered the course of art history, our region, and our daily lives. What is the ground of New Orleans made of, and how have its unique qualities affected the history and current life of the city? In what ways did the use of oil paint revolutionize the history of art? How has our relationship to paper changed over time? What role has cotton played in shaping our region, our everyday world, and artists' materials? How have computers and the digital revolution changed how we read, write, and look at art? To explore the answers to these questions, we'll meet with a world-renowned art conservator, take field trips to the New Orleans Museum of Art, visit a paper conservation lab, meet with specialists on the geography of New Orleans, mine clay out of the ground with a ceramic artist, and other class activities. Please contact Prof. Michelle Foa (mfoa@tulane.edu) with any questions.