

[CFP: Supply and Command: Encoding Logistics, Labor, and the Mediation of Making](#)

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Call for Papers

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Communication, Cultural History / Studies, Geography, Labor History / Studies, Journalism and Media Studies

“Man is born free, and everywhere he is in (supply) chains.”

If the supply chain is only a metaphor, it is remarkably effective one. Since the moment that business consultant Keith Oliver proposed, in a meeting with the Dutch consumer electronics manufacturer Philips, the idea of managing the previously separate systems of production, marketing, distribution, sales, and finance "as though" they were a single entity, the "supply chain" has become the paramount means of mediating production, power, and politics in modern manufacture. But this totalizing entity was not the only conceptual structure that came to take command of supply. This conference explores the moments of movement, of transition, of *mediation*, as the forms and patterns of production became distributed and digitized, analyzed and automated, coming together into what sometimes seems to be the sole medium for managing the logistics of life and labor—the singular and total object of the global supply chain.

Supply and Command is a two day conference hosted by New York University's Department of Media, Culture, and Communication, **April 19th-20th, 2018**, featuring a keynote address from **Deborah Cowen and Carolina Bank Muñoz**. We invite scholars, writers, artists, and activists to submit papers organized around the logic of the supply chain from the perspective of communication and media studies, media history, and media anthropology. Potential topics might include (but are not limited to):

- Media of logistical management, from historic supply chains like those for the transatlantic slave trade to contemporary ones for the production of cell phones, software, and the machinery of modern media.
- Translation or adaptation of these forms from one medium to another, such as the digitization of paper systems of organization for computerized software services.
- Accounts of how logistical media forms shape the labor process and daily life in the global supply chain, including issues of human rights and social justice.
- Demystification and disruption of the logics of the supply chain and of supply chain management through ethnographic or artistic representations and interventions.
- Representations of supply chains and logistical practice in literature, film, and television.
- Software of supply chain management and coordination, historic and contemporary.

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- Digital supply chains and the logistical algorithms behind software and services.
- Critical accounts of the technologies of worker surveillance, the securitization of global trade, and automation across the supply chain.
- Stories of non-human actors and the mediation of environmental and ecological impact.
- Metaphors that productively apply the ideas of the supply chain and logistical practice, such as the logistics of suffering, or the logistics of hope.
- Media of alternative, insurgent, and queer logistical structures and systems.

Interested participants should submit a brief abstract no later than **December 1st, 2017** at <https://supplystudies.com/supply-and-command/>

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<https://supplystudies.com/supply-and-command/>