

Meredith A. Bak

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Education

Ph.D. 2012, University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) Department of Film and Media Studies. Film and Media Studies

M.A. 2006, New York University (NYU) Department of Cinema Studies. Critical Studies

B. A. 2004, Brigham Young University (BYU) Department of Media Arts. Media Arts Studies

Academic Positions

2014-Present, Assistant Professor of Childhood Studies, Rutgers University-Camden

2013-14, Visiting Assistant Professor of Film and Media Studies, Franklin & Marshall College

2012-13, Artemis A. W. and Martha Joukowsky Postdoctoral Fellow, Brown University

2008-12, Graduate Student Instructor, Undergraduate Writing Program; Department of Film and Media Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Jason Middleton and **Meredith A. Bak**, “Struggling for Recognition: Intensive Mothering’s ‘Practical Effects’ in *The Babadook*,” *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* (July 23, 2019): 1–24.

Bak, Meredith A. “Taming Monstrous Play: STEAM Learning, Maker Culture, and Monster-Making Media for Children,” *Comunicazioni Sociali* No. 2 (2018): 218-231.

Bak, Meredith A. “Building Blocks of the Imagination: Children, Creativity, and the Limits of *Disney Infinity*,” *The Velvet Light Trap* 78 (Fall 2016): 53-64.

Bak, Meredith A. “The Ludic Archive: The Work of Playing with Optical Toys,” *The Moving Image* 16.1 (Spring 2016): 1-16.

Bak, Meredith A. “‘10 dollars’ worth of fun’: The Obscured History of the Toy Magic Lantern and Children’s Media Spectatorship.” *Film History* 27.1 (Mar/Apr 2015): 111-134.

Bak, Meredith A. “Grand Illusions: Large-Scale Optical Toys and Contemporary Scientific Spectacle.” *Teorie Vedy/Theory of Science* 35:2 (December 2013): 249-267.
<http://teorievedy.flu.cas.cz/index.php/tv/article/view/190/239>

Bak, Meredith A. “Democracy and Discipline: Object Lessons and the Stereoscope in American Education, 1870-1920.” *Early Popular Visual Culture* 10:2 (2012): 147-167. DOI: 10.1080/17460654.2012.664746

Book Chapters

Bak, Meredith A. “Projecting Play: The Give-a-Show Projector and Children's Audio-Visual Toys of the 20th Century.” In *The Routledge Companion to Media Technology and Obsolescence*, edited by Mark J. P. Wolf (New York: Routledge, 2018), 254-267.

Bak, Meredith A. “Fairy Tale Things: Studying Fairy Tales from a Material Culture Perspective.” In *The Routledge Companion on Fairy-Tales Cultures and Media*, edited by Pauline Greenhill, Jill Terry Rudy, Naomi Hamer, and Lauren Bosc (New York: Routledge, 2018), 328-336.

Works in Progress

Book Manuscripts Under Contract

Bak, Meredith A. *Playful Visions: Optical Toys and the Emergence of Children’s Media Culture*. Book under contract with The MIT Press.

Forthcoming Book Chapters

Bak, Meredith A. “Abolitionist Action Heroes: Operation Underground Railroad and the Material Cultures of Philanthropy,” in *Diverse Unfreedoms: The Afterlives and Transformations of Post-Transatlantic Bondages*, ed. Sarada Balagopalan, Cati Coe, and Keith Michael Green (New York: Routledge, 2019), 117–38.

Bak, Meredith A. “Between Technology & Toy: The Talking Doll as Abject Artifact,” in *Abjection Incorporated: Mediating the Politics of Pleasure and Violence*, ed. Maggie Hennefeld and Nicholas Sammond (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020), 164–84.

Ethan Tussey and **Meredith A. Bak**, “Get Your Cape On: Target’s Invitation to the DC Universe,” in *Point of Sale: Analyzing Media Retail*, ed. Daniel Herbert and Derek Johnson (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2019), 125–41.

Review and Editorial Publications

Bak, Meredith A. Review of *Critical Childhood Studies and the Practice of Interdisciplinarity*, edited by Joanne Faulkner and Magdalena Zolkos. *The Lion and the Unicorn* 41:1, (January 2017): 126-128.

Bak, Meredith A. Review of *Coin-Operated Americans: Rebooting Boyhood in the Video Game Arcade*, by Carly A. Kocurek. *Journal for the History of Childhood and Youth*, 10:1 (Winter 2017): 145-147.

Bak, Meredith A. Review of *The LEGO Studies Reader*, edited by Mark J. P. Wolf, *American Journal of Play* 8:1 (Fall 2015): 134-136.

Bak, Meredith A. Review of *The Children's Table: Childhood Studies and the Humanities*, edited by Anna Mae Duane. *American Studies Journal* 53.3 (2014): 90-91.
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_studies/v053/53.3.bak.html

Bak, Meredith A. Review of *Designing the Creative Child: Playthings and Places in Midcentury America*, by Amy Ogata. *The Lion and the Unicorn* 38.1 (January 2014): 136-139.
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/lion_and_the_unicorn/v038/38.1.bak.html

Bak, Meredith A. Review of *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights*, by Robin Bernstein. *Journal of Popular Culture* 45.4 (August 2012): 913-915. DOI: 10.1111/j.1540-5931.2012.00964_5.x

Bak, Meredith A. Review of *Suspended Animation: Children's Picture Books and the Fairy Tale of Modernity*, by Nathalie op de Beeck. *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 5.2 (Spring 2012): 328-330.
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_the_history_of_childhood_and_youth/v005/5.2.bak.html

Bak, Meredith A. Review of *Cinema Beyond Film: Media Epistemology in the Modern Era*, edited by François Albera and Maria Tortajada. *Screening the Past*, Issue 32.
<http://www.screeningthepast.com/2011/10/cinema-beyond-film-media-epistemology-in-the-modern-era/>

Invited Talks

“Historicizing High-Tech Toys: Motives and Methods,” *Playtrack Bootcamp on Toys, Technology, and the Future of Play*. Aarhus University Interacting Minds Centre, Aarhus, Denmark, September 2019.

“Playing with History: Technology, Toys, and the Material Turn,” *Aarhus University Department of History and Classics*, Aarhus, Denmark, April 2019.

“The Humpty Dumpty Circus: Toward an Expanded Conception of Toy Cinema and Cinema Toys,” *University of Pennsylvania Cinema Studies Colloquium*, November 2018.

“It’s Alive! Technologies of Animation in Contemporary Toys,” Invited talk at *Beloved Consumers, Fraught Cyphers: Young People, Material Culture, and Media History Faculty Research Colloquium*, University of Pittsburgh, September 2016.

Invited panelist, “Shoot, View, Play: A Study of the GameBoy Camera,” Rutgers University-Camden R-CADE Symposium, Digital Studies Center, April 2015.

“The Pre-Histories of Scanimation,” invited talk in the Department of Media and Screen Studies, Northeastern University, November 2012.

Select Conference Presentations

“Perception and Playthings: Children’s Optical Play at Home,” *North American Victorian Studies Association (NAVSA) Conference*, Columbus, OH, Oct 2019.

“Animating Play: Early Cinema, Toy History, and Schoenhut’s Humpty Dumpty Circus,” *Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS) Conference*, Seattle, WA, Mar 2019.

“GoldieBlox Goes to the Movies: Revisionist Narratives of Media History and STEM Futurity,” *International Girls’ Studies Association Conference*, University of Notre Dame, Feb-Mar 2019.

“Learning to Play: Smart Toys, Data-Driven Friendships, and Technologies of Animation,” *Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts Conference*, Toronto, November 2018.

“She ‘Cries Real Tears’! Weeping and Wetting Technologies in Doll Play,” *Children’s Literature Association Conference*, San Antonio, TX, June 2018.

“Enlivening Play: Children’s Creative Play in the Metaleptic Imagination,” *Playing with Childhood in the Twenty-First Century Conference*, University of Pittsburgh Gender and Sexuality Studies Program, April 2018.

“Tiny Trojan Horses: Privacy, Play, and Contemporary Connected Childhood,” *Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference*, Toronto, March 2018.

“Modular Creativity and Contemporary Children’s Play,” *Conceptualizing Children and Youth Conference*, Brock University, Ontario, October 2017.

“From Mad Scientist to STEM Professional: 50 Years of Mattel’s Thingmaker,” *Society for the History of Children and Youth Conference*, Rutgers-Camden, June 2017.

“From Pre-Cinema to STEM Education: Optical Toys and their Pedagogical Contexts,” *Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference*, Chicago, March 2017.

“Operation Underground Railroad and the Problem of Historical Analogy,” *Diverse Unfreedoms Conference*, Rutgers-Camden, March 2017.

“Cultivating Creativity: Technology, Toys, and Children’s Creative Work in the Twenty-first Century,” *Society for Literature, Science and the Arts Conference*, Atlanta, GA, November 2016.

“Anxiety, Subjectivity, and the Voice of the Talking Doll,” *Console-ing Passions Conference*, University of Notre Dame, June 2016.

“Color Alive! Technology and Animation in the Contemporary Children's Playscape,” *Children’s Literature Association Conference*, Columbus, June 2016.

“Magic, Materiality, and Maternal Rage: Challenging a Feminist Interpretation of *The Babadook*,” *Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference*, Atlanta, March-April 2016.

“Moving Picture Books: Multimedia for Children, 1850-1900,” *Center for Historic American Visual Culture (CHAViC) Conference*, Worcester, MA, November 2015.

“A Panacea for Pain: Band-Aid’s Historical Construction of Mother-Child Relationships,” *Society for the History of Childhood and Youth Conference*, Vancouver, June 2015.

“Disney Infinity: Playing and Re-playing Across the Physical/digital Divide,” *Extending Play Conference*, Rutgers University, April 2015.

“Building Blocks of the Imagination: Children, Creativity, and the Limits of Disney Infinity,” *Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference*, Montreal, March 2015.

“Toying with Vision: The Gendered Dimensions of Victorian Visual Amusements,” *Fun with Dick and Jane: Gender and Childhood Conference*, Notre Dame, December 2014.

“Redeeming Distraction: Fragmentation, Adhesion, and BAND-AID’s® Magic Vision,” *Pratt Upload Conference*, NYC, October 2014.

“Animate Toys as Engines of Imagination,” *European Network for Cinema Studies Conference*, Milan, Italy, June 2014.

“The Pervasive Zoetrope: From Model to Medium and Back Again,” *Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference*, Seattle, WA, March 2014.

“The Stroboscopic Zoetrope and an Alternate Future of 3D Animation,” *The Magic of Special Effects: Cinema-Technology-Reception*, Montreal, November 2013.

“Engaging Childhood: Interactivity and the Augmented Reality Toy,” *Extending Play Conference*, Rutgers University, April 2013.

“Movable Toy Books and the Cultivation of Children’s Vision at the Dawn of Cinema,” *Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference*, Chicago, IL, March 2013.

“Optimal Vantage Points: Tangibility and Standardizing Perspective in Mediated Views of State and National Parks,” *Berkeley Conference on Silent Cinema*, Berkeley, CA, February 2013.

Fellowships, Grants, and Honors

Digital Studies Fellow, Rutgers-Camden, 2015-16

Summer Scholar, NEH Institute in 19th-Century Material Culture, Bard Graduate Center, 2015

Mellon Regional Faculty Fellowship, Penn Humanities Forum, 2014-15

Franklin & Marshall College Office of Grants Faculty Research Grant, 2013-14

Domitor Student Essay Prize, 2012

UCSB Dean’s Advancement Fellowship, 2012

Jay and Deborah Last Fellowship, American Antiquarian Society, 2010

Albert and Elaine Borchard Foundation European Studies Fellowship, 2010

Friends of the Princeton Library Research Grant, 2010

UCSB Dean’s Fellowship, 2009-2010 Academic year

UCSB Academic Merit Fellowship, 2007-2008 Academic year

NYU Academic Merit Fellowship, September 2005-December 2005

BYU Office of Research and Creative Activities Grants, June 2003 and February 2004

Courses Taught

Rutgers University-Camden

50:163:350 - Kids’ Media Cultures

50:163:351 - Toy Design

50:163:480 - Senior Seminar in Childhood Studies

56:163:480 - Graduate Seminar: Visual and Material Cultures of Childhood

56:163:500 - Graduate Seminar: Proseminar I in Childhood Studies

56:163:642 - Graduate Seminar: Children and Cinema

Franklin and Marshall College

ART/TDF 165 - Introduction to Film and Media Studies

TDF 273 - Documentary History and Theory

TDF/ENV 275 - Imag(in)ing Nature
TDF/WGS/AMST 278: Children's Media
TDF 375 -Animation History, Theory, Practice

Brown University

AMST/GNSS 1960 - Media and Modern Childhood

University of California, Santa Barbara

FAMST 189 MC - Media and Childhood

FAMST 189 MC - Film and Museum Culture

WRT 2 - Introduction to Composition

Teaching Assistant for: History of Silent Film; Advanced Film Analysis; Introduction to Film

Service and Professional Affiliations

Service at Rutgers University- Camden

2017-ongoing: Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Childhood Studies

2016-ongoing: Gen Ed Subcommittee - US and the World

2016-ongoing: TA/GA Grievance Committee

2015-ongoing: Teacher Prep Program Advisory Board

Service to the Field

2019: Book Proposal reviewer for Palgrave

2015-ongoing: Book reviews editor, H-Childhood

2017: Book Manuscript Endorsement, *Childhood by Design: Toys and the Material Culture of Childhood, 1700-Present*, for Bloomsbury

2017-ongoing: Journal peer reviewer: *Jeunesse*

2017-ongoing: Journal peer reviewer: *Girlhood Studies*

2015-ongoing: Book Reviews Editor, H-Childhood

2015: Book Proposal reviewer for Routledge

2015-ongoing: Journal peer reviewer: *Childhood*

2015-ongoing: Journal peer reviewer: *Visual Communication Quarterly*

2015-ongoing: Book Manuscript Reviewer for Bloomsbury

2014: Book Manuscript Endorsement, *The Child in Post-Apocalyptic Cinema*, for Rowman & Littlefield and Lexington Books