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### **Speculating on Everyday Life: The Cultural Economy of the Quotidian**

‘it is now possible to use just about anything as a platform for more speculative financial activity — up to and including the kitchen sink ...’

Andrew Leyshon and Nigel Thrift, *The Capitalization of Almost Everything*

The goal of the session is to bring together cultural studies scholars who are interested in the critical perspectives that cultural economy provides for thinking about how everyday life is increasingly framed as a space of economic action and investment. A wide range of cultural-economic forms — home ownership and mortgages, credit cards, car loans, pension plans and superannuation — are now firmly embedded in global financial networks through processes of securitization. However, ordinary lifestyle practices are also often viewed in terms of the future returns they will yield to the individual, with everyday consumption tied to the accumulation of capital (cultural, financial, economic, social and so on) that can then be leveraged to provide further dividends. This not only makes everyday life and material consumption more and more ‘aspirational’, but also positions the individual as an investor in a life project that requires the constant pursuit of opportunities and the negotiation of risks in order to yield rewards. While this logic of economic action and investment is sometimes made explicit (for example, in financial literacy literature), it is more often than not presented in a range of popular culture formats (lifestyle television; home renovations and makeovers etc.) as ‘just living’. It is a cultural/political rationality that is of interest here for the ways in which it disrupts a range of binaries — consumption/production; everyday life/markets; culture/economy — that continue to stubbornly inform much cultural research and analysis.