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MeCCSA newsletter goes digital

Jane Arthurs
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We've updated the newsletter to a digital magazine format.

Distribution via email means you can now decide whether you want to print a copy to read or simply look at it online. MeCCSA members will be circulated in this way while anyone else can read it on the website at www.meccsa.org.uk. If you have any comments on the new design we'd be pleased to hear from you – just email me at the address above.

The newsletter aims to keep the MeCCSA membership informed about all the activities we support. Reports from the Postgraduate, Women's and Race Networks and the newly constituted Practice Section show just how many people have been involved this year in organising events

around the country. And of course there's the annual conference, with a wry account from Karen Ross on the Coventry event and a call for papers for next year at Cardiff University. There's still time to submit a proposal up till 30 September.

Representing the interests of our members also means engaging with emerging issues that affect us all. In this edition we have commentaries on developments at the HEA for Art, Media and Design, the AHRC, and the BFI while the Practice Section is asking for feedback from departments involved with the Skillset Academies.

We have also included some news about upcoming conferences, and calls for papers for three new journals that are a welcome addition to the publications in the field. While lots of this kind of publicity is circulated on the JISC email list we have included a selection here from people who responded to an email request for contributions to the newsletter. We would welcome further suggestions for items in future editions of Three-D.

 www.meccsa.org.uk

reports

MeCCSA

Christine Geraghty
Chair of MeCCSA



For the last two or three years, the merger with AMPE has been at the top of my agenda – trying

to sort out arrangements which will suit the different aspirations of two organisations is never easy even when, as was the case here, there is a lot of good will. Those of you who came to the well-attended AGM at Coventry will know that in January we jumped over the final hurdles into the new organisation: the transitional Executive Committee was replaced by the first elected Executive of the new organisation and the name was agreed. So now the merger is completed and we are getting used to our new systems and relationships. The Executive Committee elected me as Chair, John Ellis as Vice Chair, Peter Golding as Secretary and Gillian Doyle as Treasurer

Getting all the organisational details sorted out has certainly been important in putting us in a position to respond to the many challenges that face the sector. Of these the most striking has been the events at the BFI which seem to indicate that the Institute is withdrawing from some



It can only be an advantage to have united organisation to pool knowledge and share the representative work which is the essential task of a subject organisation



of its key activities in publishing and education and the immediate future of the library is in question. We have been trying to represent our concerns about this and maintain a dialogue with the BFI though this has proved difficult.

In addition to this, there have been other issues raised by the AHRC which has been reviewing its arrangements for the allocation of postgraduate funding and is currently conducting a review of how it administers its research programmes. The basic trends seems to be to channel funding into well-established research department and it was interesting that, according to the AHRC, it was mainly the subject organisations which raised concerns about the way in which changes in postgraduate arrangements could favour large, well-established departments at the expense of newer subjects like ours. This is an area of great importance and we would welcome information from you about how these changes are being implemented on the ground. In addition, MeCCSA is representing the subject area in further discussions about benchmarking, sits on the Reference Group for the Higher Education Authority – Art, Design, Media and we continue to monitor Skillset's activities. In all of this, it can only be an advantage to have united organisation to pool knowledge and share the representative work which is the essential task of a subject organisation.

One great achievement of the merged organisation is the growing strength of the Practice Sections with Charlotte Crofts as Convenor and the various networks. You will read about their activity elsewhere but it is worth bearing in mind that all the events are organised by volunteers and spring from the willingness of people to get involved and do the work. Given the demands placed on academics, we are very grateful that MeCCSA members are still willing to commit time and enthusiasm to maintaining and supporting our activities.

Race Network

Ash Sharma
Race Network chair
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Join the Race Network

The MeCCSA race network is committed to supporting the development of an intellectually vibrant multi-racial Higher Education environment in Media, Communications and Cultural Studies. If you are interested in joining this collective network of diverse lecturers, researchers and practitioners go to the dedicated website www.culturereights.co.uk for further details. You are able to register on the network via the website.

Darkmatter: new independent online journal

Culture Rights is pleased to support the development of Darkmatter – a new independent online journal at www.darkmatter101.org, committed to incisive postcolonial critique. Contact the editors editors@darkmatter101.org if you are interested in contributing to this innovative journal project.

Screening Islam

The network will be holding a special symposium later this year at the University of East London on Islam and contemporary media culture. Further details to be posted on the Culture Rights website.

MeCCSA conference 2008 strand:

Embodying knowledges: race, gender and practice

In conjunction with the MeCCSA Practice section the Race network is developing a themed strand and linked panels at the MeCCSA conference 2008 entitled Embodying Knowledges: race, gender and practice. If you are interested in presenting a paper and/or showing your practice work contact ash sharma (a.sharma@uel.ac.uk) for further details. Also see conference call for papers for general information.

"Only whites need apply?"

The Race network is interesting in finding out about the current 'Black and Minority Ethnic' staff profiles of UK Media, Communications and Cultural Studies departments. Contact the network if you would like to participate or would like further information about this proposed research.

Get involved!

If you have any ideas for events of research projects contact the Race Network to discuss your plans.



www.culturereights.co.uk

Postgraduate Network

Kaitlynn Mendes

Postgraduate Network chair



The MeCCSA post-graduate network has had an extremely busy and successful year. With the help of seven post-graduate students, one early-career researcher, and a representative from both MeCCSA and ADM-HEA, we worked together to fulfil the network's goals, which is to "bring together postgraduate students in media, communication and cultural studies from different intellectual traditions and cultural backgrounds in order to form research, and teaching and learning networks and also ensure peer support."

The executive committee is pleased with the three events organized – a record number for the network. These events included two symposia, and a post-graduate conference. The first symposium, 'Sharing Experience: Audiences in Media, Communication and Cultural Studies,' was held in the University of Wales, Aberystwyth in April and brought together students interested in audience or reception studies.

This event gave students a chance to present their work, as well as take part in two workshops, one examining research methodology and the other issues surrounding teaching audience or reception studies to undergraduate students. Twenty-four delegates from around the UK attended this event, and the general feedback was excellent.

The second symposium, "Minding the Gap: Reflections on Media Practice and Theory," was held at the Reuters Institute, Oxford University in May. This event attempted to explore the unmistakable gap between media theory and mass media practice through three thematic workshops. Over fifty people attended from European as well as British institutions. The general feedback has been extremely positive, and we are working with some new executive committee members who are planning on continuing with this idea with a similar symposium for next year titled: "Mending the Gap," at SOAS, which builds from the Oxford event.

Our final event for the 2006–2007 academic year was the Fourth Annual Post-Graduate Conference held at the University of Western England,

Bristol in July. This conference was the largest so far, with 78 abstracts, and several non-presenting participants. This interdisciplinary conference featured papers on topics relevant to both theory and practice-based research within the field. In addition to providing post-graduate students an opportunity to present their work and network with other students, the conference hosted a range of plenary speakers and workshops that addressed PhD experiences, finding employment, applying for bid funding, and issues surrounding teaching.

For many students, this annual conference provides their first opportunity to present their work to their peers. The main benefit of doing so at the MeCCSA post-graduate conference is the supportive environment provided, where students can gain constructive criticism as well. Informal feedback from this conference was once again extremely positive, and many people said they would return next year, or would recommend the conference to peers.

Next year's annual conference will be held at the University of Sussex, and organizers have already begun to plan it. In addition to next year's conference, and the "Mending the Gap" symposium, we are working

on organizing a study day titled "Cultural Borrowings: Appropriation, Reworking and Transformation" at the University of Nottingham. We look forward to organizing these events with some current executive members, as well as look forward to working together with our new recruits.

Finally, many thanks to the entire executive committee, who all worked hard in different roles to ensure all of these events ran smoothly. We would also like to thank Salvo Scifo, Helen Thornam and Kerstin Leder, who are leaving the committee as they enter their final stages of their PhD, and as they begin their academic careers.

“For many students, this annual conference provides their first opportunity to present their work to their peers”

www.meccsa.org.uk/pgn

Practice Section

Charlotte Crofts

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In the spirit of engaging with new media, the MeCCSA Practice Section has set up a group on Facebook through which we can communicate, post photos and videos, share work and discuss issues relating to Practice.

myspace.com/meccsapractice

The Practice Section is experimenting with using MySpace to develop an online community and method for communication and

dissemination of practice events and issues. Please sign up and become a friend, or just visit the site to see blogs on diverse issues from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills and the Leitch report, to Wonderlandaward.com, a peer-review film website that is seeking academic peer reviewers to assess submissions. After a brief glitch where I published the wrong address on the meccsa.org/practice website (I had typed myspace.co.uk instead of .com which takes you to a sexy website – apologies to anyone who was led astray), the MySpace site is up and running and awaiting you to join as friends, post comments, and get the online

practice community going.

Practice at MeCCSA 2008 Annual Conference

As Practice Section Chair I have met with the organisers of the next MeCCSA conference at Cardiff to discuss plans to ensure that practice is well represented at the conference – but this can only happen if practice people actually submit practice presentations, so please spread the word and encourage practice colleagues to put their work forward this year.

Cardiff have agreed to provide a screening space where any work that is being presented can also be screened in full in a

programme that runs throughout the conference. We have agreed on a mixed strategy of both practice-specific panels and weaving practice within theme/topic based panels (rather than mono-disciplinary ones). I have been liaising with the Race Network to develop a series of panel sessions on the theme of Embodying Knowledges, which will also be of interest to practitioners. In addition I have been talking to the Postgraduate Network to develop a practice strand aimed specifically at Postgrad and Early Career researchers.

I have also been working with the Practice Section to develop a panel on digital content and its

implications for practice research, pedagogy and professional practice entitled "The (Mal)Content Generation", developed with Sarah Jeans and Laura Simms. The internet and convergent digital technologies have had huge implications across a range of media practices, including citizen journalism and "vanity publishing" sites such as lulu.com; internet film distribution (from Blair Witch to YouTube.com); mobile phone distribution (blip.tv); peer-to-peer networking (MySpace.com, FaceBook.com) and photo-sharing (Flickr.com); music distribution (iTunes.com); digital radio; video and podcasting; interactive digital TV and 360-degree broadcasting, not to mention gaming and the possibilities of new media. These in turn are changing the business models of media production and "threatening" traditional industry structures in print journalism, publishing, broadcasting, music and cinema distribution. The profusion of screens and contexts for consumption of various types of media is matched by the supposed democratisation of media production, in tandem with the technological means for peer-to-peer distribution and user-generated content.

As Practice researchers and



We can challenge, engage and shape the visions of future practitioners, but only if we as practitioners engage with the technology and its possibilities



teachers we are at the coalface of emerging trends in digital content, but this word "content" begs many questions: What does the term "content" imply? And what does it suggest about the "work of production" that goes in to producing specific media texts? Is the attention span of today's audiences becoming too jaded to engage with content that is more considered or crafted? What are the aesthetic/ontological implications of digital media? Is the technology dictating content? Are we dealing with anti-content? Is anything validated as content just because it

is recorded? Is "authenticity" still a useful concept?

How are we as practitioners using the demotic/democratic possibilities of these new technologies to advance our own research and/or teaching? How do these changing technologies demand us to be self-reflective about our assumptions of what is "content" in our own practice and teaching?

What are the ethics of "content"? As teachers, how do we engage the "click – shoot" generation in debates about content, philosophy, social issues and responsibility? What are the issues in terms of intellectual copyright and cross-platform exploitation? What are the emerging business models? How is the industry adapting to this new digital environment? How are broadcasters reacting to the threats and opportunities presented by digital culture?

As teachers and researchers of practice, we are in the front line, engaging with these issues. We can challenge, engage and shape the visions of future practitioners, but only if we as practitioners engage with the technology and its possibilities.

Skillset

The Practice Section is currently collating information from its members on Skillset interventions in University level education. We recently mailed a questionnaire to the MeCCSA membership, but we haven't heard from all 27 institutions who applied. If your institution hasn't responded and has been involved in an inspection for a Screen or Film Academy then please contact Charlotte Crofts charlotte.crofts@uwe.ac.uk with the date and result of your inspection, and any comments, plus the name, address and email of the appropriate contact.

The feedback so far seems to be that there are reservations about Skillset's emphasis on vocational training, as critical theory does not seem to be part of the agenda, although 'soft skills' are highlighted in the Skillset New Entrants Training Skills Strategy. There has been some suggestion that the inspections are over rigorous with an emphasis on what the submitting institutions can offer. However, overall there was also an acknowledgement of the benefits of attaining Skillset Screen Academy status given the climate of fierce competition for students.



www.meccsa.org.uk/practice

Women's Media Studies Network

Heather Nunn

WMSN chair, h.nunn@roehampton.ac.uk

The Women's Media Studies Network has been busy since last we contributed to the newsletter. There continues to be a steady expression of interest from colleagues keen to host a WMSN event. Academics, practitioners and students in Media and Cultural Studies and related areas have used the space that the Network provides to exchange ideas and importantly to network with colleagues. Events held over the last eighteen months have tapped into a range of contemporary debates about theory, practice, pedagogy and participation as a female academic in contemporary university life.

Events

In March 2006 – a seminar was held to celebrate International Women's Day at De Montfort University organised by Margaret Montgomerie. Titled 'Just Joking? Positioning Humour in Contemporary Life' it addressed the relationship between gender, performance and comedy. The event led with Shazia Mirza, an award winning stand up comedian, who talked about how she interacts with and negotiates different audience groups and their expectations of her as a female comedian. Becky Findlay, (De Montfort) responded to Mirza by working through different academic approaches to analysing contemporary stand up comedy. In the panel discussion, Kim Akass (London Metropolitan)

and Janet McCabe (Manchester Metropolitan) spoke on 'Samantha Jones as Post-Feminist Clown: Humorous Performance, Post-Feminism, Sex and the City'. Deborah Chambers (Newcastle) discussed 'Comedies of Sexual Morality and Female Singlehood' in British and American TV comedy and Sharon Lockyer (De Montfort) spoke on 'The Ethics and Aesthetics of "Having a Laugh"'. The June 2006 network seminar, 'Teen TV: Audience, Industry, Identity', was organised by Dee Amy-Chinn and Michele Paule, and was held at Oxford Brookes University. The event attracted women from institutions as far apart as Lancaster and Brighton and included a number of people who had not previously attended a WMSN event – so the chance

was taken to promote the Network and encourage new colleagues to become involved.

Sue Turnbull (La Trobe, Melbourne) opened with her discussion of the parallels between the contemporary teen drama and the 1950s-early 1960s teen show. She drew fascinating parallels between *The OC*, *Rebel Without a Cause* and the late 1950s-early 1960s teen show *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*. Rebecca Feasey (Bath Spa) spoke on the adult appeal of the long-running series *Charmed*. Stepping back to consider the cultural context of the series she related this appeal to the emerging phenomenon of the 'quarter-life crisis'. Milly Williamson (Leicester) brought this exploration of teen TV up-to-date by analysing modes of femininity

and fandom in contemporary teen TV. She proposed that young women characters are now driven by a sense of duty and sacrifice rather than a straightforward desire to have fun. In the final paper of the day Michele Paule (Oxford Brookes) looked at the 'super slacker girls' from shows such as *Dead Like Me*, *Wonderfalls* and *Joan of Arcadia*.

In December 2006 a seminar on 'Women, Sex and Media' was held at Sheffield Hallam University to explore some of the ways in which women's sexuality is produced, represented and consumed in the media. The event was organised by Feona Attwood and Rosalind Brunt and included talks on women's rights, charitable campaigns and sex trafficking; consumer research on women and soft-core pornography and third wave feminism. The event was very well attended with around 40 participants and new participants included members of women's rights campaign groups.

Jane Arthurs (UWE) gave a paper developing her earlier research on sexual portrayal in the digital era *Television and Sexuality: Regulation and the Politics of Taste* (2004). Her current research investigates the media strategies used in global charitable campaigns against sex trafficking, such as UNICEF or MTV's Exit Campaign, and the challenging aesthetic and ethical issues these raise. Clarissa Smith (Sunderland) drew upon research for her new book *One for the Girls! The Production and Readership of Pornography for Women* (2007) to discuss 'Emotional Vibrations and Physical Sensations: Women Reading Porn Fictions'. Smith was keen to debunk the commonplace that women have little taste for pornography. Drawing on readers' responses to pornographic stories and images aimed at women she explored the way that pornography is a social product subject to a range of institutional practices and open to diverse styles of representation and consumption. Her paper opened up a provocative discussion about the relevance of established feminist theories about transgression, ideology, consumption and the value of

empirical research.

Rebecca Munford, (Exeter) has researched and published on 'Third Wave Feminism' and 'Post-feminism'. She tapped into her research to open out current debates about the new types of empowerment offered to women via contemporary feminist and post-feminist theory and popular culture. Her talk, ' "If it feels good, screw it": Girlie Feminism, the Sex Wars and Raunch Culture' led to pointed discussion on contemporary gender, generation, girl power, sexual equality and empowerment in relation to the promise of freedom to be sexually provocative or liberated offered by some brands of popular culture and current theory.

In May 2007, Joanne Garde-Hansen and colleagues at University of Gloucestershire explored experiences of an all-life approach to being a successful woman academic in media studies in their event aptly titled 'Desperate Researchers'. Discussion for the day focused upon sustaining research and balancing this with other work, life and institutional responsibilities. Speakers included academics with wide experience of negotiating the (frequently conflicting) demands of the range of duties from research and teaching to managerial and administrative responsibilities in our contemporary pressured academic environment. Karen Ross, (Coventry) addressed the experience common to many female academics as she spoke on 'Coming to academia later in life'. This was followed by Jane Arthurs, who offered some suggestions for 'Balancing Teaching and Research'. Finally, Jenny Owen, (London South Bank) continued the theme of career progression by exploring the challenge of 'Sustaining a Research Profile'. The event concluded with an open debate on 'Balancing Life, Work, Research and the Institution' and importantly, the day allowed ample space for informal networking with colleagues from a range of institutions.

'Women and Pornography', held at University of Sunderland in June 2007, was organised by Feona Attwood and Clarissa

Smith with colleagues from the Centre for Research in Media and Cultural Studies at the University of Sunderland. It tapped into current wide-spread debates about pornography and explored women's production and consumption of porn in film and on the net. Attwood, who has published widely on sex and the media spoke about her current work on online pornography and women's use of online sex sites. She explored alternative porn that aims to be radical either in terms of counterculture, subculture, queer representation or sexual politics. This theme

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There continues to be a steady expression of interest from colleagues keen to host a WMSN event

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was developed by Katrien Jacobs, who is an Assistant Professor at City University of Hong Kong. She has published widely on Internet pornography, sexuality, art and censorship. Since 2005 she has organized the netporn conferences at the Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam. She focused on arousal studies and the concepts of gender morphing.

Clarissa Smith talked about her recent research based on interviews with women about their enjoyment of porn films and its significance in their lives. This was followed by Anna Span, Britain's first female porn director and a recent winner of a Feminist Porn Award in Toronto. Span has run her own production company since 1998, Easy on the Eye Productions, which also releases work of other female porn directors. As author of *Erotic Home Videos* (2004), a manual on how to shoot one's own home porn, she was able to speak with

a wealth of experience about her work and the challenges of making female-point-of-view porn.

Consultancy and networking

The WMSN steering committee was contacted in November 2006 by Fiona Duffy, Head of Development at The Women's Library, London. The Women's Library was planning to fully catalogue a number of their valuable archival collections on women and journalism. We were asked to consult with colleagues in a range of universities and to advise on the relevance of the selected archives for research and teaching on gender and media/journalism. The subsequent positive report we produced fed into the library's bid for funding and future planning on how to make the material fully available to researchers in the field.

We have recently been in discussion with colleagues (and in some cases WMSN members) who are planning to co-organise an international conference next year to mark the 10th anniversary of the first episode of *Sex and the City*. Deborah Jermyn and Stacey Abbot (Roehampton), Kim Akass, and Janet McCabe (now both Manchester Metropolitan) and Mike Allen (Birkbeck) are holding the conference entitled 'Sex and the City: Landmark TV and its Legacy' at Birkbeck June 2008. The WMSN is really pleased to be involved in supporting what looks to be an exciting and timely event.

Currently, over the summer we are updating our webpages and the WMSN mailing list. To this end we will be sending out a global email via the MeCCSA list to ask colleagues to post brief profiles, confirm they still want to belong and to welcome new members to the list. In the meantime if colleagues wish to host a WMSN event, to contribute suggestions for future events or indeed to join the network please let us know. At present it's best to contact the WMSN Chair Heather Nunn on h.nunn@roehampton.ac.uk.



www.meccsa.org.uk/wmsn

conference reports

MeCCSA with AMPE conference

Karen Ross

2007 conference organiser

MeCCSA with AMPE Conference, Coventry, 10–12 January 2007
Reporting with hindsight and clear blue water*



The day after the conference ended, I told my fantastic local conference team that if they ever heard me volunteering to run another conference again they should slap me very hard and remind me of what we had collectively experienced over the past few days, weeks and months. Don't get me wrong, it was a great conference, with a wonderfully positive vibe, mostly satisfied delegates, some really excellent papers, good food and very happy publishers. Yes, there were a few glitches with the laptops, but frankly, what self-respecting media conference would be complete without such irritations? And yes, our gamble that there would always be a 25% no-show of paper-givers at sessions didn't always come aright, resulting in some folks feeling squeezed for time but then, why on earth do presenters think that speed-reading their latest article is an acceptable proxy for a thoughtful bullet-pointed presentation which the audience can actually follow? Hey, chum, give me your paper to read in my own time and I'll do so in comfort with a macchiato at my elbow and highlighter pen in hand. And yes, Coventry isn't fantastically well-served with bijou eateries but there was plenty of tourist info on the conference website and a few intrepid souls did find the rather gorgeous Lebanese restaurant downtown. And most of the delegates enjoyed a delightful networking supper at the Herbert art gallery café, albeit amid a few complaints of tired legs and a

slightly over-zealous local boy band doing musical accompaniment. Food is important at conferences, we all know that – yeah, I heard a few good papers but boy, was the spinach and feta panini totally divine – and for conference centre cuisine, the food was actually rather good, especially the fruit-filled chocolate basket mouthfuls at lunch. But I did have to laugh at one delegate's complaint that there wasn't enough to eat at the opening reception, which was free! There really is no pleasing some people nor, apparently, an understanding of what to expect at an early evening reception of drinks and nibbles, scheduled to take place before delegates then sally forth to find their own dining pleasure. Admittedly, there was a bit of a mini-disaster involving the reception, with mixed messages from catering resulting in people turning up in one place and food and drink in another, but this was eventually resolved in less than 15 minutes, and a good-natured crocodile of delegates massed across the road from one part of the campus to another, but like, chill, man, the wine still flowed generously.

For those of you who like to know such things, here are some vital statistics about the conference. Over the three days, we had a total of 171 delegates, 130 faculty and 41 students. We had a relatively low take-up of the three-day registration option (73 faculty and 39 students), with the other 71 delegates being mostly bunched around Thursday 11, the only full-day of the conference. Eight delegates presented posters, most of whom were students. A total of 8 publishers attended (Blackwell, Intellect, T+F, OpUP, Sage, Edinburgh UP, Hodder Arnold and Berg). It is perhaps worth saying something about the most frequent complaint which we received in

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Why on earth do presenters think that speed-reading their latest article is an acceptable proxy for a thoughtful bullet-pointed presentation which the audience can actually follow? Hey, chum, give me your paper to read in my own time and I'll do so in comfort with a macchiato at my elbow and highlighter pen in hand

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feedback, which was about 'the 10-minute rule' (too many papers per session), and suggestions flowing from this included a more rigorous selection procedure and/or more parallel sessions. However, out of the 25 competitive sessions which were scheduled over the three days, the breakdown of sessions by number of papers presented was:

- 6 panels with 6 papers (24%)
- 6 panels with 5 papers (24%)
- 8 panels with 4 papers (32%)
- 5 panels with 3 papers (20%)

It's a hard call to make, between accepting fewer papers (and therefore potentially reducing the number of delegates as most folks need to present in order to apply for conference support to attend), scheduling more sessions (which then provokes complaints about splitting the audience by having too many parallel streams) and having lots of presenters per panel. But no one ever gets this right for everyone, so conference organisers must accept this and do what seems most appropriate for their particular set of circumstances. One extremely positive aspect of the Coventry conference was the involvement of a good number of

postgraduate delegates, attracted in no small part because of the reduced fee. With their attendance in mind, we organised a 'welcome' event for them, hosted by a group of Coventry's own students which took place immediately before the opening reception, and it would be good to see similar kinds of initiatives being scheduled by future conference teams.

Despite my opening remark, organising the MeCCSA conference is a rewarding experience, not least because for me, it meant that I got to spend time with some of my own research students where we developed a different kind of relationship to the one we usually enjoy as student-supervisor. I also got to put names to faces of a few people whom I had only 'met' on email or as writers of work I've read and appreciated. And of course, I earned lots of brownie points with the Dean which is always a good thing. Good luck Team Cardiff.

* Karen Ross wrote this while on leave in New Zealand from a loft apartment in downtown Wellington with a background of blue sky and cold sun. She took up a new post at the University of Liverpool on 1 July.



www.meccsa.org.uk/conference

Postgraduate Network Conference

Iain Smith

4th Annual MeCCSA Postgraduate Network Conference,
Thursday 12 – Friday 13 July



At a time when the postgraduate process is becoming increasingly professionalised – with pressure to teach undergraduate courses, to publish articles in respected journals, to attend and organise conferences, and write a thesis – it is a relief to know that events such as the MeCCSA Postgraduate Network (PGN) Conference are available to help postgraduates attain the necessary skills to enter the academic workplace.

Building on previous annual events in Ulster, Cardiff and Birmingham, this year's PGN conference was held at the University of West of England in Bristol. The two-day event featured 68 papers on topics as diverse as 'The US Black Power movement in documentary film', 'Female sexual desire in contemporary Spanish cinema', and 'The reception of television historical dramas in China'. Illustrating the diversity of work currently being undertaken across the field of media and cultural studies, the conference pointed to a flourishing discipline that is coming to terms with the impact of new media technologies, geo-political disputes, and trans-media mergers on an increasingly globalised media landscape.

While the nature of a conference with four parallel sessions running at any one time meant that each delegate's conference experience was likely to diverge greatly, this particular delegate found the student panels on 'Fan Culture and Online Audiences' and 'Online Citizens and Democracy' to be particularly valuable – with Cath Davies' insightful discussion of representations of death and Einar Thorsen's rigorous research on online civic engagement deserving

special mention.

Furthermore, while one of the aims of the PGN conference is to offer the opportunity for new PhD students to deliver their first conference papers in a mutually supportive environment, this thankfully did not mean that students simply offered each other unquestioning praise. Indeed, some of the most useful sessions were those in which methodologies were challenged and conclusions questioned. With criticism generally tending towards the constructive – "perhaps you could read such-and-such in order to broaden the relevance of your case study?" – there was a refreshing sense that most delegates were delighted to help and support their colleagues.

Of course, with the job market becoming increasingly fierce, one shadow which hangs over these events is the prospect of graduate students competing with their peers for jobs in a few years' time. Thankfully, one of the real strengths of the PGN conferences are the workshop sessions which are specially designed to help postgraduate students develop those skills which will prove invaluable on the job market. This year these ranged from plenary talks on publishing and finding employment, to workshop sessions on teaching and obtaining funding. One of the most useful of these sessions was the keynote on 'The PhD Experience and Finding Employment' in which Dr Lincoln Geraghty and Dr Farida Vis offered their advice on that worrisome question – what next? Drawing on their own experiences, they discussed obtaining book contracts, navigating the job market, and developing future research projects. These were especially helpful since both speakers were recent PhD graduates: in the years following graduation, Dr Geraghty gained a permanent lecturing position and a number of book contracts, similarly Dr Vis achieved a prestigious post-doctoral research post with the

Open University.

The event was rounded off with a plenary talk on the development of digital video technology from Prof Michael Chanan and a discussion of the Raundance Film Festival from founder Elliot Grove. Laying emphasis on the much neglected media practice sector, these closing sessions brought insights from the practical world of cultural production into the more theoretical world of academia. Indeed, this dialogue often resulted in clashes – the stark pragmatism of film producer Elliot Grove very much conflicting with the more idealistic vision of artistic production from Michael Chanan

– yet it seemed a fitting end to a conference which brought together academics and practitioners from across the media spectrum.

With this annual conference capping an academic year which has already seen the PGN organise the regional events 'Sharing Experience' and 'Minding the Gap', the network is very much in rude health. Far from the poor cousin of the main MeCCSA conference, this year's PGN event was the more youthful – dare I say more vibrant – nephew. These are the next generation of media studies scholars, an indication of where the discipline is heading, and where it will one day arrive.

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www.meccsa.org.uk/pgn

current issues

The Higher Education Academy: Art, Media and Design

Christine Geraghty

The Higher Education Academy was set up in May 2004 with the intention of publicising and supporting teaching, learning and assessment in Higher Education. Its job in many ways is to balance the emphasis on research generated by the RAE by enhancing the quality of learning and teaching in Higher Education. As with the RAE, the disciplines we represent are grouped in with another set of disciplines, this time Art and Design, so that the Centre we work with is called HEA – Art, Design, Media and its website can be found at adm-hea.brighton.ac.uk. My intention here is not to get into the debate about the HEA and its Centres and how far they can have an impact on what happens in HE. Instead I just want to alert you to some of the

MeCCSA activities which the HEA-ADM has supported.

Firstly, the HEA-ADM gives strong support to our Postgraduate Network. This has been an enormously successful collaboration, initiated by Annette Hill and now supported by Mark Jancovitch on the Executive. The Postgraduate Network has its own committee which runs events, a website and mailing lists. Their conferences give the opportunity to discuss issues around teaching, pedagogy and academic development and by supporting the network the HEA-ADM fulfils part of its remit to enhance the quality of learning through the on-going development of new academics.

In addition, the HEA-ADM has supported the annual MeCCSA conference. Staff from the Centre have given papers at the conference for a number of years

and in 2008 the HEA – ADM will be sponsoring a prize for the best paper on a topic concerned with teaching and learning. More generally, the centre funds research projects into aspects of teaching in our field and puts their reports up on the website. Examples of such reports include assessment practice, the use of new technology, widening participation, visual literacy and research and the development of students' employability and entrepreneurial skills. One example of this kind of work was support for the project on assessment of group work conducted at Bournemouth University. The HEA-ADM also tries to encourage the student voice through for example its annual essay competition

Linking up with Art and Design has its complications. Because of it, there has been a temptation

to think that the main issues in teaching and learning involve practice courses and innovative work is often deemed to be practice-related. However, under the chairing of Martin Lister, the Media and Communications Reference Group has tried to bear in mind the very varied nature of the course and programmes taught in our field and to refuse the theory/practice division which can be so unhelpful.

If you haven't heard of the HEA-ADM up until now, you might come across it in the future since the HEA is about to undertake a review of the teaching of Media and Communications. We are assured that this review is not a result of official concern about the quality of teaching in our subject areas. MeCCSA has been asked to nominate to the review team and Sue Thornham and I will be participating in it.

AHRC changes postgraduate funding scheme

Mark Jankovich

The AHRC has been holding meetings around the UK about their new scheme for allocating postgraduate studentships, a scheme that will apply to both MA and PhD students. Although these meetings were presented as part of a consultation, it was clear at the event that I attended that the scheme would be taking place regardless of the outcome and that the function of the meeting was to

justify the decision; to put minds at rest; and to allow people to identify specific problems.

As a result, the day started with an explanation of the context for these changes, most of which was rather general information about how the AHRC is changing, particularly to respond to government pressure to fall in line with other research councils and ensure that the University sector is producing world-class research that has 'value'.

However, it was clear that the

central motivation for the change was the AHRC's plan to "increase the proportion of money that it spends on research". In other words, it is not necessarily about spending more money on research but rather about cutting administrative costs at the council, which inevitably means shifting some of these costs onto the HEIs.

Consequently, the AHRC set up a Doctoral Working Group to review the decision making process for allocating research awards, a review that was guided

by two principles. First, the AHRC feels that the current system is unsustainable as it is simply too costly in administrative terms and, second, the committee was charged with looking how other councils operate, presumably as part of the general policy of harmonization between councils.

It has therefore been decided that, in future, there will be two schemes. The first will allocate block grants of funding for postgraduate students to specific HEIs for them to dispense to

students. In other words, a select group of HEIs would apply for a number of a specific number of awards on a five-year basis. Second, there will remain an open competition, but this will a) only account for about 20% of awards in most cases, and b) will only be open to those HEIs that have not been awarded a block grant, even if they were unsuccessful in receiving awards in a particular subject area.

In other words, it was pointed out that at present about 40 HEIs receive 82% of awards and that 67 institutions only receive between one and nine studentships a year. These 40 will therefore be invited to apply for the block grants, while the others will only be eligible for the open competition. Furthermore, not all those who apply for a block grant will be successful or receive all of the studentships for which they apply. In other words, the competition will be competitive and the criteria for assessment are far from clear, although they will definitely include issues such as completion rates.

To be clear, individual departments would not be bidding for the block grants, but rather these bids would be put in by the HEI, although it would need to specify the specific subjects areas in which awards were sought. For example, an institution might bid for 3 studentships in English, 4 in History and 2 in Media.

Of course, this proves particularly problematic for subjects that are not strongest in the elite 40 HEIs. Art and Design, for example is largely taught in small art schools, which would not be large enough to be eligible for the block grants. But this is also one of the biggest subjects in terms of research. In such cases, the formula might be slightly different so that 80% of the awards do not go to the small number of HEIs that teach art and design leaving only 20% for all the small art colleges. In such a case, it was claimed, the formula might be, say, 50-50.

The Timetable for this process will therefore be as follows:

- Autumn 2007: Invitations to HEIs that are eligible for the block grants will be sent out.
- May 2008: Deadline for individual student applications

to the existing scheme for start in Autumn 2008.

- September 2008: Deadline for applications to the block grant scheme.
- Early 2009: The outcome of applications to the block grant scheme will be announced.
- May/June 2009: Open call competition will take place.
- October 2009: Students start.

The next block grant competition will then happen four years later, i.e. the block grants will cover five years, although the AHRC failed to clarify whether these block grants would therefore cover a PhD student the full three years if they start in year five of the block grant scheme.

The AHRC stressed that some collaboration between HEIs was possible so that, for example, a smaller institution that wouldn't be eligible for a block grant might team up with an institutions that was eligible. However, they stressed that these could not be marriages of convenience but would only be permitted where there was a strong intellectual justification, and it also seems unlikely that most eligible institutions would be willing to share their block grant allocation.

These proposals raise a number of issues and problems. For example, 20% is actually a fairly token amount. In most years, for example, there are between 10 and 15 PhD studentship in film studies, which would mean that 20% would only amount to 2-3 studentships nationally within the open competition to be fought over by all but 40 key institutions.

Even within institutions that do receive block grants, the internal struggles over the studentships could be very onerous. At present, the selection is kept at arms length from specific departments and institutions but devolving the selection process to them will create large amounts of work and unpleasant political tensions.

It is also difficult to see how this achieves the AHRC's aim of cutting down administration as they are proposing that students can apply to as many institutions as they choose for the open call, which would mean that the number of applications could actually skyrocket. Although the block

grants would be allocated first this would only remove about one-fifth of applicants from the open call, and if only a small number of the remaining four-fifths chose to apply for more than one HEI, the number of applications to the AHRC would actually be higher than it is already.

The AHRC is firm that it sees no reason why this system should create a two-tier system, and actually claims that as the open call will be a national competition and potentially very tough, it may acquire more kudos. However, given that the block grant studentships will be allocated before the open call, and that the HEIs that hold block grants will be a select group, there is a strong likelihood that the block grants studentships will be more prestigious and that they will actually kill off research at other institutions, so that the open call will simply wither and die.

In the USA, it is common for people to apply to do their MAs at institutions that can offer studentships, and if some HEIs have block grants and others do not, it is likely that most students will apply to the institutions that have studentship to offer. Even if

they are unsuccessful in attaining an MA studentship at one of these institutions, they may also feel that the investment in taking an MA at one of these institutions will enhance their chance of obtaining one of the block grant studentships for the PhD.

One complaint about the current system was that it was being driven by the interests of 21 year olds. This underestimates the role of mature students, and even of the AHRC in assessing their applications, but there are also serious problems with a system that recruits students in the way proposed. It is already difficult to maintain completion rates when students are undertaking projects to which they have a strong intellectual commitment but if they are simply fitting in with the terms laid down by a departmental bid, these rates are likely to get worse.

Most significantly, despite the AHRC's assurances, there are real problems about protecting research in new Universities and smaller HEIs, where certain subjects are heavily represented, and this is particularly important for our own subject area.



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calls for papers

MeCCSA 2008 Conference

After the merger of MeCCSA with AMPE (the Association of Media Practitioners in Education) last year the new organisation holds its first conference from 9-11 January 2008, hosted by the School of Journalism Media and Cultural Studies, at Cardiff University (with some locations as featured in Dr Who!)

It includes a reception in the Wales Assembly Building (the Senedd) and evening meal in the nearby Millennium Centre, both in the Bay area.

We are inviting papers, presentations of practice, posters and panels across the range of interests represented by the Association and its networks (see www.meccsa.org). Some sessions we hope will weave together 'practice' and 'research' focused

papers, and there will be separate screenings in full of material referred to in these. George Monbiot's presence signals the hope that at least one panel will explore the relation of media and cultures to environmental politics, and perhaps also to HE practices.

Confirmed plenary speakers:

- Toby Miller, University of California, Riverside
- George Monbiot, Guardian columnist and environmental activist
- Greg Philo, Glasgow University
- Annabelle Sreberny, SOAS

Other speakers who have said they intend to take part include Martin Barker, Nick Couldry, Ros Gill, Ian Hargreaves (OFCOM), Sonia

Livingstone, Angela McRobbie, Gillian Swanson, Richard Tait (BBC Trust) and Valerie Walkerdine, as well as staff from the Cardiff School.

There will be a poster competition with a prize of £100, to be judged by the MeCCSA Exec Cttee. (see writing.colostate.edu/guides/speaking/poster/pop2a.cfm for advice if you're uncertain how to present this).

The Art Design Media - Higher Education Academy Subject Centre (ADM-HEA) are also offering a £300 prize, and publication, for the best paper analysing key issues impacting on media, communications and cultural studies in higher education.

Submission details as for other papers etc below.

Abstracts of papers, presentations of practice and posters, no longer than 250 words, should be sent to meccsa2008@cardiff.ac.uk by 30 September in order for peer review to take place.

For panels, let us have a short description and rationale for the whole (200 words), abstracts for each of the papers (250 words each) and the name of the person chairing. If you're screening in full material referred to in a 'practice' presentation, make sure you send some DVD or VHS preview material (not the whole item) with the abstract.

We're aiming to produce a conference CD so will need full electronic versions of any paper (pdf format please) shortly before the conference date.

The Futures Of The News

Goldsmiths Media Research Programme: Spaces, Connections, Control Inaugural Symposium. Funded by the Leverhulme Trust. Saturday 24 November 2007, Goldsmiths, University of London

New communication technologies present several challenges to the role of the journalist in society. The functions of inquiry, observation, research, editing, and writing have had to adapt to the vast array of information available on-line, digital video footage, wire photos, amateur pictures taken with camera-enabled cell phones or digital cameras, the blogosphere, personal-public platforms that turn all users into accessible news sources such as MySpace and YouTube, as well as the speed of 24/7 cable news. The nature and processes of news have responded to this new technological mediascape in various ways.

It is claimed that the speed of reporting and deadline pressure has increased dramatically, along with an expansion in the scope of available news sources and the temptation of digital dumping with the recycling of old material into new copy resulting in a move away from in-depth analysis.

Claims are also made concerning the democratization of news with a new mode of civic journalism emerging as citizens seek to present their own accounts on-line accelerating a shift of power away from traditional voices of authority in journalism and politics. By ridding journalists of the top-down hierarchy and professional/normalised values that come from the learned routines the internet is claimed to change the institution of news. The reportorial act of data collection is dispersed, with data collection potentially taking

place at any node on the net, editorial control is diminished. The network of news is fragmented, participatory, non-hierarchical and de-centred.

These debates are concerned with the role of the news in democratic societies and raise some of the most urgent challenges we face in defining the public interest in the Information Age.

To discuss these issues and others this event brings together leading figures in the news industry with acclaimed academics, political bloggers, Ofcom and journalists.

For further details see www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/media-research-programme/index.php and follow the link.

There will be no charge for this event. Places are strictly limited.

To book a place please email g.narraway@gold.ac.uk

Ageing Femininities: Representation, Identities, Feminism

Gender and Culture Research Group forthcoming conference, University of the West of England, Bristol, Sat 6 Oct 2007
Key note speaker: Ros Jennings (University of Gloucestershire)

Confirmed speakers include:

- Sadie Wearing, Gender Institute, LSE
- Janet Hill, St Mary's University, Canada
- Suzy Gordon
- Estella Tincknell, UWE
- Diane Railton
- Paul Watson, University of Teesside
- Brent U3A Film Group, Wembley

Late proposals will be considered – deadline Monday 8 September

For further details and booking form see www.uwe.ac.uk/hlss/cms/gac/projects.shtml

new journals

Communication, Culture & Critique

Call for papers

Communication, Culture & Critique (CCC) is ICA's latest publication and the first new journal to emerge from the Association for more than a decade. CCC will provide an international forum for critical, interpretive, and qualitative research examining the role of communication and cultural criticism in today's world. The journal welcomes high quality research and analyses from diverse theoretical and methodological approaches from all fields of communication, media and cultural studies. Sites for enquiry include all kinds of text- and print-based media, as well as broadcast, still and moving images and electronic modes of communication including the internet and mobile telephony.

Communication, Culture & Critique welcomes contributions examining the role of communication from all theoretical perspectives and using all forms of inquiry. As well as 'traditional' scholarly research and theory-focused articles (approx. 7,000-8,500 words in length), we also welcome shorter research notes and commentaries (approx 1,500 words), together with scholarly reviews of cultural artefacts (eg books, films, DVDs, websites/blogs) which might be of interest to other readers. Please see below for separate CFP for the 'Comments, Crits and Notes' section.

Whilst CCC has no interest in perpetuating the unhelpful binary of quantitative/qualitative in terms of the kinds of submissions it will accept, the journal will specifically encourage scholarship which is critically informed, methodologically imaginative and careful in its exposition and argument. We believe that by providing a new outlet for critical, interpretive and qualitative work, our contributors will push the boundaries of considering the role that communication and culture play in our local and global world.

We expect to publish well-argued, rigorous and thoughtful work which

asks more questions than it answers. We aim to provide a lively forum for debate, dialogue and doubt. In the coming years, we will be inviting contributions on topical themes and encouraging interdisciplinary and cross-over work which uses innovative approaches and methods to cast new light on some of the urgent issues facing our planet. Bringing a critical lens to the social, cultural and political dimensions of our media-saturated world is a crucial task in which the academy must engage if we are to be of any real use to the societies in which we work and play. We must recognize the salience of geography on communication flow, the importance of gender on lived experience, the place of poverty in the knowledge society and the historical antecedents of contemporary events, if our work is to have any real meaning for or influence in the lives of real people in the real world. If you would like further information about contributing to the journal, please contact me by email: Karen Ross, Editor, rossk@liverpool.ac.uk.

Call for comments, crits and notes

Informed opinion, in the form of commentary, has always enlivened critical and cultural studies, whether focused on a current issue or something long debated. We are therefore seeking short commentaries and critiques to complement the longer articles to be published in CCC, so as to ensure a lively mix of content and format. These short-order pieces should be no longer than 1500 words and should take the form of an op-ed piece rather than a scholarly article. However, if your contribution includes references to published works or media texts these should be cited appropriately. We also welcome research notes on work-in-progress: these notes should be no longer than 3000 words. I look forward to receiving your comments, crits or research notes in due course. If you would like to discuss a possible

contribution to the CCN section, please email: Carolyn M Byerly, Associate Editor, Comments, Crits and Notes, cbyerly@earthlink.net.

General guidance

When to submit: Articles may be submitted to CCC for publication at any time, although we will be putting out a call for special themed issues in 2008 and subsequent years.

Copyright: By submitting an article to CCC, you are agreeing that it is not under review for any other journal, edited collection, or conference proceedings.

Preparing your manuscript

Citation style: The academic citation style used in CCC follows the most recent American Psychological Association (APA) Manual of Style, currently the 5th edition. Go to the APA site for a list of FAQs which will help - www.apastyle.org/faqs.html#12. You can also look at Blackwell's other ICA journals and follow the citation and referencing style of articles: go to Blackwell Publishing's website and then to any of the following: Human Communication Research, Communication Theory, Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication or Journal of Communication.

Manuscript submission

Submitting a manuscript to CCC can only be done via the online submission process at Manuscript Central. Before accessing the online submission site, you should have the following ready to upload:

- manuscript title (limit 50 words)
- running head (limit 50 characters)
- abstract (150-200 words)
- email address(es) and institution(s) of co-authors, if any
- an anonymized version of the manuscript
- a cover page containing author(s) name(s), contact details and title.

Submitting your article through Manuscript Central

Go to the CCC Manuscript Central website at mc.manuscriptcentral.com/cccr

If you have not used the website before, you will need to create an account. To do this, click on "create account" all the way in the upper right-hand corner of the page.

Follow the instructions to create an account. Fields marked with "req" are compulsory to complete.

Note: the password you select must be at least 8 characters long.

After you have created your account, click "log in." You should see a welcome screen with two options: Author Center and Reviewer Center.

To submit a manuscript, click on "Author Center," then "Click here to submit a new manuscript" in the Author Resources column.

Provide all requested information and upload your document(s).

Note: Manuscript Central allows you to upload figures and tables separately; please do NOT choose this option. If you have tables and figures, they should be incorporated into the main manuscript.

Acknowledgment of receipt will be sent by email shortly after your submission is processed by the online submission system. Submitted articles will not be returned. Authors should retain an original copy.

Reviewing procedure and decision-giving

All articles will be double-blind reviewed by at least two reviewers. The decision of the editors and reviewer comments will be returned by email. We hope to complete the reviewing process in timely fashion and anticipate a turnaround of between three and six months from initial submission to final decision.

Science Fiction Film and Television

First issue: March 2008

A new biannual, peer-reviewed journal published by Liverpool University Press.

Edited by Mark Bould (UWE) and Sherryl Vint (Brock University), with an international board of advisory editors.

Aims to encourage dialogue among the scholarly and intellectual communities of film studies, SF studies and television studies.

We invite submissions on all areas of SF film and television, and which situate texts, practices and institutions within broader national, historical, cultural, theoretical and critical contexts. In addition to popular and contemporary works, we are interested in papers which consider neglected texts, propose innovative ways of looking at canonical texts, or explore the tensions and synergies that emerge from the

interaction of genre and medium. We encourage work that considers the specificities of the genre and what its increasing centrality to film and television globally might suggest for critical approaches to film, SF and television.

We publish articles (6,000–8,000 words), book and DVD reviews (1,000–2,000 words) and review essays (up to 5,000 words). Suggestions for papers include but are not limited to the following areas:

- Silent SF
- European SF (eg: French New Wave, Turkish pop cinema)
- East Asian SF (eg: kaiju eiga, anime)
- Hollywood SF blockbusters
- Animation and greenscreen
- Adaptations
- Low-budget and independent SF
- Children's SF
- Costume, design and music

- Spectacle and special effects
- The 'soap opera-isation' of television SF
- SF and avant-garde practice
- The relationships between globalisation, transnationalisation, media convergence and SF
- The science-fictionality of media technologies and forms themselves
- Cross-media and transnational franchises
- Audience, fans and consumption

Articles should be 6,000–8,000 words (MLA format) and include a 100-word abstract. Electronic submission in MS Word is preferred. Send submissions to both editors at mark.bould@gmail.com and sherryl.vint@gmail.com. If you are interested in reviewing a book or DVD, or have materials you would like reviewed, please contact Sherryl Vint.

Advisory editorial board

- Jonathan Bignell (University of Reading)
- Catherine Constable (University of Warwick)
- Susan A George (University of California, Berkeley)
- Elyce Rae Helford (Middle Tennessee State University)
- Matt Hills (Cardiff University)
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- David Seed (University of Liverpool)
- Steve Shaviro (Wayne State University)
- Vivian Sobchack (University of California, Los Angeles)
- JP Telotte (Georgia Institute of Technology)

Photographies

Routledge Journals,
Taylor and Francis
Issue 1, Winter/Spring 2008

Photographies seeks to construct a new agenda for theorising photography as a heterogeneous medium that is changing in an ever more dynamic relation to all aspects of contemporary culture.

Editors

- David Bate, University of Westminster
- Sarah Kember, Goldsmiths College, University of London
- Martin Lister, University of the West of England
- Liz Wells, University of Plymouth

Aims

- To establish a sustained and dynamic forum for the development of the history and theory of photography
- To consider new frameworks for thinking and addressing questions arising from digital technologies and economic, political and cultural change
- To examine contemporary uses and currencies of the photographic within local and global contexts

- To identify, develop and discuss emergent critical debates and practices
- To publish work in the humanities and social sciences which has a bearing upon our understanding of photography thereby locating debate within a wider community

Scope

There is more and more photography! It follows that there is a need to foster debate and reflective dialogue on practices, contexts, and ideological implications of contemporary developments. Photographies will construct a new agenda for the study and theory of photographic practices which is alert to photography's changing contexts and meanings.

Most scholars of photography would assent to there being only photographs rather than an essential 'photography'. Such photographs, the technologies, discourses and investments which shape them, and their various and conflicting histories, have been powerfully at work in many areas of social, political, economic and

cultural life since the mid-19th century. Photographies are utilised and transformed in a wide range of forms and sites. Fields of activity are diverse: legal, documentary, scientific & medical, art practices, personal & domestic, commercial (including fashion and advertising), political, of the person, the land, the cosmos, the molecule, of events and places. Photography, whether analogue or digital, material or virtual, printed or electronically networked, abounds. Photographies explores issues and practices across a range of fields with a view to better understanding the import of the photographic image in the 21st century.

The 1970s/80s were taken up with political and structuralist/post-structuralist debates which have framed something approaching an orthodoxy within photography theory. In the 1990s much critical thought was preoccupied by the import of the digital. Debates passed through speculations on the 'death of photography', the nature of the post-photographic and a photography after photography

as a liberation from the always contested referential nature of photography, of the afterlife of photography as an ideological realist rhetoric, and as the antecedent of the panoptic and spectacular machinic assemblages of contemporary visual culture.

Arguably critical scholarly work on photography is constrained by the legacy of these theoretical debates of the late twentieth century. Some theorists continue to seek the elusive 'photographic' and its essence in the index, the punctum, subjectivity, and the experience and technology of modernity. On the other hand, there are those who want to address only the present and future, formulating the impact of the digital as 'post-photographic' and transcending photography as previously constituted. Yet, throughout its history, photography has constantly been re-invented, the new becoming complexly inter-woven with the old as new uses and practices emerge. Photographies aims to construct a new agenda for theorising the photographic, one which is alert to changing

contexts and meanings, and to the unprecedented scale and diversity of sites of image production, reproduction and consumption now. It will seek diversity of focus through fostering a wide range of themes, methodologies and contexts of exploration.

In summary

Photographies seeks to construct a new agenda for theorising the photographic, one which is alert to photography's changing contexts and meanings, and to the unprecedented scale and diversity of sites of image

production, reproduction and consumption now. It aims to further develop the history and theory of photography, considering new frameworks for thinking and addressing questions arising from the present context of technological, economic, political and cultural change. It will investigate the contemporary condition and currency of the photographic within local and global contexts. The editors seek research papers and innovative visual essays, shorter papers engaging new debates, review essays evaluating publications, cultural events, key

developments, exhibitions and conferences

Practicalities

The journal will be published twice a year in the first instance. Contributions will take the form of:

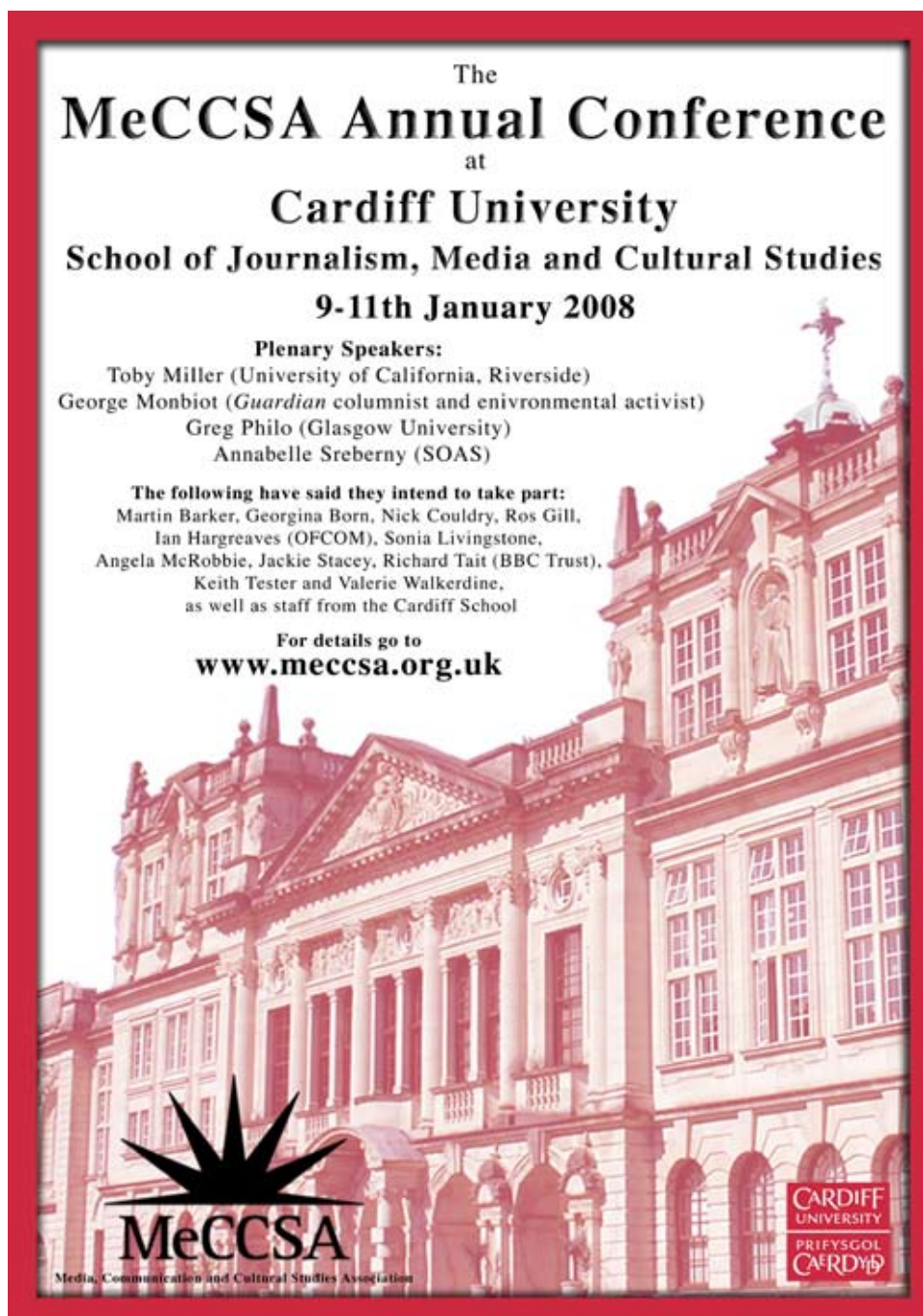
- Research papers and innovative visual essays (6,000–8,000 words)
- Shorter papers engaging new debates (circa 4,000 words)
- Reflective review essays evaluating publications, cultural events, key developments, exhibitions and conferences

NB: Photographic illustrations will normally be reproduced in black and white. (Permissions clearances are the responsibility of authors).

Papers will be peer-reviewed following the usual procedures.

Papers and proposals should be sent to Photographies, c/o Liz Wells, Faculty of Arts, Scott Building, University of Plymouth, Drake Circus, Plymouth PL4 8AA, UK, photographies@plymouth.ac.uk

Contributors are advised to contact the editors with proposals for reflective review essays in advance of writing/submission (to avoid duplication).



The
MeCCSA Annual Conference
at
Cardiff University
School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies
9-11th January 2008

Plenary Speakers:
Toby Miller (University of California, Riverside)
George Monbiot (*Guardian* columnist and environmental activist)
Greg Philo (Glasgow University)
Annabelle Sreberny (SOAS)

The following have said they intend to take part:
Martin Barker, Georgina Born, Nick Couldry, Ros Gill,
Ian Hargreaves (OFCOM), Sonia Livingstone,
Angela McRobbie, Jackie Stacey, Richard Tait (BBC Trust),
Keith Tester and Valerie Walkerdine,
as well as staff from the Cardiff School

For details go to
www.meccsa.org.uk

MeCCSA
Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Association

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY
PRIFYSGOL CAERDYDD

Credits

Three-D (Issue 9 September 2007) was brought to you by:

Jane Arthurs
Coordinator

Nick Sayers
Design

Three-D is a publication of MeCCSA, the subject association for media, communication and cultural studies teaching in Higher Education in the United Kingdom. This is a merger of two previously separate subject associations: MeCCSA, the Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Association, and AMPE, the Association for Media Practice Educators.

Except where stated, contributions do not necessarily reflect the views of MeCCSA or its Executive Committee.

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Hon Secretary
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University of Glasgow

Full details of MeCCSA including how to join, along with a full list of the Executive Committee for 2007 can be found at:

www.meccsa.org.uk