



**Exploring hyperreality, imagination and
metafiction in the Creative and Visual Arts**

Department of Theatre, Film and Television
with Interactive Media

7th Annual Postgraduate Symposium

Tuesday 31st May 2016

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Schedule for the Day

9.30am Coffee and tea on arrival

10am - Introduction to the conference: Kristyn Gorton, University of York

10.10am Part One: Projection and Performance

Marc Bosward, University of Derby

"A Mixed History: Colliding Realities and the Hybrid Aesthetic"

Hasmik Gasparyan, University of York

"Investigating the making of cinematic silence"

11.40am Break

12.00am - 1pm Keynote : Harry Ross and Helen O'Neil from Ross O'Neil

Industry Talks: Immersive Theatre in Practise

1pm - 2.30pm Lunch

2.30pm Part Two: Interpretation and Engagement

George Crosswait, King College London

"Individuation and Assemblage in Meta-Horror Cinema"

James McLaughlin, University of Kent

"Are videogames effective models for confronting players"

Alix Beaumont , University of York

Research Update: "The phenomenon of the adaptation of myth"

Ashley Gonik, University of York

Research Update: "Musicals about Musicals: Self-Referentiality in Performance,"

3.30pm Coffee and Networking

Although we will try to keep to schedule all timings are approximate. Please let us know if you have any allergies or dietary requirements .

Today we welcome...

Kristyn Gorton, University of York

Kristyn has managed the graduate program within the Department of Theatre, Film and Television for several years.

Kristyn graduated from the University of Edinburgh with an MSc and PhD in English Literature. Her PhD was later revised into a monograph titled *Psychoanalysis and the Portrayal of Desire in Twentieth-Century Fiction: A Feminist Critique* (2006).

Her research focuses on two overlapping areas: one strand considers the concept of desire and the ways in which it can be figured and understood in film, television and contemporary culture; while the second strand centres on the concepts of emotion and affect and examines the ways in which viewers become 'emotionally engaged' with what they watch.

Kristyn has written for a large range of journals such as *The Journal of British Cinema and Television*, *Feminist Review*, *Studies in European Cinema*, *Critical Studies in Television*, *Feminist Theory*, and *Feminism and Psychology*.

We thank Kristyn for opening this year's symposium

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Marc Bosward, University of Derby

"A Mixed History: Colliding Realities and the Hybrid Aesthetic"

The paper will present a body of ongoing practice-based research that interrogates the interface of live-action and animation, specifically, how found footage as an indexical element of lived experience functions within the aesthetic of a constructed 'other' world. Particular focus is given to how video collage, containing found footage components composed in the spatial as well as temporal dimensions, construct non-fiction explorations of the socio-historical world from an ontological perspective.

The research explores how found footage elements are deployed to address themes relating to memory and history, with regard to how collective impressions of history are constituted and socially assimilated. With reference to historiography, the paper will ask how found footage can be manipulated to create alternate histories that challenge orthodox 'grand' narratives. The paper will describe a practical methodology designed to deploy live action, animation, digital compositing and special effects techniques to critically evaluate the status of found footage in reference to materiality and truth-value.

The practice generates a hybrid aesthetic that foregrounds the diversity of its components, producing deliberate stylistic and ontological discontinuities that express conflicted notions of truth and reality as they are socially negotiated. In focusing on the convergence and conjunction of the indexical and abstracted in the spatial dimension, the research aims to add to current debates in extending the taxonomies and theories of non-fiction animation.

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Hasmik Gasparyan, University of York

“Investigating the making of cinematic silence”

If in the beginning was the word (John1:1) then what was before the word?
Was the act of creation also the act of breaking the silence? Was it a silence, noise or chaos?

Despite extensive research on the notion of silence across a wide range of disciplines (music, philosophy, literature, architecture, theology), little is known about silence in Film. The image that emerges from published literature is the relative nature of cinematic silence and its intrinsic connection to sound. This research investigates the representation of silence in film by studying the directorial approaches developed by selected film directors, the sound production techniques used and the audience’s reception of cinematic silence. This will enable to define new ways of harnessing the power of silence in film, to stir the audience’s emotions and enhance the impact of film in general.

Research question:

What are the main directorial approaches and sound techniques in making cinematic silence?

Research sub-questions:

Can silence, as a strong narrative device, contribute to representation of the truth?

Why filmmakers have tendency to fill the gaps of silence on Screen?

Does the audience have a fear of silence?

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Keynote: Harry Ross and Helen o’Neil

We are very pleased to announce a keynote discussion from [O’Neil Ross](#) a collaborative partnership best described as cultural curators, who specialise in working in found spaces and the public realm.

Recent works produced by O’Neil Ross include partnerships with Aldeburgh Festival, Bompas & Parr, The Hospital Club, London Contemporary Orchestra (RPS shortlist 2013), Secret Cinema, London Symphony Orchestra, Shakespeare’s Globe, Opera Holland Park, RAMBERT, Roundhouse, Saatchi Gallery, Vivienne Westwood, Wilderness Festival, Frogner Dance, Tim Casson, Neo Futurist Collective, and the National Trust.



@apocalypsefruit

George Crosswait, King College London

“Individuation and Assemblage in Meta-Horror Cinema”

This paper analyses a classically metafictional Hollywood horror film, Wes Craven’s *New Nightmare* (Wes Craven, 1994), in order to locate socio-political themes within self-reflexive mainstream US cinema.

The current status of self-reflexive Hollywood cinema appears anodyne. Films that represent the cinema industry, such as *Singin’ in the Rain* (Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen, 1952), are seen within an oversimplified binary: they either celebrate filmmaking or criticise it. In truth, their complicated relationship with their subject matter means that they aren’t particularly successful at either. Typical examples of metafiction in Hollywood, such as *The Last Action Hero* (John McTiernan, 1994), tend to invoke a strand of postmodern theory that sees such films as hermetically sealed texts that refer to nothing but themselves. In an effort to circumvent the anxiety over postmodern criticism that negates meaning, contemporary Hollywood scholars have increasingly turned to an allegorical mode of interpretation which sees all films as metaphors for the industrial and financial conditions of their own production. The effect of such a totalising theory is to close off all other avenues of investigation, ultimately leading to a very narrow scope for political potential in cinema.

By turning away from these established critiques, and towards a more philosophical framework I aim to open up both Hollywood and self-reflexive theories. I submit that we can view these films as what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari termed ‘a minor literature’: that which destabilises the mainstream from within. Also vital to my theoretical framework is Gilbert Simondon’s work on ‘individuation’. With individuation I can propose Hollywood as an assemblage of relation, wherein films, filmmakers, actors, characters, and audiences all exist in a state of collectivity; each with the potential to effect, and be effected by, all other parts of the assemblage.

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James McLaughlin, University of Kent

“Are videogames effective models for confronting players”

What does it mean to experience consequences in a videogame? Consequences, both seen and unforeseen, are, after all, an inevitable part of any action (or inaction) we might take in our daily lives...it is usually the unforeseen consequences that cause us (and those around us) most anxiety. With this in mind, the aim of my research project is to establish a comprehensive approach to analysing videogames in the context of their effectively simulating consequences in direct correlation with player action. Can videogames replace the actual experience of any given consequence with a simulation of it?

In order to answer such a question, what I am proposing is a new analytical approach to videogames that recognizes them as being necessarily the combination of four key elements: Play, Game, Media, and Computational Processes. Each element has its own particular mode of expression that often conflicts with the others, the result being the player constantly oscillating between an immersive and dissonant experience of the videogames virtual environment. The suggestion being that it is only through understanding the relationship (both antithetical and

harmonious) between all the elements of a videogame that one can gain a comprehensive appreciation of what a player may or may not experience when engaging with that videogames particular scenario—more so than if any one element were to be favoured over the others (i.e. just thinking of videogames as a type of media).

The ultimate goal of my research is to create an analytical framework for understanding how particular videogames can simulate both specific and unspecific scenarios that confront players with the consequences of their own actions, without slipping into the realm of virtual reality, or abstracting the consequences to such a degree that players no longer consider themselves invested in the experience.

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Alix Beaumont, University of York

Research Update: “The phenomenon of the adaptation of myth”

"My thesis on the topic of the depiction of Greek myth in cinema, television and video games considers the phenomenon of the adaptation of myth. The importance of this lies in the permeation of Western culture by Greek mythology, but also by the proliferation of adaptations of several mythologies, for example, the film *Gods of Egypt* due out the summer, and the use of mythological figures out of context, such as the use of Greek monsters in the fantasy genre. Furthermore, the use of Greek myth allows another examination of adaptation, without the baggage of literature, given that Greek myth is a very specific and unique source type. My thesis thus looks at numerous different aspects of adaptation, in relation to this kind of non-literary adaptation, and also adaptation of similar texts across multiple media. One of the primary concerns is the way in which these adaptations interact with each other, and the myths themselves, creating a hyperdiegetic, heteroglossic meta-text that is one of several influences, including medium requirements, genre and industrial contexts working upon and shaping the transmission of myth through the adaptations”.

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Ashley Gonik, University of York

Research Update: “Musicals about Musicals: Self-Referentiality in Performance,”

A discussion of the opportunities and limitations of bringing together "self-referential" performances from film, television, and live stage productions to determine how such performances-within are distinguished from the primary narrative.

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More about TFTV...

Since its founding in 2007, research activities in the department have developed in relation to the fields signified in the department's name: Theatre, Film and Television studies. More recently this has extended into the field of Interactive Media.

The department is outward focussing and so research has purposefully developed hand-in-hand with both teaching and commercial activities. Our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes combine vocational training with critical and historical analysis and make extensive use of our state-of-the art performance and production facilities; while industry clients are also continually using these facilities in the production of feature films and television programmes, theatrical performances and technology development. All of these activities have had a significant bearing on the nature and development of departmental research activities and on our future plans.

The department is on the way to becoming a world-leading centre for inter-disciplinary research and creative practice in theatre, film, television and interactive media. While some activities and projects are medium-specific, others cross over and embrace commonalities that reflect both the deep historical interconnections between these media and the current phenomenon of media convergence. Our research has a strong focus on the contemporary articulation of forms and practices. However this is necessarily informed and underpinned by knowledge and understanding of historical processes and developments that have shaped current forms and practices.

For more information please visit the department website: <http://www.york.ac.uk/tftv/research/>

Thank you....

We would like to thank the following people who contributed invaluable ideas and support to this years symposium:

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