

Digital Memories Seminar

10 July 2012, 2-5.30pm

Centre for Media and Culture Research, London South Bank University - K2 building, room VG11

Organized by Dr Andrea Hajek and Professor Anna Reading for the *Centre for the Study of Cultural Memory* at the Institute of Germanic & Romance Studies (University of London), in collaboration with the *Centre for Media and Culture Research* at London South Bank University

This joint initiative between the Centre for Media and Culture Research (CMCR) and the Centre for the Study of Cultural Memory (CCM) seeks to address the impact of globalization and digitization on the production of individual and collective memories. The seminar will open with Anna Reading's conceptualization of the notion of 'global memory' which is changing the epistemology of memory, followed by an exploration of memory work in digitally networked environments. The second part of the seminar will focus on two specific case studies. The seminar is aimed at researchers, research students and those working in the broad memory studies field.

Programme

- 2 - 2.15 Welcome and introduction
- 2.15 - 2.45 Anna Reading, *Changing the Epistemology of Memory: The global memory field*
- 2.45 - 3.15 Christian Pentzold, *Too many things to remember. Commemoration online, memory places, and the economies of attention*
- 3.15 - 3.45 Discussion
- 3.45 - 4 Coffee break
- 4 - 4.30 Christine Lohmeier, *The politics of memory: Remembering and forgetting pre-revolutionary Cuba in Miami, FL*
- 4.30 - 5 Andrea Hajek, *Facebook and the 1977 family album: The digital (r)evolution of an Italian protest generation*
- 5 - 5.30 Discussion

All are welcome but registration is required, so please contact Andrea Hajek: andrehajek@gmail.com

Abstracts

Anna Reading - Professor of Communication, University of Western Sydney (Australia)

Changing the Epistemology of Memory: The global memory field

The synergetic combination of the processes of globalization with digitization means that media memory now traverses established the binaries of the body and the machine, the individual and the collective, the local and the global in new ways. The paper begins by outlining Anna Reading's conceptualization of the 'global memory field' which is changing the epistemology of memory before then explaining the six analytical dynamics through which the global memory field can be understood and researched.

Christian Pentzold - PhD Candidate, Technische Universität Chemnitz (Germany)

Too many things to remember. Commemoration online, memory places, and the economies of attention

The internet is both, an oblivious and an observant medium at once. On the one hand, too many messages, images, tweets and comments compete for attention and nothing attracts concentration for long. On the other, all activities done in, with, and through the internet are recorded, archived, and retrievable and cannot be forgotten. Under these circumstances, how can we possibly think about remembrance and memory online? Starting from this question, I'll first develop an understanding of memory work in digitally networked environments and second, I'll argue that we see the rise of online memory places where social memories are built and contested.

Christine Lohmeier - Assistant Professor, University of Munich (Germany)

The politics of memory: Remembering and forgetting pre-revolutionary Cuba in Miami, FL

Memory has always been essential to collective and individual identities. What and how a community remembers says something about who they are and where they want to go as a group. This presentation considers memory practices of the Cuban-American community in Miami. Identifying themselves as a community with an 'exile mentality', the Cuban-Americans make for a vibrant case study, in which memory of home and belonging are in a constant process of re-negotiation. In particular, I examine how media have been employed by different groups to shape and negotiate what is remembered of home and of the exodus. Furthermore, I focus on how these memories are used to argue for future engagement and activities of the community.

Andrea Hajek - Associate Fellow, University of Warwick Institute of Advanced Study (UK)

Facebook and the 1977 family album. The digital (r)evolution of an Italian protest generation

Memories are increasingly shaped and shared through the media, in particular visual media such as photography. However, it is not just the images that allow for memories to enter our individual and collective identities: the latter take shape in the *mediation* of the past *through* images. In other words, the very act of selecting, storing and sharing visual data - e.g. through photo albums - has an impact on the way the past is recalled and identities are reconstructed in the present. What happens, though, when photo albums go digital, and private snapshots become public? This presentation analyzes the collective sharing of a number of photo albums of a 1970s protest movement on the social networking site Facebook, in 2011. I will explore how the collective (hi)story of this generation is reproduced online, why this specific medium was so successful in reconnecting these people some 35 years later, and what the importance is of digital photography and social networks in the reconstruction of collective identities.