

Family Ties: Recollection and Representation

Centre for the Study of Cultural Memory
Institute of Germanic & Romance Studies, University of London

Deadline for submissions: 4th October 2011

Conference dates: 8th & 9th March 2012 (Thursday evening/Friday)

Venue: Senate House, University of London

Organisers: Dr. Sally Waterman, Artist
Dr. Katia Pizzi, Senior Lecturer in Italian, IGRS

Keynote speakers: Rosy Martin
Prof. Marsha Meskimmon, Loughborough University

An interdisciplinary conference exploring the representation and role of family memories in autobiographical writing, photography and artist's film and video. This event will be accompanied by a Q&A with the artist filmmaker, Sarah Miles and a screening of her film, *2001 - A Family Odyssey: Ophelia's Version* (2002).

Memory's lane is a narrow, twisting and discontinuous route back through the broad plains of the past, leading to a self that by definition we can never remember but only construct through the limited and partial evidence available to us – half hints of memory, photographs, memorabilia, other people's remembrances.

Liz Stanley (1992), *The Autobiographical I*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, p.62.

Since the 1990's, there has been a proliferation of research on the relationship between photography and memory, such as seminal works by Jo Spence and Patricia Holland, Editors (*Family Snaps: The Meanings of Domestic Photography*, 1991), Annette Kuhn, (*Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination*, 1995), and Marianne Hirsch (*Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*, 1997 and *The Familial Gaze*, 1999). In particular, the family album has been used as a route to autobiographical writing or visual interpretation that encourages remembrance and the close examination of personal histories, documented by writers, such as, Laura Marcus (1994), Liz Stanley (1995) and Gen Doy (2005), and by artists such as, Robert Frank, Tracey Moffat, Trish Morrissey and Annelies Strba.

This recollection and interrogation of memories and family relationships has also led to methods of re-imagining, re-staging and role-play, underpinned by the re-enactment phototherapy work of Jo Spence and Rosy Martin in the mid-late 1980's. However, this conference aims to investigate the various motivations and approaches used by writers and artists when dealing with family memories, which range from the confessional, the therapeutic, the nostalgic, to the celebratory.

We invite papers from a wide variety of disciplines and approaches such as: art history, cultural studies, film studies, fine art, literary studies, psychology, etc. Possible themes include but are not limited to:

- Methods for recalling memories
- Representing time and space
- Notions of the domestic and family relationships
- Examining family history, identity and place
- Gendered perspectives on the family
- Subjectivity: Re-telling or reinvention?
- Privacy and ethics
- Therapeutic approaches
- Performance and re-enactment
- Self-portraiture and autobiography
- Nostalgia for the materiality?: Analogue versus digital technology

Papers will also be considered on any related themes. Abstracts of 300 words, along with brief biographies should be submitted to Sally Waterman at familytiesconference@gmail.com no later than 4th October 2011.

Conference Organisers

Dr. Katia Pizzi

Senior Lecturer in Italian Studies, Institute of Germanic & Romance Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London

Dr Katia Pizzi's publications, particularly her book *A City in search of an Author: The Literary Identity of Trieste* (2001) discussed authors from Trieste within their wider cultural and historical context and addressed issues of identity formation linked to memory, nationhood, gender, ethnicity and confession. She has since taken her research further into the domain of cultural memory and is a member of the European research project ACUME. Her work and publications on children's illustration and comics have developed into a wider interest in the Futurist avant-garde and she is researching a book on the Futurists' sustained interest in dynamism and machines (e.g. arte meccanica) together with their international mindset, which led to contacts and extended residence outside Italy. She is Director of the Centre for Cultural Memory at the IGRS.

Dr. Sally Waterman

Sally Waterman's media art practice and research explore issues of female subjectivity, memory and autobiography, drawing upon writers such as Henry James, Sylvia Plath and Virginia Woolf. Indeed, the chosen literary text functions as a mechanism for self-representation, enabling the recollection and self-examination of past trauma. Her doctoral research at the University of Plymouth (2004-2010) used T.S Eliot's 1922 poem *The Waste Land* as an explorative text to examine her self-representational strategies and interpretative methods, culminating in a collection of photographic and video installations. Past exhibitions have included 'Shifting Horizons', Derby Museum & Art Gallery and Midland Arts Centre (2000-2001), 'Forest', Nottingham Castle Museum, Oriel Davies Gallery, Wolverhampton Gallery and York Art Gallery (2004-2005) and 'What Happens Next?' Pitzhanger Manor and Gallery, London (2008). Her work is held in public and private collections including The School of Art Institute of Chicago, King St. Stephen Museum, Székesfehérvár, Hungary, the National Art Library at the V&A and the Yale Center for British Art, New York. She has lectured at Plymouth College of Art and the University of Plymouth.