

Feminist Writing

Friday June 6, 2014

LG01, New Academic Building, Goldsmiths

The question of what to write, how to write, and where to write have always been central to feminism. Writing matters not only in the dissemination of knowledge but to the creation of feminist publics. The history of feminism includes a history of materials that have been passed around. In this workshop we hope both to return to some of these histories of feminist writing (to consider, for example, the role of feminist presses, the uses of brochures and pamphlets as well as experimentations with genre) as well as to reflect on the challenges and opportunities for feminists raised by digitalization. We hope to open up theoretical questions about the materiality of writing, the relation of writing to bodies and worlds, as well as practical questions about how we write, publish, distribute, own, access or display feminist work (from literature, art, drama and performance, to blogging, journalism and academic books). By 'writing' we thus not only refer to scripts or texts, but all forms of communication.

Programme for the Day

9.15-9.30

Introduction and welcome Sarah Kember and Sara Ahmed

9.30-11.00am

Feminists and/in the Mainstream Media

In this opening panel, feminist journalists will be invited to discuss the pressures and difficulties, as well as opportunities, of working in mainstream media. Rather than thinking of feminist writing, either at the level of content or form, the focus will be on the experiences of feminist writers and the compromises that might have to be made when working for industry.

Panellists: Yasmin Alibhai-Brown (Independent), Angela Phillips (Goldsmiths), Polly Curtis (The Guardian), Rosamund Erwin (Evening Standard).

11.15-12.45

Experimental Feminisms

In this panel we invite experimental feminist artists and writers to reflect on their own practices. What is the relation between experimenting with form and experimenting with feminism? How does experimentation allow us to rethink the materiality of writing, as well as the relationship between bodies, words, images and things? Each practitioner will speak about their work and/or show or read examples of their work, which will be followed by a conversation facilitated by Helena Reckitt.

Panel: Sophia Al Maria (tbc, artist), Julia Calver (artist and writer), Heather Phillipson (artist) and Isabel Waidner (experimental novelist, Roehampton University).

12.45-1.45

Lunch

1.45-3.15

Feminist Genres

Academic writing could be understood as a genre, to the extent that academic writing involves a narrowing or restricting of what counts as writing. This panel will reflect on how feminists have experimented with different modes of writing by invited three feminist academics based at Goldsmiths to reflect on their decisions to stray from the usual genre of academic writing. What can we learn about feminism and genre from the point of view of feminist academics who have strayed? The discussion will widen to consider why “straying” might itself be a feminist method.

Panel: Heidi Mirza, Sarah Kember and Nina Wakeford, chaired by Sara Ahmed (all at Goldsmiths)

3.30-5.30

Feminist Publishing

This strand on writing, publishing and the politics of communication operates within the remit of the CREATE project *Whose Book Is It Anyway* to open out debates on copyright, open access and emergent business models in order to address the wider ethics and politics of communication inside and outside of the academy. This politics is oriented not just toward a contest over, say, the future of the book as an analogue/digital object, but also toward questions of publishing ethics, care, relations and process. How might we respond, intellectually and practically, to the observation that academic publishing at least, has become a relatively closed circuit? Readers of academic books are also predominantly (or potentially) authors of academic books and, with a widespread interest in digital first academic publishing, may well, in due course, become the publishers of academic books. What are the opportunities here for redirecting our free labour (increasingly demanded from mainstream publishers, and increasingly differentiated according to gender, career stage development and so on) away from economies of innovation and toward those of experimentalism, invention and intervention?

Panel: Speaker Carol Stabile (University of Oregon), followed by position papers from Joe Deville (Goldsmiths, University of London), editor, *Mattering Press*, Andrea Francke and Eva Weinmayr, *AND Publishing*, Janneke Adema (Coventry University), Pauline van Mourik Broekman, *Mute*.

Followed by reception, Weston Atrium, NAB