University of Birmingham

Dr Zara Dinnen

Lecturer in Modern and Contemporary Literature

Department of English Literature (/schools/edacs/departments/english/index.aspx)

Contact details

Telephone +44 (0)121 414 5657 (tel:+44 121 414 5657)

Email z.dinnen@bham.ac.uk (mailto:z.dinnen@bham.ac.uk)

Twitter @zara_dinnen (http://twitter.com/@zara_dinnen)

University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT
UK

About

I joined Birmingham in September 2013 and teach modern and contemporary literature and culture. My research interests are in contemporary literature, film, art in relation to digital culture, and new media.

Qualifications

- PhD in English, Birkbeck, University of London (2012)
- MA in American Literature and Culture, University of Leeds (2007)
- BA in English and History of Art, University of Leeds (2005)

Biography

My undergraduate and MA were both undertaken at Leeds, where I studied in the School of English and the School of Fine Art, History of Art, and Cultural Studies. I completed my PhD at Birkbeck in 2012, with the thesis “Mixed Media: Representations of the digital in American culture”.

Teaching

In 2014-15 I am teaching undergraduate courses on Imaginging the Digital, Literature in Britain since 1945, Postmodern Fiction, and an MA option on writing and the Internet. I will also be lecturing on courses across the department and supervising BA and MA dissertations.

Postgraduate supervision

I would be interested in receiving proposals for postgraduate projects on any themes related to my research (contemporary literature and technology; new media studies; post 9/11 fiction; contemporary iterations of postmodernism). Please get in touch with any queries.

Research

My research specialism is in representations of the digital in contemporary American literature and culture. I am currently working toward my first book which explores the idea of a ‘seam-ful’ contemporary culture, looking at texts that push against the image of the digital as immaterial and seamless, and instead suggest the current era is one of complex ties and resistant material manifestations of technology.

I am also working on a project that considers the way digital metaphors often suggest that digital technology enables us to occupy two places at once; I am thinking about how windows, frames, holograms and interfaces permeate images of the digital in recent literature and art.

Authors and artists whose work I am interested in include: Cory Arcangel, Don DeLillo, EL Doctorow, Jennifer Egan, David Fincher, Jonathan Lethem, Eva and Franco Mattes, Takeshi Murata, Richard Powers, Thomas Pynchon, and Gary Shteyngart.

In addition to my own research I am working collaboratively with colleagues at Goldsmiths, University of London, and Concordia University, Montreal, on an evolving investigation into digital culture, taking specific topics as provocations for presentations and articles. Themes we have worked on so far include digital figures, the future anterior in digital culture, and digital exaptation. We have presented at ASAP4 (2012) at the Royal College of Art, The International Conference on Narrative (2013) at Manchester Metropolitan University, and will be presenting as part of the New Media Caucus at the College Art Association annual convention (2014), Chicago. We have published a special issue of the open access journal Alluvium on ‘digital metaphors’; and have an article for Media-N journal forthcoming (summer 2014).

Other activities

I co-convene the Contemporary Fiction Research Seminar at Institute of English Studies with Dr Tony Venezia at Birkbeck, University of London. The series invites guest speakers and panels to talk across a range of fields. Previous sessions included work on: Joss Whedon, Caryl Phillips, Pixar, Modernist Legacies, The Dark Knight, Games Culture. See **here (http://events.sas.ac.uk/ies/seminars/332/Contemporary+Fiction+Research+Seminar)** for full details.

I have convened the first International conference on the work of Jennifer Egan.

In Summer 2014 I will be co-convening a series of AHRC Research Skills enrichment workshops on Researcing Contemporary Culture researchingthecontemporary.net

For 2013-2014 I will be the Departmental contact for the English and American Literature programme at Birmingham.

I am a member of MLA, ASAP, and BAAS.

Publications

Articles

- "Talking Contemporary Fiction: A conversation," with Bianca Leggett and Tony Venezia. C21: Journal of 21st Century Writings. 3.1 (Summer 2014).
- "Exaptation and the Digital Now." Co-authored article with Rob Gallagher, Alex Myers, Daniel Rourke. Media-N Journal 10.1 (Summer 2014).
- "Digital Metaphors: Editor's Introduction." *Alluvium* 2.6 (Dec 2013).
- "Breaking out that Perl Script: The imaging and imagining of code in The Social Network and Catfish." European Journal of American Culture. 32.2 (Summer 2013).
- "Things that Matter: Representing Everyday Technological Things in Comics." Studies in Comics. 3.2 (Winter 2013). Special Issue on Comics and Contemporary Cultural Theory.
- "In the mix: the potential convergence of literature and new media in Jonathan Lethem's 'The Ecstasy of Influence'." Journal of Narrative Theory. 42.2 (Summer 2012)
- "Androids in the Academy." Alluvium. 1.5 (Oct 2012).
- "Pictures of Self-Portraits." Contribution to In Media Res; for the topic "Digital Media and the Autobiographical Impulse". (May 2012).
- "Two Jonathans: Writing on comics in essays." Invited post for Comics Forum (April 2012).

Reviews

- "Review of James Peacock's Jonathan Lethem". Textual Practice. 27: 5 (Summer 2013).
- "Review of Caroline Hamilton's One Man Zeitgeist". Journal of American Studies. 46: 4 (November 2012).
- "Review of Milad Doueihi's Digital Cultures. Textual Practice 26: 3 (Summer 2012).
- "Review of Mark McGurl's The Program Era". Journal of American Studies. 46: 2 (May 2012).
- "Review of Art of McSweeney's". ImageTexT. 6:2 (Fall 2011).
- "Review of Five Strands of Fictionality: The Institutional Constructions of Contemporary American Fiction". Journal of American Studies. 45: 1 (February 2011).
- Conference Review: "Occasional Music: A one-day symposium on the work of Jonathan Lethem". Dandelion. 2 (January 2011).

Interviews

- "Interview with Jonathan Lethem". Dandelion. 2 (January 2011). Podcast.

Media Publications

- "Early career researchers: ever thought about teaching in schools?" Guardian Higher Education Network (12 April 2013).

Editor

- Alluvium, invited Guest Editor and contributor for forthcoming special issue on "Digital Metaphors" (September 2013)
- Dandelion (AHRC-funded Open Access Journal), Reviews Editor, 2010 - 2012.

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