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Phelps, Dolores (2017) Right to Narrate. In: The Right To Narrate, stories and ways of telling, ways of listening, Mini - symposium, 22 November 2017, Museum in the Park, Stroud. (Unpublished)

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the right to narrate*

Stories and ways of telling, ways of listening

Wed 22nd November 2017

Museum in the Park, Stroud

Stratford Park, Stroud, Glos, GL5 4AF

10am -3.30pm Free entry; registration required

To accompany the Cheltenham Illustration Awards 2017 Exhibition

A one-day symposium on human displacement and the stories that result, with emphasis on the roles that illustration and visual arts can play in their communication, dissemination and reception.

Presentations by:

Olivier Kugler, *Visual journalist*

Andrew Melrose, *University of Winchester*

Adelaide Morris, *University of Winchester*

Dolores Phelps, *University of Gloucestershire*

Fumio Obata, *University of Gloucestershire*

* 'the right to narrate' is the title of a forthcoming book by Homi K. Bhabha, the Director of the Humanities Center at Harvard University. He is the author of numerous works exploring post-colonial theory, cultural change and power, and cosmopolitanism.

Faculty of Arts and Technology.
Application for Research Funding (2017/18)

Name: Dolores Phelps/ Illustration

School: Art & Design

Application Date: 18 Sept 2017

Title of proposed project: **The Right To Narrate:** Stories and ways of telling, ways of listening
One-Day Symposium on visual storytelling, focusing on the unofficial, unrecorded and remembered

Summary of proposed activity, with dates where applicable, indicating clearly if this is intended to be a complete outcome, developmental, collaborative and/or part of a strategy that includes external funding applications or already committed internal funding:

Rough agenda:

‘The Right to Narrate’: Stories and ways of telling, ways of listening

Weds 22 November 2017

One-day symposium on human displacement and the stories that result from displacement, with emphasis on the roles that illustration and visual arts can play in their communication, dissemination and reception

The Harvard professor H K Bhabha’s idea of the “Right to Narrate” – the idea that the voices and opinions may be given fuller access and exposure from a non-authoritarian perspective, from the people who experienced the events, the effects of displacement, their memories, stories. **“The arts and humanities contribute to the process of cultural translation by propagating and protecting what I call the “right to narrate”—the authority to tell stories, recount or recast histories, that create the web of social life and change the direction of its flow.”** (Bhabha, 2014.)

In Shaun Tan’s 2006 wordless graphic novel, *The Arrival*, the various characters the protagonist meets tell the stories of why they were forced to leave their homes and settle in the land in which the story is set. These stories are told through terrifying scenes – ‘the first involves a woman escaping from industrial slavery; then a couple fleeing from a country invaded by aggressive giants (a metaphor for Nazism or Communism); and a man whose family and country have been destroyed by civil war’ (Tan, 2006).

Many of Tan’s books explore themes of alienation, displacement, and the effects of colonialism, invasion, and migration.

The use of ‘indirect language’ such as visual art and poetics, the subordination of prose form, turning around the usual emphasis of the written word, allows for a richer and more emotionally direct form of communication, with the added advantage of the surmounting of the language barrier.

The presented work will cover :

Picture books, especially those that widely employ devices such as allegory and fable, anthropomorphism, symbolism, magic realism, and simplification can be used to aid understanding, and it has been widely stated, especially by Tan himself, that as these books are not necessarily aimed at children, they can be used across ages and cultures to help transmit and disseminate common experiences and emotions. **Andrew Melrose**, Professor of Writing for Children, University of Winchester will present his project *The Immigration Boat Story*, an Arts Council funded project that designed to challenge the perceptions of immigration via an illustrated children’s story book.

- **Visual journalism**, such as that of **Olivier Kugler** and **Fumio Obata**, re-presents facts and situations in a way that meld form and content seamlessly to produce a highly accessible and effective, yet aesthetically rich and pleasing, form of communication. New and unfamiliar audiences may be accessed, with an attendant rise in awareness and empathy with the issues covered.

- **Graphic novels**, - a category that defies categorization, and which includes the whole gamut of 'comic books', 'comix', 'commix', superhero and fantasy genres, manga. Two examples are exceptional: Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1980-91) and Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*. (2000)

- **Illustration**, *La Niña Aurelia* by Dolores Phelps

This MPhil/PhD illustration research project is a visual response to a memoir left to me by my late mother, who was one of the 4,000 children evacuated from Bilbao by the ship *Habana* to Southampton in May 1937 during the Spanish Civil War.

Interpreting my mother's direct recollections of living in Bilbao - air raids, starvation, the terrible voyage and starting life in the UK, where she spent the rest of her life - and extensive research into the collective experiences and memoirs of other Basque refugee children.

Presentations by :

Olivier Kugler

Visual reportage – Refugees in Europe

Olivier studied MA illustration at the School of Visual Arts in New York.

Since then he has been working as an illustrator based in London for clients all over the world. Olivier creates intricate drawings which combine reportage with illustrated scenes of the lives and living conditions of refugees and migrants. Over the past few years, he has been interviewing refugees and others affected by the current crisis, drawing their pictures and telling their stories. He will show and discuss his latest work which is about to be published as a book in Germany.

Andrew Melrose, University of Winchester

The Boat: Word & Image & Refugees is a presentation about a creative writing, illustration and multimedia project – The story of the project begins with an early refugee story when his mother put Moses in a basket on the Nile and it leads into a boat sinking off Lampedusa. The theme being the highlighting of the plight and the problem of refugees who take to boats in search of a better life for a specific child-centred audience. What this presentation will do is elaborate on the visual, critical and creative rationale while demonstrating how such a project is developed and delivered for a very specific child-centred audience. It will demonstrate not just the role of the writers and the technologists but the way a story can be constructed for an audience whose verbal and visual literacy is limited by their experience. And it will emphasise that the people we call children are temporarily the inexperienced branch of the human family and thus writers and artists ought to have this as a consideration in the development of child-centred culture - which I will explain through a visual demonstration.

Adelaide Morris, University of Winchester

Remember this man? : freeing an object from its history

This presentation demonstrates how applying a range of theories to an image can inform creative practice, allowing multiple layers of meaning in a creative work: a hybrid post-memoir. At its core, the work is about two settled members of the post-World War Two generation of migrants; people forced to cross countries, cultural boundaries, and identities. Their stories have in common something long in existence and ongoing: flight from peril and the inter-generational challenges of discussing the catastrophes of the past, present and future. To understand the historically constructed schemata that these individuals carried, and which directly influenced their decisions and, ultimately, their sense of being, I will discuss the potential of a dialectical image - a photograph, which stands in for dialectic in standstill - using the notion of textual intervention as a method of breaking into a range of creative opportunities.

Dolores Phelps, University of Gloucestershire

My Name Is Aurelia

'My MPhil/PhD illustration research project is a visual response to a memoir left to me by my late mother, who was one of the 4,000 children evacuated from Bilbao by the ship *Habana* to Southampton in May 1937 during the Spanish Civil War.

An interpretation of my mother's direct recollections of living in Bilbao - air raids, starvation, the terrible

voyage and starting life in the UK, where she spent the rest of her life - with extensive research into the collective experiences and memoirs of other Basque refugee children, has resulted –so far- in a daily graphic visualization, sentence by sentence. By taking the bare words and directly translating them into images using a range of mark-making tools, I hope to connect her memories and especially her emotions with colours and shapes in a kinaesthetic and phenomenological way – affect to effect.'

Fumio Obata, University of Gloucestershire

Fukushima Project

Fumio is a graphic novelist and illustrator. Just So Happens, his first book, was published by Jonathan Cape in 2014 and has been translated into several languages.

His comics-form reportages of the aftermath of the 2011's tsunami disaster & the subsequent nuclear accident in Fukushima have been featured in the Italian magazine Internazionale and he is now forming them into his second graphic novel. This is the latest & biggest project Fumio has ever undertaken and the research has taken him over 4 years.

Provisional schedule/agenda

Chaired by Dolores Phelps, MPhil/PhD Researcher, Illustration

9.30 Coffee and introductions, etc

10am start

Introduction by Dolores Phelps and Jen Whiskerd

10.15 Presentation by Andrew Melrose

10.45 Presentation by Adelaide Morris

11.15 Presentation by Olivier Kugler

12.00 Lunch – Vegan buffet provided by 'Poco Culina' of Cheltenham

1.00 Presentation by Fumio Obata

1.30 Presentation by Dolores Phelps

2.00 Presentation by TBA OR Panel discussion

2.30 Panel discussion/Q&A – Olivier, Adelaide, Andrew

3pm Closing remarks,

3.30 Close

(Homi K. Bhabha is the Director of the Humanities Center at Harvard University. He is the author of numerous works exploring postcolonial theory, cultural change and power, and cosmopolitanism, among other themes. His book *The Right to Narrate* is forthcoming.)

BHABHA, H.K. (2014) *The Right to Narrate*. Harvard Design Magazine no.38, Do You Read Me? USA, Cambridge, MA.

Available at :

<http://www.harvarddesignmagazine.org/issues/38/the-right-to-narrate>

(Homi K. Bhabha is the Director of the Humanities Center at Harvard University. He is the author of numerous works exploring postcolonial theory, cultural change and power, and cosmopolitanism, among other themes. His book *The Right to Narrate* is forthcoming.)

References:

TAN, S (2006) *The Arrival: Teacher's Notes*, Scholastic

Available at: http://www.scool.scholastic.com.au/schoolzone/toolkit/assets/pdfs/the_arrival.pdf

<http://the-immigration-boat-story.com/>

Indication of the project's place within your research plans for the next few years, also giving some idea where this project will fit in to your submission for REF 2020:

This event

- ☐ forms part of my MPhil/PhD research project
- ☐ will help to disseminate and promote subject-specific research,
- ☐ has an additional outcome of an exhibition



- will forge new and productive links with related visual arts and humanities academics, suggesting and forming interdisciplinary applications and contacts with areas such as history, creative writing, and sociology/anthropology
- will highlight the research potential of Illustration and how it may be applied/ collaborated with in studies of phenomenology, exegesis, anthropology and history

The Illustration Department has several research active members who are involved with many different projects. This event could be one of a series that promotes the various threads

Indication of affiliations the research will develop, internal and external to University, particularly in relation to the identified Research Priority Areas:

Connecting with visual arts researchers:

By invitation to present (accepted) by academics from Winchester School of Art

By invitation to attend by members of 'Illustration Research', Winchester School of Art, Glasgow University, MIRIAD Manchester, MA Authorial Illustration Falmouth (ongoing)

Proposed Outcome(s):

Recording of event, made available on Media Library

Paper based on presentation submitted to The Fourth Annual Dartmouth Illustration, Comics and Animation Conference. May 26th and 27th, 2018. (Vermont, USA)

Exhibition at Museum in the Park, Stroud

Funding sought, with breakdown of proposed expenditure:

Fee for guest speaker Olivier Kugler, plus travelling expenses: £400 approx

Lunch and coffee for attendees and speakers.....£600 approx*

(Sample quote: Sustainability menu (roasted veg, smoked fish/salamis/meats/local cheeses, salads, selection of breads, fruit, mineral water/juices, tea/coffee + biscuits) £14.95 pp/£598 for 40 no.)

Total

£1000

Please indicate which research projects you have already submitted to the University's Research Repository (note applications where there is no research already placed in the repository will take less priority than those clearly documented as part of the school Research Repository).

"Duplex" illustration/comics and poetry project

Application accepted

