

## What is the Contemporary? (St Andrews, 1–3 Sep 14)

University of St Andrews

Deadline: Aug 31, 2013

Margaret-Anne Hutton

Call for Papers:

What is the Contemporary?

'What is the Contemporary?' is a multi-disciplinary international conference due to be hosted by St Andrews University School of Modern Language's Institute for Contemporary and Comparative Literature (ICCL) on 1-3 September 2014. Keynote speakers and performers will be announced on the Institute website in due course.

Calls for individual papers (duration 30 mins) are now invited as well as proposals for conference panels (three papers of 20 mins each). A title and abstract of 300-400 words should be provided for an individual paper; panel proposals should include three abstracts and a panel title. The language of the conference is English. Proposals are welcome from researchers in any discipline, and should contribute to one of the following overarching areas:

### 1. 'The Contemporary' through Time

An exploration of historical conceptions of 'the contemporary' as applied to cultural products and texts of all types. What did the term, or its (near) equivalent(s), mean in – for example – Ancient Greece, Renaissance Italy or early twentieth-century Iran? Are other terms – e.g. 'modern', 'new', 'original', 'novel' – homologous to today's 'contemporary'?

### 2. 'The Contemporary' across Disciplines

Seeks to explore the term as it is applied to a broad range of disciplines. What and when are contemporary art, dance, music, architecture, history? Contributors to this field need not (though they may wish to) provide comparative analyses. The aim is to bring together representatives for different disciplines and practices in cross-disciplinary panels.

### 3. 'Contemporary' Literature

How is such a body of work to be defined? Is contemporary literature age-related (e.g. no more than ten years old)?; should it be defined

oppositionally (not-modernist or post-modernist)?; prepositionally (contemporary to what or whom)?; geographically (determined by publishing centres)?; financially (determined by market forces)?; in relation to global(ising) events ('contemporary' is post-9/11 or post post-Holocaust)?; technologically (exploiting new media)?, to name just a few possibilities. Do we need to differentiate between 'contemporary literature' and 'contemporary culture', and if so, why?

#### 4. The 'Contemporary Canon'

Is the term quite simply oxymoronic? Is it really the case that only time will tell? If we can already identify authors and texts which have 'made it' onto the, or a, contemporary canon, what aesthetic and commercial processes are at play? Are we dealing with Great Works or Big Books?

#### 5. Practising the Contemporary

How does working on the contemporary call for particular research methodologies and pedagogical practices? Are there specific publishing implications? What is the role of the library? Of digital technologies?

Please send proposals and queries by email to:

Professor Margaret-Anne Hutton: [mh80@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:mh80@st-andrews.ac.uk)

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Reference:

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