

From Analogue to Digital in Literature and Art

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Our increasingly digital world affects all aspects of people's lives, including the arts, culture and heritage. The visual medium of art and the more informational medium of literature and writing have both been significantly changed in the ways in which they can reach their viewers and readers. Here we record overviews of four presentations by experts in their various fields, setting out their views and experience of topics relating to this issue.

Curation. Digitalism. Digital art. Digital culture. Literature. Open access. Social media. Street art. Writing systems.

1. INTRODUCTION

This year, the EVA London 2016 Conference has been preceded by a day-long Pre-Conference Symposium of four invited talks. Information on the speakers and the abstract for their talks are included in the following section.

The first two of the presentations concern literature, specifically writings systems over the millennia and open access issue. The second two concern art, one in the context of street art and social media, and the other covering developments in digital art. These wide-ranging presentations are designed to be contrasting but thought-provoking.

2. PROGRAMME

Andrew Robinson,
independent
author



<http://andrew-robinson.org>

Biography: Andrew Robinson is the author of more than 25 books on the arts and sciences, some of them on writing and scripts, ancient and modern. They include *The Story of Writing: Alphabets, Hieroglyphs and Pictograms*; *Writing and Script: A Very Short Introduction*; *Lost Languages: The Enigma of the World's Undeciphered Scripts*; and two biographies of decipherers: *The Man Who Deciphered Linear B: The Story of Michael Ventris* and *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-François Champollion*. He also wrote the essay on *Writing Systems* in *The Oxford Companion to the Book*. Formerly literary editor of *The Times Higher Education Supplement* from 1994–2006, he is now a regular freelance contributor to *Current World Archaeology*, *History Today*, *The Lancet*, *Nature* and *Science*. He holds degrees from University College, Oxford and the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, and has been a visiting fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge.

Title: Five Millennia of Writing: From Hieroglyphs to Alphabets and Back?

Abstract: Many scholars of writing today have an increasing respect for the intelligence behind ancient scripts. Down with the monolithic 'triumph of the alphabet', they say, and up with Chinese characters, Egyptian hieroglyphs and Mayan glyphs, with their hybrid mixtures of pictographic, logographic and phonetic signs, not to mention "emojis". Their conviction has in turn nurtured a new awareness of writing systems as being enmeshed within societies, rather than viewing them simply as different kinds of technical solution to the problem of

efficient visual representation of a particular language. While I personally remain sceptical about the expressive virtues of pictograms and logograms, this growing holistic view of writing systems strikes me as a healthy development that reflects the real relationship between writing and society in all its subtlety and complexity. The transmission of my intimate thoughts to the minds of others in many cultures via intricate marks on a piece of paper or a computer screen, continues to amaze me as a kind of barely explicable magic.

Martin Eve,
Professor of
Literature,
Technology and
Publishing
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Biography: Martin Paul Eve is Professor of Literature, Technology and Publishing at Birkbeck, University of London (formal conferment of title, 1 October 2016). Previously he was a Senior Lecturer at Birkbeck, a Lecturer in English at the University of Lincoln, UK, and an Associate Tutor/Lecturer at the University of Sussex, where he completed his PhD. Martin specialises in contemporary American fiction (primarily the works of Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo and David Foster Wallace), histories and philosophies of technology, and technological mutations in scholarly publishing.

Title: The Universal Library: Open Access and Why It Is So Hard

Abstract: Open access, the notion that research work should be free to access and re-use, is a theoretically simple concept that has become mired in practical complexities and controversies. It is also, however, an aspect of contemporary research practice that is gaining worldwide traction and one that no contemporary scholar can afford to ignore, regardless of his or her discipline. In this talk, Professor Martin Paul Eve will set out the background to open access, the specific challenges faced by the humanities disciplines and the potential future solutions. What, exactly, do the terms “gold”, “green”, “libre” and “gratis” mean? How can OA be affordable for the humanities? What are the political motivations for its implementation? What is open licensing? And will open access really happen?

Ingrid Beazley,
educationalist,
curator, writer
Dulwich Picture
Galley



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ingrid_Beazley

Biography: Ingrid Beazley has a BA in Art History and has taught at [Dulwich Picture Gallery](#) (DPG) among other places for over 20 years. As chair of the Friends of DPG, Ingrid founded a unique, hybrid, local community/DPG blog, [Dulwich OnView](#) which won the prestigious *Best Small Website* award at the *Museums and the Web* conference in Denver, Colorado in 2010. In 2013, she founded [Dulwich Outdoor Gallery](#), an ongoing collection of murals in the vicinity of DPG, created by many of the top street artists alive today. Ingrid has won nine national and international awards for her work at DPG and has been made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in recognition of her contributions to promoting the arts to a diverse audience. Ingrid writes and lectures on ways the traditional arts can reach a wider audience and has documented Dulwich Outdoor Gallery in the lavishly illustrated *Street Art Fine Art*.

Title: Baroque the Streets, Bridge the Gap - Street Art, Fine Art: Dulwich Outdoor Gallery, Dulwich Picture Gallery

Abstract: How do we encourage a wider demographic to visit a small, inaccessible, traditional, ‘stuff’ art museum? Link it to what this ‘wider demographic’ is interested in, show connections, increase respect, and break down prejudice on all sides. In 2013, Ingrid Beazley, in conjunction with street artist Stik, founded Dulwich Outdoor Gallery, an ongoing collection of street works in the vicinity of DPG, created by many of the top street artists alive today. All of these walls and pavements are inspired by the 17th and 18th century paintings in DPG’s permanent collection. Rembrandt, Gainsborough, Van Dyck, Poussin, Murillo, etc., were dragged onto the streets by Phlegm, Mad C, System, RUN, Stik, etc., and street art social media took these old master interpretations to audiences far beyond DPG’s press list, to fans of graffiti rather than the Baroque.

Nick Lambert,
Head of
Research
Ravensbourne



<https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/staff/dr-nicholas-lambert/>

Biography: Dr Nicholas Lambert has a first degree from SOAS University of London and a DPhil from the University of Oxford. His PhD covered the evolution of digital-specific art forms under the general rubric of “computer art”, although he showed this was not a unified style or movement in the traditional sense. Nick’s interests revolve around the digital medium and its application in contemporary art and visual culture. Through this, he engages with questions about the boundary between “fine” and “applied” arts, design and interfaces, and the relation of art, science and technology. He has researched the history of computer art and engaged with artists and theorists in this field. He has also developed parallel interests in the history of digital technology, in particular its roots in Cold War America. The evolution of interfaces and display technologies is also part of his research, including some practical as well as theoretical outcomes. Nick also lectures in digital art and culture in the School of Arts at Birkbeck, University of London.

Title: From Superhighways to Clouds: Digital Art in the Age of Digital Ubiquity

Abstract: As a retrospective of digital art is shown at the Whitechapel Gallery in London, is it possible to assign any particular resonance to “digital” art in a culture that has seemingly embraced the digital medium? Nick Lambert considers the meaning of these terms and ponders the future of the area.

4. CONCLUSION

The EVA London 2016 Pre-Conference Symposium talks have been designed to cover a wide range of issues in the transfer from an analogue to a digital world, in the context of the arts, culture, and heritage, especially in the framework of visual art and informational literature (Giannini and Bowen 2016).

A selected bibliography of publications by the symposium chairs and the four invited speakers is included below for further reading.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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