



The Gift of the Gab: The Writer, The Artist and Their Words

A summer school at the Rothermere American Institute, University of Oxford

DAILY SCHEDULE

MONDAY 29 JUNE

10.00am-12.30pm **Sally Bayley on the private conversations within Virginia Woolf's diaries and memoir writing**

Sally will offer a unique encounter with the diaries and private writings of feminist icon, Virginia Woolf. Working directly with Woolf's autobiographical writings, reminiscences, unpublished novel drafts and diary entries, we will explore the haphazard process of keeping a diary as a form of autobiography. The session will be led using rare photographs, manuscripts and voice recordings and students will work towards creating a voice piece from these materials.

2.15pm-4.15pm **Lyndall Gordon on the family memoir**

We will look at the possibilities of writing family memoir: finding the story and facing the need for candour: how much truth to tell? We will consider questions of inclusiveness: the place of ancestry in a memoir and the quantity of detail versus the need for narrative momentum. What is enlivening anecdote and what is digression? And where might memories begin and end?

TUESDAY 30 JUNE

10.00am-12.30pm **Sally Bayley on *Coffee shop Chatter and Kitchen Dialogues: The Journalised Dramas of James Boswell, Samuel Johnson, Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes***

Sally will lead a session on the recorded conversations and dialogue-dramas of journal-writers James Boswell and Sylvia Plath whose skill in generating dialogue is close to domestic drama. Boswell and Johnson speak to one another like a married couple, sharing intimate matters of dress, habits of eating and sleeping and love-affairs. This session will include 18th century paintings and the references to painted dramas recorded by Plath in her journals and poetry.

2.15pm-4.15pm **Tom MacFaul on *Speaking Nicely in the Eighteenth Century***

This session will consider the underlying theories of politeness before exploring in depth how the great writers of the age, from Swift to Austen, exploited and parodied conversational conventions, while also looking at the pictorial conventions of ‘conversation-piece’ paintings.

WEDNESDAY 1 JULY

10.00am-12.30pm **Stephen Pickles on *the art of conversation in Shakespearean dialogue***

‘The time has come,’ the Walrus said,
‘To talk of many things:
Of shoes — and ships — and sealing-wax —
Of cabbages — and kings —’

Lewis Carroll’s take on Richard II’s talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs, raises several vexing questions for Shakespeare’s characters. How and when should they speak, and what should they say or talk about amongst each other, or even to themselves? The session will explore these questions through contemporary records, textual analysis and audience/student participation in readings from the plays themselves.

2.15pm-4.30pm **Ben Morgan: *His Daughter’s Voice in Shakespeare and Beyond***

How do we talk about the 'voice' of a character, a speaker, or - odder still - a book? In this session, we will pursue the idea of 'voice' from page to performance, taking in drama, poetry and prose. Beginning with Shakespeare's 'King Lear', we will then look at two retellings of father-daughter relationships: J M Coetzee's *Disgrace*, and Sylvia Plath's poems to and about her father.

THURSDAY 2 JULY

10.00am-1.00pm **Sally Bayley, Hannah Sanders, and Martin Hitchcock on
*T.S. Eliot's 'Marina', Music and Spoken Memory***

This session will work intimately with the rarely seen manuscripts of T.S. Eliot's poem father-daughter poem, 'Marina', held in the Bodleian Library's Special Collection. The session will explore the relationship between poetry and music, using notes from Eliot's staging of his dramatic voice piece, *The Rock: A Chorus*, considering, in particular, Eliot's relationship between the spoken word, music and movement.

2.15pm-4.15pm **Suzie Hanna on *The Making of a Personal Film Built
Around War***

Suzie Hanna will present her mixed-media animated film process, showing the development of visual and sonic elements, narrating a personal story about war through interlinking biography and post-war poetry, in particular the poetry of David Jones.

FRIDAY 3 JULY

10.00am-12.30pm ***Authenticated Fragments: a creative workshop***

Suzie Hanna will run a practical creative workshop using montage, re ordering text fragments in dynamic layouts to create new meanings.

2.15pm-4.15pm **Joshua Carver: *Mary No More: The Imagining and Making
of a Short Film***

This session will discuss the creative processes behind Joshua's short film *Mary No More*, including his methods of generating and translating ideas into the multi-disciplinary medium of

cinema. Dialogue and recorded interviews and unrehearsed speech are at the heart of this process.

SATURDAY 4 JULY

10.00am-12.00pm

Sanders Bernstein: *Visual story-telling in the work of Terrence Malick*

This session will look at Terrence Malick's use of voice-over and montage in his autobiographical film, *The Tree of Life* (2011), to think about how he constructs his narrative and challenges our ideas about what film can do, what film can be.

1.30pm-3.30pm

Tom de Freston: *OE- lost in a maze: A multidisciplinary retelling of Orpheus and Eurydice.*

In its original form, Ovid's account of Orpheus and Eurydice is under one thousand words. Virgil's account is even smaller, hidden away in *The Georgics* (book IV), taking up less space than his discussion of bees. Plutarch and Ovid's original versions of the Minotaur myth of similarly short. Tom de Freston has taken these sources, and the 2000 year history of retellings, as the basis for his own multidisciplinary retelling of two myths conflated. Tom has constructed an underworld where Orpheus wanders in search of Eurydice, only to get lost and end up in the myth of the Minotaur. He is collaborating with the poet Kiran Millwood Hargrave, who is writing poems in the voice of Eurydice and Max Barton, who is writing songs in the voice of Orpheus. Tom's session will take us into this world, exploring the dialogue between the arts. The session will explore the processes that lead to Ovid's words being converted into a fractured graphic novel and a mythic collection of paintings.

SUNDAY 5 JULY – day off

MONDAY 6 JULY

10.30am-12.30pm

Celeste Marie-Bernier: *'Stick to the Skin': Storytelling, Memory and Historical Imaging*

This session will examine the relationship between oral histories and personal storytelling and the quilts, sculpture and installation art of African American artists, Mary Lee Bendolph,

Whitfield Lovell and Beverly Buchanan. Debating issues related to language, storytelling, memory and historical imaging, Celeste will lead a debate around questions of ancestral traditions, oral testimonies and the development of black artistic resistance strategies in the face of dominant histories of white racist injustice, discrimination and disenfranchisement.

2.15pm-5.00pm **Catalina Gayà: *Go and Experience: How the Journalist Hears Her Story***

‘Go’ and ‘experience’ are two verbs that allow a journalist to tell a story. The first implies that the journalist knows how to see a story where others just see a landscape; and to have the courage to search for and to find the story. This workshop will explore the journalist's subtle art of listening to and conversing with their subject.

TUESDAY 7 JULY

10.30am-12.30pm **Isabel Seligman: *The Relationship between the Portrait Artist and their Subject***

Isabel’s session will explore the relationship between the portrait artist and their subject, looking at the role of speech in the supposedly silent medium of portraiture. Conversations between artists and their models make up the fabric of the history's most fascinating portraits, and we will investigate some of these interactions and exchanges in the realm of the verbal and the visual.

2.00pm-4.30pm **Jemima Hunt: *The Paris Review Interviews: the shifting territories between fact and fiction***

Jemima will lead a session around samples drawn from The Paris Review interviews. The session will encourage us to look at the interviews as a means of exploring writers' lives and the sources of inspiration for their work. How can these oral histories and our understanding of the writing life enable us to write fiction?

WEDNESDAY 8 JULY

10.00am-12.00pm **Charlie Lee-Potter: *Writing it Out Loud: an exploration of spoken and broadcast literary journalism***

Using original texts and recordings, this workshop will assess the transformative effect of reading reportage aloud. The session will take as its starting point some key examples of war and conflict journalism, to examine the ways in which they are altered by the addition of the human voice.

1.00pm-3.00pm

Will May: *'I heard it through the grapevine': overhearing American songs*

In this session, we'll be exploring how North American songwriting makes use of gossip, rumour and cliché. Reading the work of lyricists from Joni Mitchell and Tom Waits to Cole Porter and Tin Pan Alley, we'll be listening to the way songs recount us with known and unknown news.