

Call For Papers

Forming Ruins: an interdisciplinary postgraduate workshop

2nd July 2014

University of Nottingham

Ruins are multivalent; the term itself can be used to indicate both a process and an object. Ruins are also a palimpsest onto which many, often differing, interpretations and understandings can be projected. As such, a wide discourse has developed around ruins, which crosses a range of disciplines as they have been explored as artefacts, haunted spaces, critiques of capitalism, and reclaimed sites, to highlight just a few examples.

As Caitlin DeSilvey and Tim Edensor point out: 'Ruins merrily transgress and collapse a whole set of binaries: transience/persistence, nature/culture, attraction/repulsion, power/vulnerability, potential/purposelessness, abandonment/appropriation, presence/absence, aestheticization/abjection. Their oscillating identities ensure that no stabilized meaning can endure unchallenged, as long as the process of ruination continues.'¹

This workshop explores the different forms ruins can take, and the way these formations are realised and written as ruins are explored as both material 'things' and intangible process. It is concerned with when, where, by and for whom, ruins are formed and how this formation relates to social, political and cultural forces. It aims to use the ambiguity of ruins to enrich the enquiry into their meaning, asking how ruins can be read productively and what might be the significance and implications of the recent academic interest surrounding them.

Papers are invited on – but are by no means limited to – the following themes:

- * Representing and narrating ruins and ruination: how concepts of ruins and ruination have been expressed and shaped across disciplines, in various art forms, and in a range of media.
- * The use and abuse of ruins: the appropriations, restorations, or interventions enacted in or upon ruins as physical spaces and objects; for example ruins as sites of archaeology, heritage, architectural regeneration, play or occupation.
- * Experiencing ruins: when ruins become subject to movement and transition, experienced by bodies in time and space.
- * Ruins as intentionality: the motivations for forming ruins in regards to wider political or military concerns and the social consequences resulting from this.
- * Environmental or ecological ruination: the forms of ruins within the lived environment and surrounding landscapes; their implications and import within local and global ecologies.
- * Aftermaths: the afterlives of ruins as catalysts for transformation and their role as producers of memory and emotion, from trauma to freedom to nostalgia.
- * Reinvigorations of ruins: examining the new critical readings of ruins as they increasingly become the subject of contemporary academic interest across disciplines.

This is an interdisciplinary workshop that seeks to offer postgraduate students an opportunity to present related work at any stage of their research within a friendly, supportive and stimulating environment. Papers will be followed by a keynote speech from Amy Concannon, assistant curator of the *Ruin Lust* Exhibition at the Tate Britain (4th March - 18th May 2014).

¹ Caitlin DeSilvey & Tim Edensor, "Reckoning with ruins," *Progress in Human Geography* 37, no.4 (2012), 479.

This is the eighth annual postgraduate workshop to be run by the Landscape, Space, Place Research Group and co-organised by the School of English and Geography Department at the University of Nottingham. The event has been made possible through generous support from the AHRC Landscape & Environment Programme and the School of English.

Abstracts of 250-300 words for 20 minute papers, along with a short biography, should be sent to forming.ruins@nottingham.ac.uk by **12 noon on Friday 2nd May 2014**.

Organising Committee

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