

Researching DIY Cultures: Towards a situated ethical practice
11am-1pm, Saturday 8 September 2012, Squires Building, 208
Northumbria University
(free workshop as part of Gender & Subcultures symposium)
facilitated by Dr. Julia Downes (Durham University)

This is a one-off workshop that focuses on the ethics and dilemmas of doing research in radical DIY cultures. Academic research on DIY feminist cultural activism has increased over the past 20 years. Fanzines (Piano 2002; Schilt & Zobl 2008), music cultures (Taylor 2008; Keenan 2008; Giffort 2011; Downes 2012), films (Kearney 2006), grassroots sports (Finlay 2010), civic spaces (Enke 2007), cyberspace (Mazzarella 2005), and culture jamming (Stasko 2008) have all become popular arenas in which to theorise the construction of feminisms, genders, sexualities, race, ethnicity and class in culture and society. However relatively little methodological and ethical guidance has been published to help researchers at all levels (including undergraduate, postgraduate, early career and established academics) to negotiate the difficulties and dilemmas that confront those doing critical research within these cultures.

This workshop is for activists, academics, researchers and activist-academics to discuss their experiences of being involved in research on DIY cultures and radical groups that they do and do not see as a place of personal belonging. Discussion of set readings, case studies and personal experiences will lead to the collaborative development of a series of practical and constructive recommendations for future practice.

Topics to be discussed include

- Using established friendships and close-knit networks
- Rethinking insider/outsider dilemmas
- Problems in accessing, working with and representing radical DIY cultures
- Challenges in being critical about DIY cultures
- Dealing with moments of personal and political crisis throughout the research process

Provisional reading list

Jodie Taylor (2011) The Intimate Insider: Negotiating the ethics of friendship when doing insider research. *Qualitative Research*, 11(1): 3-22

Kath Browne (2003) Negotiations and Fieldworkings: Friendship and Feminist Research. *Acme: An International E-journal for Critical Geographies*, 2(2): 132-46

Jo Freeman (1972) The Tyranny of Structurelessness. *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, 17: 151-65

Keith Halfacree (2004) 'I Could Only Do Wrong': Academic Research and DiY Culture (Chapter 6) Duncan Fuller & Rob Kitchin. *Radical Theory/Critical Praxis: Making a difference*. Pg 68 - 78 (PDF available online www.praxis-epress.org%2Frtcp%2Fkh.pdf&ei=Ke3qT60QGstS0QWzso2sBQ&usg=AFQjCNF3ZG5JUPvx8w2gYv2t9UZGt5anVA)

Zack Furness (ed.) (2012) *Punkademics: The basement show in the ivory tower*.

Brooklyn: Autonomedia (available online:
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/94208855/Punkademics>)

List of Participants & their research interests

1. Ann Kaloski-Naylor (University of York)

Feminist cultural activism; social movements and religion

Current projects: Carrying out fieldwork in New York on the connections between feminism, DIY art, and religion/ spirituality. Organising an 'unconference' in spring 2013 to explore the feminist connections between 'women' and 'religion'

2. Red Chidgey (London South Bank University)

DIY feminist cultures: Ladyfests and zine cultures, feminist media, feminist histories

Current project: PhD on DIY feminist media and how activist pasts are represented in DIY media cultures today. I blog about this research project here, <http://feministmemory.wordpress.com>

3. Michelle Kempson (Warwick University)

Feminist fanzine subcultures

Current project: PhD entitled 'Text in Context: A Qualitative Study of Feminist Zine Subculture in the UK'.

4. Debra Ferreday (Lancaster University)

Feminist craftivism

Current project: DIY cultures around knitting and crochet with specific focus on the interconnections between online fibre-related crafts and digital cultures.

5. John Parman parman@oddpost.com

Community radio stations

Current project: Completed PhD on Social Entrepreneurs as Cultural Producers: Return on investment of entrepreneurs in creative and cultural social enterprise. I am continuing work whether social production creates entrepreneurs inside its own currently defined structure: autonomism, an ideology that in my opinion trends toward ethics but not liberalism.

6. Dr. Pollyanna Ruiz (London School of Economics and Political Science)

DIY protest movements

Current project: My work focuses on the organizational systems which structure alternative and mainstream public spaces and examines the ways in which very differently orientated protest clusters communicate across political difference. I have carried out research on Women's Peace Movement, Anti-Criminal Justice movement, autonomous and/or anarchist anti-war groups.

7. Maddie Breeze (University of Edinburgh)

Roller derby

Current project: PhD visual (auto?)ethnography of local roller derby team.

8. Finn Mackay (University of Bristol)

Feminist activism

Current project: PhD on the so-called 'resurgence' of feminist activism in the UK through the lens of the Reclaim the Night march, which I actually founded in 2004 as well as setting up the London Feminist Network in the same year.

9. Donna Grace (Northumbria University)

Women in anarchist movements

Current project: MRes dissertation about the emotional dimension of collective identity among women in the anarchist movement.

10. Sarah Shaw (Northumbria University)

Creative writing

Current project: The ethics of writing stories about people who have different experiences from mine. Themes of belonging, identification and appropriation.

11. Guy Mankowski (Northumbria University)

DIY subcultures

Current project: PhD on DIY post-punk subcultures

12. Lesley Twomey (Northumbria University)

Ethics

Current project: I am the Chair of the Department research committee

13. Theresa Cronin

Extreme cinema communities

Current project: Completed a PhD that focused on reception of controversial films. Wants to develop research to focus on formation of extreme cinema

communities and/or the formation of cultural mores in social media responses to certain texts.

14. Claire English (University of Leicester)

Activism, gender and orientalism

Current project: I'm an activist involved with Calais Migrant Solidarity. PhD around questions of whether activists reinforce gendered and Orientalist ideas through the work that we do, and if this can be overcome through a reworking of notions of vulnerability.

15. Bianca Elzenbaumer (Goldsmiths)

Radical design cultures and communities

Current project: PhD Designing Economic Cultures. Together with my long-term design partner Fabio Franz, we have begun to work with a group of 10 young Italian designers engaged in political and social practices.

16. Gerry Maguire

Documentary films; DIY cultures

Current project: Noise: documentary on the development and influence of avant-garde or experimental heavy music. The project aims to explore the artists and their stories while also focusing on important events such as Supersonic Festival in UK, Roadburn in Holland and the experiences of otherwise ordinary people.

17. Naomi Griffin (Northumbria University)

DIY punk subcultures

Current project: PhD of DIY punk subcultures in North East UK.

18. Julia Downes (Durham University)

DIY queer feminist cultural resistance

Current project: national evaluation of community-based domestic violence perpetrator programmes; editing a book about all-girl bands; writing up my PhD on riot grrrl and contemporary queer feminist music cultures in various chapters and maybe one day a monograph. I also sit on the School of Applied Social Science ethics sub-committee.