

International Conference

IN-BETWEEN

Liminal Spaces in Canadian Literature and Culture

Graz, 2-4 June 2016

University of Graz

Department of American Studies

Center for Inter-American Studies

Keynote Speakers

Aritha van Herk | University of Calgary

Reingard M. Nischik | University of Konstanz

Marlene Goldman | University of Toronto

Keynote Speakers

Aritha van Herk (University of Calgary)



Aritha van Herk is a public intellectual and motivational cultural speaker as well as an award winning Canadian novelist whose work has been acclaimed throughout North America and Europe. She was born in central Alberta, read every book in the library at Camrose, and studied at the University of Alberta. Her popular, creative and critical work has been widely published and her work has been translated into ten languages. She first rose to international literary prominence with the publication of *Judith*, which received the Seal First Novel Award and which was published in North America, the United Kingdom and Europe. Her other books include *The Tent Peg*; *No Fixed Address: An Amorous Journey*; *Places Far From Ellesmere*; *Restlessness*; *In Visible Ink* and *A Frozen Tongue*. Her most recent expedition into time and words is *Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta*, which won the Grant McEwan Author's Award. Supported by SSHRC research funds, she is currently working on a creative place-biography of Robert Kroetsch. She is a member of the Royal Society of Canada and of the Alberta Order of Excellence, recipient of the Lt. Governor's Distinguished Artist Award, and recipient of the Lorne Pierce Medal, awarded to recognize achievement of special significance and conspicuous merit in imaginative or critical literature in Canada. Aritha van Herk is also a Professor who teaches Canadian Literature and Creative Writing, Canadian Literature, and Contemporary Narrative in the Department of English at the University of Calgary, but first of all, she is a writer who loves stories.

Reingard M. Nischik (University of Konstanz)



Reingard M. Nischik is Professor and Chair of North American Literature at the University of Konstanz. She studied English and North American Literature as well as Social Sciences at the University of Cologne, where she obtained her Ph.D. with a thesis on single and multiple plotting in English-language literatures. Awarded many prizes, fellowships and grants throughout her career, during the academic year 2009/2010, Nischik was a fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Center of Excellence "Cultural Foundations of Integration" at the University of Konstanz, funded by the German Excellence Initiative, and in 2014 was awarded the competitive "Freedom for Creativity" by the German Research Foundation (DFG). In both her teaching and her numerous publications, she has focused on the literature and culture of the United States and Canada, with special emphasis on narratology, the short story, the work of Canadian writer Margaret Atwood, literature and gender, and literature and the visual media. Reingard M. Nischik is considered one of the pioneers and leading scholars of Canadian Studies in Germany and Europe, and is an internationally leading expert on the works of Margaret Atwood. Her current focus is specifically on Comparative North American Studies. In 2010, she was awarded the 'Best Book' Award by the Margaret Atwood Society for her monograph *Engendering Genre: The Works of Margaret Atwood* (University of Ottawa Press, 2009). Other recent publications include *Comparative North American Studies: Transnational Approaches to American and Canadian Literature and Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) and the edited volumes *The Palgrave Handbook of North American Literature* (Palgrave Macmillan 2014), *History of Literature in Canada: English-Canadian and French-Canadian* (Camden House, 2008), and *The Canadian Short Story: Interpretations* (Camden House, 2007).

Keynote Speakers

Marlene Goldman (University of Toronto)



Marlene Goldman is a Professor in the Department of English at the University of Toronto. She received her B.F.A. and M.A. from the University of Victoria and her Ph.D. from the University of Toronto. She specializes in contemporary Canadian literature. Her recent research focuses on the intersection between narrative and pathological modes of forgetting associated with trauma, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease. She is the author of *Paths of Desire* (University of Toronto Press, 1997), a book on apocalyptic discourse in Canadian fiction, *Rewriting Apocalypse* (McGill-Queen's Press, 2005), and *(Dis)Possession* (McGill-Queen's Press 2012). She also acted as guest editor of *University of Toronto Quarterly* on several occasions and has published numerous articles on Canadian literature, gender, and race and alterity in literature. Currently, Marlene Goldman is writing a book entitled *Forgotten: Age-Related Dementia and Alzheimer's in Canadian Literature*. Recognizing Canadian writers' unique contribution to cultural understandings of age-related memory loss and Alzheimer's, this book project analyzes how Canadian aesthetic narratives engage with, critique, extend, and at times resist the findings of contemporary, cutting-edge biomedical research. Although her primary focus is Canadian Literature, Goldman's study contextualizes literary discourses within the larger context of the historical conversations ranging from the late nineteenth century to the present among scientific, cultural, and literary depictions of age-related dementia and Alzheimer's. The overlaps and tensions between complementary and at times competing discourses—biomedical, media, and aesthetic—offer rich ground for the analysis of the political and ethical stakes involved in conceptualizing age-related dementia and Alzheimer's.



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