

Thinking Work / Penser le travail: The London Postgraduate French Conference

At the annual London Postgraduate French conference 'Thinking Work / Penser le travail', held on Friday 4th November 2016 at the Institute of Modern Languages Research at the University of London, the organizers (Ben Dalton – KCL; Kate Foster – KCL; Adina Stroia – KCL) invited postgraduate students conducting research within the area of French studies to give papers on the theme of 'work'. The theme was broadly interpreted across areas of philosophy and critical theory, literature and cinema, and from a variety of historical contexts. Papers touched upon issues including labour, class, leisure, technology, energy, economics and mental health. The organizers were particularly pleased with the international scope of the event, hosting speakers who had travelled from Europe, Canada and the United States. The conference was attended by more than 30 delegates from a wide range of institutions. Discussion remained lively, focused and creative throughout the day, with all panel discussions inviting eager debate after the papers. We felt that the papers complemented each other very well, and generated rich dialogues between different media and socio-political contexts. An especially interesting interpretation of the theme was provided by the keynote speaker, Dr Claire White (King's College London), whose enigmatically-titled paper 'Digging' focused on the work of George Sand, who claimed to have yearned for a life of manual rather than literary work. The conference highlighted the centrality and importance of thinking work in French cultural and intellectual contexts, whilst demonstrating the wealth of research that is yet to be conducted on the subject. The conference ended with a *vin d'honneur* at Senate House, followed by a conference dinner at a local restaurant, both of which provided further opportunities for networking and discussion of the day's papers.

The conference was made possible due to the kind support of the Society for French Studies, the Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France, and the French department of King's College London.

<http://www.sfs.ac.uk>

<http://www.aspcf.org>

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/depts/french/index.aspx>

<https://thinkingworkconference2016.wordpress.com>