

Press release: July 2016

## Reimagining reading:

### Digital literature research project launched

A two-year collaborative research project, exploring the developing relationship between digital technology and literature was formally launched last week, against the iconic backdrop of The Thames.

The Ambient Literature project will see a team from the universities of Bath Spa, Birmingham and the West of England (UWE) investigate the design and delivery of location-based reading experiences using pervasive technology, which responds to the reader and uses digital media as a bridge between story and place.

Funded by a grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), the academics will combine expertise on the traditional format of the book with research into the future of literature delivery with the aim of continuing the exploration of the relationship between technology and story-telling.

The project will develop this new knowledge by commissioning three writers to create original stories that will further explore new experiential forms with help from software partner Calvium.

Speaking about the project, Dr Tom Abba, project leader from UWE, commented: "Kate Pullinger, James Attlee and Duncan Speakman have each been asked to create something especially for this form. Each of these works will respond to the presence of a reader, and aim to show how we can redefine the rules of the reading experience through the use of technology.

"Our intention is to develop a whole new writing technique, specifically for this space, which is essentially a new literary genre. It's a new arena with lots of potential, and a very exciting project to be embarking on."

Guests at the launch event - hosted by publishers Hachette - were also offered a preview of the forms of storytelling the project is addressing. Experiment i, a contained, ambient story, drew guests into a fictional history of Carmelite House, the location for the event.

For more information about the project go to [www.ambientlit.com](http://www.ambientlit.com)

ENDS

Press contact:

Niki Goddard, Speed Communications

[Niki.goddard@speedcomms.com](mailto:Niki.goddard@speedcomms.com)

01179064515

## **Notes to editors:**

### **Writer biographies**

#### **Kate Pullinger**

Kate Pullinger writes fiction. Her recent works include the novel *Landing Gear*. In the summer of 2014, 22,000 people wrote letters to the digital war memorial she created with Neil Bartlett, *Letter to an Unknown Soldier*. *Inanimate Alice* recently won Honourable Mention for the Robert Coover Award; she is currently working on a serialised media-rich novel for smartphones, *Jellybone*, with the start-up *oolipo.com*. She is Professor of Creative Writing and Digital Media at Bath Spa University.

#### **Duncan Speakman**

Duncan Speakman is an artist based in Ghent. Originally trained as a sound engineer at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, his work examines how we use technology to locate ourselves in personal and political environments. Seeking out the poetics of the everyday, he creates socially relevant experiences that engage audiences emotionally and physically in public spaces. He is the founder of the artists collective *Circumstance*. Recent commissions include work for the Times Museum in Guangzhou, *UkMX* in Mexico City and the Saitama Triennial in Tokyo.

#### **James Attlee**

James Attlee lives in Oxford and works in art publishing in London. He is the author of *Station to Station*, *Isolarion: A Different Oxford Journey* and the co-author, with Lisa Le Feuvre, of *Gordon Matta-Clark: The Space Between*.

### **About the project**

Funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council, *Ambient Literature* is led by Professor Jon Dovey and Dr Tom Abba at UWE, working with Bath Spa's Professor Kate Pullinger and Professor Ian Gadd and Birmingham University's Dr Matt Hayler. *Calvium Ltd* is providing the technical infrastructure for the practice-led outcomes.

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funds world-class, independent researchers in a wide range of subjects: ancient history, modern dance, archaeology, digital content, philosophy, English literature, design, the creative and performing arts, and much more. This financial year the AHRC will spend approximately £98m to fund research and postgraduate training in collaboration with a number of partners. The quality and range of research supported by this investment of public funds not only provides social and cultural benefits but also contributes to the economic success of the UK. For further information on the AHRC, please go to: [www.ahrc.ac.uk](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk)