Presenter: Jacob Edmond
Title: *Repetition in Transition: The Samizdat Principle of Russian Digital Poetics*

Abstract:

This paper argues that the strategies in recent Russian poetry that seem most overtly to respond to the rise of the Internet and digital technologies actually derive in part from what I term the *samizdat principle*, a mode of writing that developed in and though the technologies of typewriter and carbon paper and the culture of late-Soviet unofficial art and literature.

The samizdat principle merged artistic production and reproduction, writing and reading. It furnished Russian conceptual artists and poets like Dmitrii Prigov, Lev Rubinshtein, Aleksandr Iulikov, and Iurii Al'bert with the means to stress improvisation and individuality within systematic acts of copying. These artists and writers used samizdat to respond to the cultural authority of Western art and to the ideological systems of official and unofficial late Soviet culture. They also anticipated the iterative turn that accompanied the upheaval in media and political authority after the end of the Cold War.

Russian poets of the 2000s have drawn on the samizdat principle in exploiting the newfound ease of copying and in filtering the confusing diversity of the Internet's voices from Kirill Medvedev's "Tekst, posviashchennyi tragicheskim sobytiiam 11 sentiabria v N'iu-Iorke" and Stanislav L'vovskii's "Chuzhimi slovami" to Anton Ochirov's "Izrail" and the multimedia work of Roman Osminkin. These and other poets have extended samizdat's merger of artistic production and reproduction, writing and reading. In their hands, the samizdat principle of improvisation and individuality within systematic acts of copying becomes a tool to address the new media and authoritarianism of the new millennium.