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Autumn Term Seminar

DR. PAM MEECHAM

Displaying Sexuality: camp, gay sailors
and hidden histories in the Maritime
Museum

Centre for Multimodal Research

www.ioe.ac.uk

24 November 2009
IOE, Room 744
5.30-7.30pm

**STAFF, STUDENTS
& VISITORS
WELCOME!**

Please inform Sarah Gelcich
of your attendance
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Centre website
www.multimodality.org.uk

This talk discusses the landmark exhibition **Hello Sailor! Gay Life on the Ocean Wave** at Merseyside Maritime Museum, Liverpool that was based on the book **Hello Sailor! The Hidden History of Gay Life at Sea** published in 2003 by Paul Baker and Jo Stanley.

Based largely on oral history interviews and part of a hidden histories project, the book recovers the previously repressed mid-twentieth century histories of gay sailors in the gay heaven of the merchant navy.

This paper explores the visual construction of gay seafarers presented in the exhibition: the fruit locker and taffeta frock. It attempts to understand what we can learn from the now historic construction and re-presentation of gendered identities through the celebration of camp and cross-dressing. Through the politics of camp, carnival, transgression and parody it is hoped to unravel issues that arise in the re-presentation of gay sailors lives in the orthodoxies of museum display.

Dr Pam Meecham is a Reader in Museum and Gallery Education at the Institute of Education.