



Cerisy International Conference : *Machines. Magic. Media*
Saturday, August 20 to Sunday, August 28, 2016
Cerisy-la-Salle (France)

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Collaborators : Caroline Renouard, Frédéric Tabet and Stéphane Tralongo

Scientific Committee : Renée Bourassa ; Marguerite Chabrol ; Marie-France Chambat-Houillon ; Sandrine Dubouilh, Réjane Hamus-Vallée ; Erkki Huhtamo, Frank Kessler ; Jean-Marc Larrue ; Jacques Malthête ; Geneviève Mathon ; Giusy Pisano ; Anne-Marie Quévrain ; Caroline Renouard ; Maxime Scheinfeigel ; Jean-Pierre Sirois-Trahan ; Antonio Somaini ; Frédéric Tabet ; Stéphane Tralongo.

Theme :

Machines. Magic. Media examines the life cycle of the technologies that create illusions: magic moment (belief), magic mode (rhetoric), and naturalization (secularization of the magical). As far as its secrets are kept, its inner workings remain obscure, and it resists being co-opted and formalized by a medium, every technology that confounds the senses exists as a *magic moment*. Indeed, we find the *secret*, the *metamorphosis*, the *double*, *participation*, and *mediation* in both *Machines* and *Magic*, an idea in keeping with Arthur C. Clarke's hypothesis that "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic" (1984, p. 36). The very emergence of media can be read as an instance of magical thinking, a "patron-modèle" (Edgar Morin, 1956) – or "main pattern" – of primitive perception (Marcel Mauss, 1950). We will therefore examine the specific coming-into-being of each medium, from its magic mode to secularization, with a view to the recurring principles elucidated by intermedial studies in recent years. Viewed as spectacular machinery, the histories of phantasmagoria, theatre, the magic lantern, the theatrophone, opera, photography, the phonograph, the radio, the microphone, cinema, and today's digital forms intersect with the history of magic and the experimentation of its practitioners – early adopters of every invention capable of creating new magic through mechanization. From Robert-Houdin and Georges Méliès to Abdul Alafrez, Harry Houdini, David Copperfield, Jim Steinmeyer, and Marco Tempest, magicians re-examined the process for producing illusions with every optical, acoustic, electric, and (more recently) digital innovation.

This intermedial conference is one part of a vast project: *Les Arts trompeurs. Machines. Magic. Médias / Deceptive Arts: Machines, Magic, Media* (Labex Arts-H2H/ENS Louis-Lumière/CRialt/CRILCQ). The conference is supported by the ANR program Investissements d'avenir (ANR-10-LABX-80-01).

Provisional Program

Research Area 1 : The Magic Moment, media archaeology

This axis concerns the study of prototypes, experiments, scientific and industrial innovations and spectacular technical devices.

Possible topics include:

- Psychic powers attributed to radio; radio as an occult medium.
- The phonograph, the théâtrophone and other devices for communication at a distance.
- Photography as a link between the world of the living and the spirit world.
- Illusions, appearances and disappearances in 18th and 19th centuries devices and spectacular shows: phantasmagoria, panoramas, dioramas, magic lantern, anamorphic, Peep shows, stereoscopy, magical paintings, magic theatre.
- Medical images.
- The illusion techniques of opera, dramatic theatre, fairy plays (*féeries*)
- "Théâtre Noir".
- Levitation, catalepsy, ectoplasm, materialization and dematerialization.
- Effects produced by exceptional and peculiar devices and techniques.
- Cinema and telepathy.

Research Area 2 : The Magic Mode

This axis concerns phenomena of reuse and remediation, intermediality, and the circulation of devices and forms.

Possible topics include:

- The remediation of magic tricks: from one type of stage to another, from one medium to another.
- Effects produced by devices and technologies of illusion (theatre, cinema, radio, television, etc.).
- The reuse of effects and themes of magic shows in present-day performances.
- Archetypes and models of magical illusions.
- Technologies of immersion.
- The rediscovery of lost magical devices of the past in movies (e.g. *The Prestige*, Christopher Nolan ; *Now You See Me*, Louis Leterrier ; *Interview with the Vampire*, Neil Jordan ; *The Draughtsman's Contract*, Peter Greenaway) ; television shows (*Fringe*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *American Horror Story*, *The Knick*) ; mixed-media performances (*Algo et Ritmo* and *Les Totologiques*, Michel Jaffrennou) ; theater (*L'Homme d'un soir*, Denys Amiel and Charles Lafaurie ; *Petit Pêché*, André Birabeau ; *Leurs vedettes*, Armand Salacrou ; *Cœur*, Robert Lepage), video games, contemporary art.
- Phenomena of absorption and enchantment of the viewer.
- Destabilization of the viewer's perception (double exposure, dissolves, substitution splices, disincarnated voices).
- 3D-effects.

Research Area 3 : The "Naturalization" of Magical Effects.

This research area studies the processes of naturalization, standardization, and habituation of special effect as well as the reactivation of magic mode.

Possible topics include:

- Levels of experience: demonstration, dematerialization, virtuality.
- Producing realism through the spectacular.
- Hyperrealism.
- The wilful creation of an illusion in everyday life (e.g. *The Truman Show* by Peter Weir or *Il postino* by Michael Radford)

For the day dedicated to Magic

Possible topics include:

- Anthropology of magic.
- Transmission of magic,
- Magic and science.
- Magic and technology.
- Theories of occultism and spiritualism (Gustave Le Bon *Les Opinions et les croyances*, 1911 ; Alfred Binet, etc.),
- Theories of magical thinking.
- Understanding magical fascination.
- Magic and intermediality.

Organization:

40 speakers (+ 15 PhD students and postdocs) ; 2 sessions per day : 9:30 / 12:30. 2:30 / 6:10 p.m. Six lectures per day: 3 papers in the morning, 3 papers in the afternoon. Each contribution: 30 minutes and 20 minutes of discussion.

Morning

- 1) 9H30/10H20
- 2) 10H20/11H10
 - Break : 15 minutes
- 3) 11h25/12H15

Lunch

Afternoon

- 4) 14H30/15H20
 - 5) 15H20/16H10
 - Break : 20 minutes
 - 6) 16H25/17H15
- Dinner

Saturday: from 5 : pm, welcoming participants, dinner and presentation of the history of Cerisy -La-Salle by Edith Heurgon

Sunday August 21

Magic and Intermediality

Show: [Magic Arts](#)

Monday August 21

2a) Magic Moment Media

Tuesday August 23

3b) Magic Moment Media

Wednesday August 24

4a) Magic Mode Media

Thursday August 25

5b) Magic Mode Media

Movies

Friday August 25

6a) "Naturalization" of Magical Effects

Saturday 27

7b) "Naturalization" of Magical Effects

Show: music and magic arts

Sunday 28 (morning)

8c) "Naturalization" of Magical Effects

Departure from Cerisy-La-Salle: Sunday at 2 pm

There will be performances by artists in the evening.



CENTRE DE RECHERCHE INTERUNIVERSITAIRE SUR LA LITTÉRATURE ET LA CULTURE QUÉBÉCOISES

