



Trans-States

The Art of Deception

trans-states.org

9th-10th Sept, 2022



// A transdisciplinary conference exploring the complex interrelationships between contemporary occulture, deception, persuasion, trickery, manipulation, communication, mastery, craftiness, sleight of hand, commerce, technē, technology, and technosis //

ESSWE
European Society for the
Study of Western Esotericism

**UWE
Bristol** | University
of the
West of
England

UoN
University of
Northampton

Trans- States: The Art of Deception

University of Northampton, 9-10th September

This conference has been hosted by the University of Northampton in association with the University of the West of England (Bristol) and the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (ESSWE).

Conference Committee

Conference Organiser

Cavan McLaughlin

Conference Organiser & Exhibition Curator

Elizabeth Tomos

Curatorial Support Team

Kirsty Wagstaffe

Libby Bove

Trans- States C.I.C. Board

Cavan McLaughlin (Chair and Founder)

Eveleigh Buck-Matthews (Director)

Carlos Ruiz Brussain (Director)



Cover art: *The Magician*. Pamela Colman Smith, from the Rider–Waite Tarot deck.

Day One: Friday 9th, September

9.00 - 9.30	Registration & Coffee	Atrium
9.30 - 10.00	Opening Remarks: Cavan McLaughlin	Oratory
10.00 - 10.30	Ferdinando Buscema: Keeper of Secrets	Oratory
10.30 - 11.30	First Keynote: Erik Davis Chair: Ferdinando Buscema The Flickering Phantasm	
11.30 - 12.30	Exhibition Opening, Screenings, VR Launch & Pop-up Performance	
	Financial Divinatory Advice [Sign-Up] Lara Luna Bartley	Atrium
	Screening of M/EAT THE ARBEITERKLASSE [47 mins] Levin Handschuh	Oratory
	Exhibition Space Opening	Theatre
	Introductions to our VR Experiences	VR Space
	Daimon Says Sonja Rendtorff	
	The Tarot Experience VR Adam Malone	
12.30 - 14.00	Lunch	Atrium
14.00 - 16.00	Parallel Panels 1A/1B/1C	
1A	Methodology, Esoteric Practices and Re-Enchantment Chair: Kasper Ostrup	Oratory
14.00	The Ghost in the Machine: Occultural Production and 'Alienated Agency' Cavan McLaughlin	
14.30	Acid Communisms and Anarcho-Mysticisms: Notes towards a History of Re-enchantment as Resistance Scott Jeffrey	
15.00	Alternative Rationalities and Esoteric Practices from a Global Perspective Bernd-Christian Otto	

15.30	The Inner Space Exploration Unit Judith Noble & Dominic Shepherd	
1B	Magical Methods: Case Studies and Reflections Chair: Eveleigh Buck-Matthews	Town Hall
14.00	Voodoo-Brecht: Contemporary Theatre and Magic Levin Handschuh	
14.30	Ludomancy: Games as Occult Practice in Between States Jeff Howard	
15.00	Escape Your Reality Tunnel: Magical Methods of Cognition Julian Vayne & Nikki Wyrd	
15.30	On Meta-Sequential Art: Hyper-Objects, System Transitions, and other Magickings of the Cartoon a6rax1s	
1C	Historical Perspectives on the Esoteric Chair: Earl Fontainelle	Forum
14.00	Full of Various Wiles John-David Kelley	
14.30	The Transmissions and Transmutations of Edward Kelley Free Frame	
15.00	The Magic of Technology: Rudolf Steiner's Rosicrucianism and the UFO Phenomenon Aaron J. French	
15.30	Toys of Torment and Transcendence Harper Feist	
16.00 - 16.30	Coffee Break	
16.30 - 17.30	Second Keynote: Christine Ferguson Chair: Jenny Butler Esotericism Studies Beyond the Academy: Engaging the Public with <i>The Media of Mediumship</i>	Oratory
17.30 - 20.00	Artists' Gathering & Artists' Dinner	Theatre/Balti King
20.30 - Late	Evening Entertainment & Social Event Venue: The Lab, 95-97 Charles St, Northampton NN1 3BG.	The Lab

Day Two: Saturday 10th, September

9.00 - 9.30	Arrival & Coffee	Atrium
9.30 - 11.30	Parallel Panels 2A/2B/2C	
2A	Esoteric Artists and (Oc)cultural Producers Chair: Heather Freeman	Oratory
9.30	Into the Welcoming Arms of the Amethyst Deceivers: The Music of Coil and Altered States of Time and Embodiment Michael N. Goddard	
10.00	'The Abominable Mercury': An Analysis of Frieda Harris's Anthropomorphised Concept of the Trickster God Deja Whitehouse	
10.30	The Mystagogue: Writing Esoterica Back into Art History Gillian McIver	
11.00	Dree Your Own Weird: How the Fictional Occult Bleeds into the Real Kasper Opstrup	
2B	Artist as Magician (Part I) Chair: Kirsty Wagstaffe	Town Hall
9.30	Séance Shannon Taggart	
10.00	Mythology & Magick in Art: Dancing with the Trickster Emma Watkinson	
10.30	THRICE GREAT GIGER: An Auto-ethnographic Exploration Ben Jeans Houghton	
2C	Explorations of Visual Texts Chair: Cavan McLaughlin	Forum
9.30	The Triumph of The Magus: From <i>Trionfi</i> to Trumps / Gertrude Moakley's <i>Originary Tarot Hypothesis</i> Simon Magus	
10.00	Could the Tarot Still be Ancient Egyptian in Origin? Mogg Morgan	
10.30	Monstrous Possibilities: States of Racial Transmutation in <i>FullMetal Alchemist</i> Cole James Graham	

11.00	The Magician Longs to See Sarah Coflan	
11.30-13.00	Lunch	Atrium
13.00-15.00	Parallel Panels 3A/3B	
3A	Technology, Language and Code Chair: Jeff Howard	Oratory
13.00	Liminal Means: Navigating experiential magic and the physical body within digital space Heather D. Freeman	
13.30	Trans-parency: Hiding in Plain Sight Tom Banger	
14.00	Language in the Age of AI: Deciphering Voynich Manuscript Karin Valis	
14.30	Magickal Mycelia, Networked Intelligence and the Mouldy Way to Grow Your NGO Danny Nemu	
3B	Artist as Magician (Part II) Chair: Elizabeth Tomos	Theatre
13.00	Cyberfeminist Reimaginings: The Transformative Power of Motion Sensor Music Technology Yoshe	
13.30	A HAPTIC-HYMN TO VOTIVE-FLUX Ben Jeans Houghton	
14.00	Hermes Oryelle Defenestrade-Basculé	
14.30	Sonic Sigils John Moletress	
15.00-15.30	Coffee Break	Atrium
15.00-16.30	Discussion Panel Chairs: Elizabeth Tomos & Cavan McLaughlin	Oratory
	Thin Curation and Intuitive Convocation: A Methodology for Curating Esoteric Art and Propagating Rhizomatic Occulture Participants TBC	

Trans- States is a proponent of alternative forms of knowledge production through the construction of radical research methodologies for transdisciplinarity, practice-based research and esoteric scholarship. For the last two conferences, Cavan McLaughlin and Elizabeth Tomos have worked closely to develop a shared praxis.

The panel will discuss how subvert, thin, transdisciplinary, coinherent, rhizomatic, holistic and synergistic approaches to knowledge-building might have agency for change in turbulent times.

Though initiated by the panel, this will develop into an open, round-table discussion where all delegates are welcome to reflect on, and voice, their own views and emergent themes and concepts arising from the conference.

For more details on the panel, see the lists of abstracts in the main programme booklet.

16.30-17.30	Third Keynote: Lionel Snell Chair: Cavan McLaughlin	Oratory
	Individual v Society: Subjective v Objective. Reality or Trick?	
17.30-17.45	Closing Remarks	Oratory

Trans- States Art of Deception: List of All Contributors

a6rax1s (Peter Duchemin, PhD)

a6rax1s (Peter Duchemin, PhD) This entity is describable as an eclectic scholar and artist who has explored issues related to magic, to the liminal threshold of practice and study (the emic/etic divide), and to how time is mediated. It resides in Hong Kong, coaches art and philosophy, makes experimental comics, and does a lot of other stuff that is not mentioned in this bio. It's quite a thing, really. It has presented and published both academic and creative work internationally. An online gallery of its metasequential art can be found on Instagram @metasequentialartist. As part of team A^^>>>TAO<<<^^A, the a6rax1s co-holds the 2020 world title in competitive telekinesis, as issued by the World Telekinesis Competition.

Aaron J. French

Aaron J. French is a Lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Erfurt. I specialize in the history of science, modernity, Western esotericism, German Romanticism, and science and technology studies. My dissertation focused on *"Disenchanting and Re-Enchanting German Modernity"* with emphasis on the German intellectuals Max Weber and Rudolf Steiner. My current research focuses on how two architects in Central Europe during the first half of the 20th century—Bruno Taut (1880–1938) and Le Corbusier (1887–1965)—sought to redefine and reimagine "sacredness" and "sacred spaces" for the modern world. This project analyzes how Taut and Le Corbusier envisioned potentially new and utopic futures designed to re-sacralize the present through a holistic approach and harmonious balancing of energetic polarities.

Adam Malone

Having previously worked as an Immersive Event Producer and Audio-Visual artist, Adam Malone's interest in immersive storytelling was inspired by his academic study of the Tarot. His dissertation for the MA in Myth, Cosmology, and the Sacred was entitled 'The Art of Transforming The World: Tarot and the Future of Immersive Experience'. The Tarot Experience was his hypothesis for the future of narrative creation in the immersive arts, and is now the title of a VR piece developed for the Oculus Quest 2 via his start-up company Astrolabe Immersive. Their focus is on bringing deeply meaningful experiences into VR and beyond.

Alexander Small

Alexander Small's practice explores ideas of the Trickster as an archetype and how these are represented in visual culture. The trickster mythos includes characters such as Puck and Bugs Bunny with themes around these often including boundary-breaking and liminality. Taking cues from found imagery including the 'poor images' of the web, diagrams, photographs, scans of prints and cartoons I play with taboo subjects and repressed experiences. Acting in the vain of 'trickster' I seek to represent a visual language mocking bodily functions, questioning gender and making jokes about genitals, philosophically working towards a 'metaphysics of shit'. Painting tropes are employed in a variety of ways joke abstraction, faux expressionistic gestures and uneven airbrushing lay bare the mechanics of the medium. alexandersmall.com

Ben Jeans Houghton

Ben Jeans Houghton's multidisciplinary practice spans sculpture, installation, film, drawing, painting, writing & performance. Through these media he investigates magic; the art of transformation and its methodologies, technologies, agencies, and implications, through art-praxis, as-gnosis, informed by astrological, philosophical, and metaphysical perspectives. The work encourages a timely remembrance of occulted metaphysics and methodologies, whilst dismantling the monopoly of the materialist paradigm, towards the reinvigoration of contemporary creative tools, for the forming of positive futures based on mutual flourishing in right-relation with a more-than-human cosmos.

Jeans Houghton works experimentally by creatively engaging with the theory and practice of magical methodologies: Through performance, he engages with ritual costume, sculptural tools, set and setting, oration, and mantric glossolalia; to both orient, explore and express the creative praxis of transformation and the agency it affords us. Through drawing and painting, he gives form to impossible objects, imaginal anatomy, and the phenotypic entities that populate the tundra of Terra Incognita. Through sculpture, he creates non-denominational haptic expressions of votive-worship, that evince the alchemical methodology of using art-praxis to both communicate and co-create self-reflexive, transformative opportunities, for the author and audience. Through writing, he engages with the poetic economy of prose to intimate the historicism of foundational ideas and reanimate their essence. Through experimental film and film essays he creates oneiric time-based expressions that subsume the structures and visual

languages of mythology, anthology, poetry, and essay; to communicate a constellation of perspectives that explore, establish and express extant contexts by embodying perennial questions, posited in novel ways, as the ambulation of a gnostic-psychogeography.

He has delivered exhibitions, screenings, presentations, performances, and publications internationally in Germany, Greece, Africa, Japan, South Korea, and America and nationally with CCA, Gymnasium Gallery, Bloc Projects, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Generator Projects, Whitstable Biennale, BFI and Channel Four amongst others. benjeanshoughton.co.uk

Bernd-Christian Otto, PhD

Bernd-Christian Otto is a scholar of religion, currently situated at the university of Erlangen-Nürnberg. His research focuses on the history of magic, where he combines different methodologies such as conceptual history, discourse analysis, social theory, and ritual studies. His recent publications include the co-written monograph (together with Daniel Bellingradt) *Magical Manuscripts in Early Modern Europe: The Clandestine Trade in Illegal Book Collections* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan 2017), the co-edited anthology (together with Martin Fuchs et al.) *Religious Individualisation: Historical Dimensions and Comparative Perspectives* (Berlin: De Gruyter 2019), and the co-edited anthology (together with Dirk Johannsen) *Fictional Practice: Magic, Narration and the Power of Imagination* (Leiden: Brill 2021). Side interests include the reception of Buddha Maitreya in Western esotericism, processes of religious individualisation, ritual theories and dynamics, the relation between religion



Cavan McLaughlin (2022) *Mecurius - The Dual One #10 - Initiate* [Digital image]

and ethics, and the peculiarities of religious experience. Bernd-Christian Otto has a broad interest and expertise in the history of Western learned magic, and is, since a few years, particularly interested in its modern and contemporary manifestations (magick). Since 2016, Bernd-Christian Otto is a permanent board member of the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism.

Cavan McLaughlin

Cavan McLaughlin is a Senior Lecturer in Media Production at the University of the West of England (UWE), with research interests related to the role and function of occulture. Editor of the recent volume *Trans- States: The Art of Crossing Over* (2019), he has also published on Crowley, solar symbolism and narrative, open-source occultism and contemporary occulture. Currently undertaking a PhD entitled 'Occultural Production as Re-visionary Mythmaking', he remains a practicing filmmaker, artist and all-around creative media practitioner. As a media professional of over twenty years, he has been involved in almost all aspects of audiovisual production, specialising in video art, music videos and visual poetry. He is the founder and Chair of Trans- States (trans-states.org) and co-founder, and editor-in-chief of *Monad: Journal of Transformative Practice* (monadjournal.com). Cavan has a profound affection for cows, fungi and rainbows.

Christine Ferguson, PhD

Christine Ferguson is a Professor in English Studies in the Division of Literature and Languages, where her research focuses on the entwined histories of the literary gothic and the British occult revival in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

century. Before coming to Stirling in 2016, she taught at the University of Glasgow from 2008-2016, at the University of Alberta from 2004-2008, and was a SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of British Columbia from 2002-2004. She currently serves on the board of the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism and sits on the editorial boards for the *Journal of Victorian Culture*, *Victorian Review*, *Victoriographies*, the *Cambridge Elements in Magic* and the *Oxford Studies in Western Esotericism* series.

Her major publications include the books *Determined Spirits: Eugenics, Heredity, and Racial Regeneration in Anglo-American Spiritualist Writing 1848-1930* (2012) and *Language, Science, and Popular Fiction in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (2006); she is the editor of *Spiritualism, Health, Race, and Human Variation* (2014), a volume in Routledge's *Spiritualism 1840-1930* facsimile edition series, and, with Andrew Radford, *The Occult Imagination in Britain, 1875-1947* (Routledge 2018). She is currently at work on a scholarly edition of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Land of Mist* for the Edinburgh Edition of the *Collected Works of Arthur Conan Doyle*, and a monograph on the popular fiction produced by leading figures in Britain's occult revival, including Edward Bulwer Lytton, Emma Hardinge Britten, Mabel Collins, H.P. Blavatsky, A.P. Sinnett, Arthur Machen, Dion Fortune, and Aleister Crowley.

She leads the AHRC Follow-On Funding project, "The Media of Mediumship: Encountering the Material Culture of Modern Occultism in Britain's Science, Technology, and Magic Collections," which runs between 2021-22 and in collaboration with the Science Museum Group and Senate House Library. She was PI on the

AHRC network project, Popular Occulture in Britain, 1875-1947, and, with Dr Manon Hedenborg-White, heads the ESSWE Network on Esotericism, Gender, and Sexuality (ESOGEN).

Cole James Graham

Cole J. Graham is a dog enthusiast, an autistic trans man, and a PhD student in History of Art at the Ohio State University. Previous study has taken him to Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania and the City University of New York. His research interests include exploring the contours of gender via queer/trans theory in German and Viennese figurative painting of the early 20th Century, with a special appeal to the notion of the body-as-contorted-trauma holder in the art of Egon Schiele. Additionally, Cole's work investigates how modernistic tendencies toward purity and efficiency limit possibilities for disabled mind-bodies. He currently serves as a curatorial intern at the Wexner Center for the Arts.

Daniella Valz Gen

Daniella Valz Gen is a poet, artist, and card reader. Their work explores the interstices between languages, cultures, and value systems with an emphasis on embodiment and ritual, through the mediums of performance, installation, conversation, and text.

Valz Gen is the author of the poetry collection *Subversive Economies* (PSS 2018). Their prose has been published in various art and literary journals such as Lish, SALT. Magazine, Paperwork Magazine, and The Happy Hypocrite amongst others. They're currently developing the next stage of their project (be)longing, a series

of immersive elemental rituals.

Valz Gen has been focusing the last two years on integrating their oracular practice with their art and poetry. They run monthly gatherings exploring poetics in relation to the symbolism of Tarot cards within the container of Sacred Song Tarot.

Danny Nemu

Danny Nemu is interested in the regenerative powers of nature, both in terms of curing people and bringing degraded land back to life. After getting ill and getting better in the Amazon, he founded RAIN (Regenerative Agroforestry Impact Network), a charity supporting community-led reforestation projects with Indigenous nations, black women in the favela and other marginalised groups in Brazil. His background is in teaching, hypnotherapy and writing (*Science Revealed and Neuro-Apocalypse*). His future is in the trees.

Deja Whitehouse, PhD

Following a 25-year career in business analysis and training consultancy, Deja Whitehouse returned to academia in 2016, completing her PhD at the University of Bristol under the supervision of Professor Ronald Hutton in January 2020. Her thesis, *In Search of Frieda Harris*, explores various aspects of Harris's life in comparison with some of her female esoteric contemporaries.

During her studies, Deja was engaged by the Warburg Institute to catalogue Frieda Harris's correspondence. Since being awarded her PhD, she has published various papers and book chapters and continues to present her research both in

person and online. She is currently working on a monograph based on her PhD thesis for OUP's Oxford Studies in Western Esotericism.

Emma Watkinson

Emma Watkinson is a Fantastic Realist contemporary fine art oil painter, originally from Dartmoor, now living in Sussex, U.K. Her inspiration comes from her explorations in consciousness and esoteric study. She is a member of the Order of Bards, Ovates & Druids, Mitra of the Triratna Buddhist Order, trained with 13 moon mystery school, Kabbalah, The Golden Dawn, Chaos Magick, Centre of Applied Jungian studies, and practices Chi Gung. After a Diploma in Fine Art & Design, she spent many years traveling and exploring the spiritual traditions of different cultures. She assisted in painting for Ernst Fuchs (one of the founders of Fantastic Realism) in 2012 in Vienna and trained on courses in traditional oil painting in Italy, Austria the U.K, London School of Representational Art, and Los Angeles Academy of Figurative Art.

Her art has been exhibited widely at festivals, galleries, and museums internationally in America, Australia, Spain, France, and the U.K for the last 15 years, including Phantasten museum and Laxenburg castle, Vienna, and the Naia museum. She is also a musician, singer/ songwriter, and flute player.

Erik Davis, PhD

Erik Davis (www.techgnosis.com) is an author, scholar, and teacher based in San Francisco. His wide-ranging work focuses on the intersection of alternative religion, media, and the popular imagination.

He is the author, most recently, of *High Weirdness: Drugs, Esoterica, and Visionary Experience in the Seventies* (MIT Press/ Strange Attractor Press), and also wrote the cult classic *Techgnosis: Myth, Magic, and Mysticism in the Age of Information*. Davis has spoken widely at universities, conferences, retreat centers, and festivals, and has been interviewed by CNN, the BBC, NPR, and the *New York Times*. He graduated from Yale University in 1988, and earned his PhD in religious studies at Rice University in 2015. He currently writes the newsletter Burning Shore (www.burningshore.com) and his extensive online archive can be accessed at www.techgnosis.com.

Ferdinando Buscema

Ferdinando Buscema is a Magic Experience Designer — a professional trickster and an international specialist who designs “magical experiences”. With a background in mechanical engineering, humanistic psychology and hermetic traditions, Ferdinando has been chosen as a partner by major corporations, leading universities, and high-end clients to create unique events, learning experiences and edutainment-based trainings.

An award-winning conjuror and sleigh-of-hand artist, Ferdinando is a credited performer at the World Famous Magic Castle in Hollywood, the most exclusive stage for magical entertainment.

He is the Magician-in-Residence at the Palo Alto-based think-tank Institute For The Future, is a teacher at the Magic and Mystery School in Las Vegas, and writes for the techno-cultural blog Boing Boing.

Ferdinando is the co-author of the book *“Amaze, the Art of Creating Magical*

Experiences”, the manifesto mapping the discipline of Magic Experience Design. beingboing.net/author/ferdinandobuscema

Free Frame

Free Frame is a researcher of alchemy and magic in the Renaissance period in the former Kingdom of Bohemia. He co-founded the Bohemia Alchemy Institute and has created a library of alchemical and esoteric books in Prague. His main focus is proving the use of psychedelic substances by Renaissance alchemists and will soon publish a book of his findings.

Gillian McIver

Gillian McIver started her artistic journey by picking up a camera and shooting bands, and then progressed to underground cinema-making. After a spell at film school, she co-founded the artist group Luna Nera, and spent a decade making large-scale site-specific projects in unusual sites, from a Russian naval base to a derelict grand hotel. She makes films and videos, installation art and photography, and curates exhibitions. Her most recent curatorial project was the exhibition, *Alchemy!*, in London. Gillian is also an art historian and the author of *Art History for Filmmakers* (2016) and the forthcoming *Between Realism and the Sublime*, both on Bloomsbury Press.

Harper Feist

Harper Feist is an esotericist, a scientist and a historian. She's interested chiefly in magical innovations of late antiquity, and the use of these tools and methods today. She is involved in both the OTO (Ordo Templi Orientis: most recent

past-Master of Leaping Laughter Lodge, Valley of Minneapolis, MN, USA; ordained priestess of Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica, current interviewer of U.S. Grand Lodge's official podcast, "Thelema Now") and the A:.A:. She has given a number of recent presentations at national and international meetings including NOTOCON, ThelemaCON and the Magical Women Symposium. The work presented in this presentation will be published in October in Hadean Press' Conjure Codex.

Recent Presentations:

The Poetry of Phyllis Seckler – a performance art piece – ThelemaCON, October 2020.

History and Use of the Bornless Ritual – ThelemaCON, October 2020.

The Body as a Scrying Sensor – ThelemaCON, October 2019.

Pranayama: History, Physiology and Practice – ThelemaCON, October 2019.

Women and Grimoire Magic in the Time of the Inquisition, Magical Women Symposium, June 2019.

Scrying with the Body – NOTOCON (national OTO meeting), October 2017.

Class: Scrying – A Workshop of Esoteric Awareness, The Blackthorne School: www.blackthorne.com

Heather D. Freeman

Heather D. Freeman is a Professor of Art – Digital Media in the Department of Art & Art History at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She holds a BA in Fine Art and German Studies from



Emma Watkinson (2012) *Akhenaten* [Oil Painting reproduced on lightbox] 98.5cm (w) x 131 cm (h)

Oberlin College (1997), an MFA in Studio Art from Rutgers University (2000), and has taught at Charlotte since 2006. Previously, Freeman worked as an art director, graphic designer, editor, and animator in New York and New Jersey. She has also taught art, graphic design, and visual rhetoric since 2001 at Allegheny College, The University of Kentucky, and Clemson University. Freeman has created work and taught a range of classes since 2001 in digital print, digital collage, 2D and 3D animation, 3D modelling, video art, digital fabrication, mobile app design, game design, and XR. She is also the author of *The Moving Image Workshop: Introducing animation, motion graphics and visual effects in 45 practical projects*, published by Fairchild Press, an imprint of Bloomsbury Academic. Freeman's artworks combine traditional and digital technologies to weave together the symbolic forms of science, mythology, and popular culture. Her animations and films have screened internationally and won numerous awards, while her prints and mixed media works have appeared in group and solo shows around the country. Her most recent endeavor is co-directing *Charlotte Nightowl Interactive*, a game design and XR co-operative focusing on interactive works furthering social and environmental justice and education, as well as experimentation and innovation in narrative forms.

Jeff Howard, PhD

Ludomancer, Technomage, Occult Game Designer. Dr. Jeff Howard is Senior Lecturer in Games at Falmouth University in Cornwall, where he specializes in occult, metal, and Gothic themes and mechanics. His theory and practice converge in his work as lead designer of *Arcana*, a ceremonial magick simulator. He is a worldbuilding consultant for *Apocalypse*

Studios on Deadhaus Sonata, a Gothic action roleplaying game. He is also the author of two books: *Game Magic: A Game Designer's Guide to Magic Systems in Theory and Practice* and *Quests: Design, Theory, and History in Games and Narratives*, as well as the creator of "Howard's Law of Occult Game Design" (published in *100 Principles of Game Design*).

Before joining Falmouth University, Dr. Howard taught for ten years as an Associate Professor of Game Development and Design at Dakota State University in Madison, South Dakota. In 2012, he presented at the Game Developer's Conference Online, where he spoke about "*Occult Game Design: An Initiation into Secrets and Mysteries*." In 2017, he presented "*Force and Fire: Making Your Game More Metal*" to an audience of professional game designers at the Game Developer's Conference in San Francisco, the largest game development event in the United States.

John Moletress

John Moletress is a multi-disciplinary artist, educator and Founding Director of *force/collision*, an interdisciplinary performance ensemble. Their work has been seen within the US at The John F. Kennedy Center, Abrons Art Center, Basilica Hudson, Queer Biennial LA, Cathedral of Saint Vibiana, La MaMa ETC, Highways Performance Space, Intersections Festival, Fusebox Festival, Arena Stage, New Dramatists, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Studio Theatre, *FUNDarte/Out In The Tropics*, *OUTsider Festival*, George Washington University, EMP Collective, Time Space LTD., to name a few. Internationally, their work has been seen at Shout Festival (UK), King's College London, Homotopia/

unity theatre (UK), Warehouse 9 (DK), The Gulbenkian (UK) and The House at Plymouth University (UK). Publications include *Wendell*. (NoPassport Press), *Boy Tail* (Amazon) and as a contributor, *Jarman (all this maddening beauty)* and *Other Texts* (Intellect Books UK) and *Innovation in Five Acts: Strategies for Theatre and Performance* (ed. Caridad Svich; Theatre Communications Group). Additionally, they practice psychotherapy on unceded Lenapehoking (Philadelphia), and lead a monthly collective dream work group for Catland Books (Brooklyn); www.kraftwitch.com, IG: Kraftwitch.

John-David Kelley

John-David (JD) Kelley is a professional astrologer and enthusiastic astral magician with a background in anthropology and education. He is the chairperson of the Scottish Astrological Association, the president of the International Association of Astral Magicians, and principle organiser for Astro Magia, a transdisciplinary conference focused on astral magic and its contents.

Julian Vayne

Julian Vayne is a British independent scholar and author with over three decades of experience within esoteric culture: from Druidry to Chaos Magic, from indigenous Shamanism through to Freemasonry and Witchcraft. Growing up in the Britain of punk and then rave culture, Julian immersed himself in the philosophy and techniques of magic. His journey into group ritual practice began within the Western Esoteric Tradition when he was 16. Since then he has worked in ceremony with practitioners from many different lands and lineages. Julian is a senior member

of the Magical Pact of the Illuminates of Thanateros and is widely recognized as one of Britain's leading occultists. In the 1990s Julian edited Britain's best-selling pagan newspaper Pagan Voice and in 2001 published one of the first books of the modern psychedelic renaissance, *Pharmakon: Drugs and the Imagination*. In addition to exploring traditional sacred medicines, Julian's work includes the first published accounts of the entheogenic ritual use of ketamine and several novel psychedelic sacraments.

Karin Valis

Karin Valis is a Berlin-based writer, musician and machine learning engineer, with a deep passion for everything occult and weird. Her work focuses mainly on combining technology with the esoteric: projects such as 'Tarot of the Latent Spaces' (a deck that uses AI to extract the visual archetypes of Major Arcana) and 'Cellulare' (a tool for exploring digital non-ordinary reality for the Foundation for Shamanic Studies Europe). She co-hosted several workshops on Jungian archetypes and divination in digital space. Karin is CTO of an imaginary Silicon Valley startup Hermetechnics Inc and a member of an experimental band Theia Mania. She writes Mercurial Minutes and hosts monthly meetings of the occult and technology enthusiasts 'Techgnosis'.

Kasper Opstrup, PhD

Dr. Kasper Opstrup is a Copenhagen-based writer and researcher. Currently, he is connected to the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid as a researcher while writing on a book about the 20th century's myths of the future. His most recent publications are *The Way Out* (Minor Compositions, 2017)

and the edited anthology *Unexpected Encounters – Possible Futures* (Antipyrine, 2019).

Kirsty Wagstaffe

Kirsty Wagstaffe is a fine art practice-based PhD student at De Montford University, Leicester, UK, studying 'Alchemy and Transdisciplinarity: the creative process, self-exploration, and transformation'. The research explores Jungian techniques as methodology in creativity through practice-led fine art. Kirsty is also Senior Lecturer on the Integrated Foundation Year, Arts at the University of Northampton. She holds a BA(hons) in Photography, MA in Visual Communication, MSc in Psychology along with teaching and learning qualifications and recognition, and shorter course qualifications. kirstywagstaffe.com

Lara Luna Bartley

Lara Luna Bartley is an artist and PhD candidate at the University of the West of England's Digital Culture Research Centre (DCRC), focused on engaging audiences in debate about the monetary, banking, and financial system through participatory art.

Recent works include: *The Autonomous Teller Machine* (2018), a confused ATM activated through the insertion of a bank card that quizzed audiences about the 2008 financial crisis via a receipt printer; *I-D coin* (2018), a speculative design film short-listed for the Future of Money Award; and *BankRUN* (2017), a self-standing ATM from which I dispensed 200 hand-printed banknotes creating a 'bank run'.

I am dedicated to creating avenues for understanding money and finance through my creative practice. More specifically, to

drawing parallels between magic, myth, and finance in order to expose 'rational' economic thought for what it is: magical thinking.

Levin Handschuh

Levin Handschuh is a theatre director from Hamburg, Germany, and specializes in performance art and opera. His works have been shown at Theater Bremen, the Gelsenkirchen Opera, Theater Hof and the Bavarian State Opera, as well as the Wave Gotik Treffen in Leipzig. His productions are characterized by cross-over and mash-up aesthetics. Political activism and a ritual aesthetic form the foundation for many of his experimental works. Upcoming this season are his works "Tranceformation (Kinky Kafka)", with his long-time collaborators XelK collective, and "Moondog vs Valentin", which will both be produced with Theater Münster.

Libby Bove

Libby Bove is a multidisciplinary artist based in North Somerset. An unconventional home-school upbringing and an early adult life submerged in D.I.Y. culture, have helped to shape her eclectic creative practice. Bove's artist's practice began to form when she became a member of the Emporium collective in Bristol in 2009. Her involvement in this independent gallery led to her first exhibition 'Feeling Peculiar' 2010, which was a group exhibition of mixed media work, shared with her now long-time collaborator, Mads Mordigan. In 2011, Bove, Mordigan, and several other creatives went on to form *Standard & Co* where they specialised in puppetry, scenic design, and construction. *Standard & Co* continue to work together, under the name

Hells Pigeons Puppetry. 2011 also saw the creation of Cirque du Flop, a surreal and chaotic performance piece in which Bove took a leading role in its creative development. Currently, Bove is studying for a BA in Creative Arts Practice at Bath Spa University, where she specialises in sculpture. In March 2022 she opened her first solo show, entitled 'The Oracles', and is a winner of the Porthleven prize.

Lionel Snell aka Ramsey Dukes

Contemporary English magician, publisher and author on magic and philosophy, who publishes under many aliases, including, most famously, Ramsey Dukes.

Lionel Snell is among the founding names in chaos magic—though better known as Ramsey Dukes. In 1970, Gerald Yorke (keeper of the Crowley archive) introduced him to the writings of Austin Osman Spare and he wrote "Spare Parts"—an introductory article about Spare's system of magic—which was published in *Agape* 4 in 1973 together with a facsimile of Snell's copy of "The Anathema of Zos". This, together with his first self-published books, *SSOTBME: An Essay on Magic and Thundersqueak*, played a seminal role in the nascent Chaos current. He is also known for his contribution to cyber magic, having already pioneered the "information universe" concept twenty years before *The Matrix* (1999). His most recent book, *My Years of Magical Thinking*, was released in 2017.

Lionel was born to a Kibbo Kift couple as WW2 was ending and lived his childhood in a converted water mill deep in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds. From his village school, he won a scholarship plus government bursary to attend prep and public school in Bristol, where he

discovered a wonderful library of ancient alchemy and magic books that had been bequeathed to the school by EJ Holmyard. A scholarship to Cambridge University enabled him to study Crowley and other occult books in the University library, and he still had time to graduate in pure mathematics.

Meanwhile, he had made a name for himself—or rather a number of names—writing and self-publishing books and articles on magic, occult philosophy, and radical worldviews. These included a wicked satirical column for *Aquarian Arrow*, a UK neo-pantheist magazine in the 1970-80s. He is now best known under the pseudonym Ramsey Dukes, and he has a lively YouTube presence under that name.

Melissa Artemis Shemanna

Melissa Artemis Shemanna is a visionary artist & art gallery curator, residing in an off-grid forest tree house studio in the Yarra Valley, Australia. Her paintings hold an evolutionary enquiry into deeper human and cosmological intelligence, contrasting super worldly imagery of organic form, futuristic technology and hyper-colour lenses with a visionary edge. Shemanna's use of oil paints, tempera and local ochres, produce an emotionally rich & saturated experience through colour, luminosity and sacred mythic symbology that delves deeply into ancient occult wisdom.

Michael N. Goddard, PhD

Dr Michael N. Goddard, is Reader in Film and Screen Media at Goldsmiths, University of London. He has published widely on international cinema and audiovisual culture as well as cultural and media theory. He is also a media theorist,

especially in the fields of media ecologies and media archaeology, as well as in digital media. In media archaeology, his most significant contribution is the monograph, *Guerrilla Networks* (2018), the culmination of his media archaeological research to date, which was published by Amsterdam University Press. His previous book, *Impossible Cartographies* (2013) was on the cinema of Raúl Ruiz. He has also been doing research on the fringes of popular music focusing on groups such as The Fall, Throbbing Gristle and Laibach and culminating in editing two books on noise, *Reverberations* (2012) and *Resonances* (2013). He is currently working on a book on the British post-industrial group Coil, and a new research project on genealogies of immersive media and virtuality.

Mogg Morgan

Mogg Morgan is CEO of leading occultural publisher Mandrake and a respected literary catalyst. He is the holder of an advanced degree in Oriental Studies from the University of Oxford where he benefited from a Wellcome research studentship in the history of Medicine. Independent researcher and author, Mogg is currently working on the interpretation of ancient Egyptian philosophy and magic, on which he has authored several respected books from a scholar-practitioner perspective. . His previous books include: *The Bull of Ombos; Supernatural Assault in Ancient Egypt; Seth and the Two Ways; Demonic Calendar Ancient Egypt, Isis, Goddess of Egypt and India, and Egyptian Magick: A Spirited Guide.*

Nikki Wyrd

Nikki Wyrd is a well-known figure in occulture, and has helped spread chaos

magic techniques by crafting writings, publications, talks and workshops since 1990. She has attended and organized numerous rituals, residential meetings and public events, and is an Elder of the chaos magic community. Nikki has edited many of the most important books of the psychedelic renaissance. She is currently Chair and an Executive Director of Breaking Convention, the charity which holds Europe's largest conference on psychedelics. She is Editor of a quarterly periodical, the Psychedelic Press Journal. She likes trees, and finds her Ecology degree comes in very handy when contacting the faery realms.

Orryelle Defenestrade-Basculé

Orryelle Defenestrade-Basculé is an esoteric artist in many media, including painting, writing, sculpture, sound, film and performance art.

He is the writer-director of Australian-originating Metamorphic Ritual Theatre Company who have presented many major original productions based in (and updating/mutating) various ancient mythos; and the creator of the *Tela Quadrivium* book web from Fulgur (*Conjunctio, Coagula, Solve, Distillatio*) and *The Book of Kaos Tarot* (iNSPiRALink.Multimedia Press).

Orryelle is interested in the ensoulment of objects through aesthetic obsession; the merging of mental, spiritual and emotional relationships with creativity, in the vanguard of the current resurgence of the esoteric in art with its processes of re-enchantment.

The interplay of the figurative/representational and the abstract, the

organic and 'synthetic' (inc. the actual and the virtual) are aspects of these explorations, which aim to delve below the surface of things. His current major project is the creation of a magical sculpture park at his 'Le Chalet Crepuscule' in the Ardennes forest, Belgium, where he is also holding ritual gatherings on some of the major Sabbats.

Sara Hannant

Sara Hannant is an artist and photographer, my publications include *Mummers, Maypoles and Milkmaids: A journey through the English Ritual Year* (2011) and *Of Shadows: One Hundred Objects from the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic* (2016). Recent awards: Winner Pollux Awards 2022: Alternative Processes, 2021 Selected Best of Show International Photography Awards, IPA Jury Top 5 and Country Pick: United Kingdom, IPA 2nd Place in the Professional Analog/Film, Other, 2021 Runner-up Julia Margaret Cameron Award, Alternative Processes, Honourable Mention PX3 Prix de la Photographie 2021, Siena Creative Photo Awards 2021 and Winner Pollux Awards 2020: Alternative Processes.

My research explores the intersections of photography and magic. I investigate the camera as a magical object, the photograph's materiality, and how the photographic image can convey aspects of the magical imagination. Recent projects explore an aesthetic communication about how darkness functions in the mystical vision, particularly how the shadow can make the unseen appear tangible.

Sarah Coflan

Sarah Coflan is an independent scholar

whose love and focus mostly lie in the way literature, film, and other art engage with the Underworld and shadow work. She earned her Masters of Arts degree at Goddard College, exploring the Horror film as a method of personal Underworld journeying. She has presented work on Twin Peaks for the Twin Peaks at Thirty conference, and for Romancing the Gothic.

Scott Jeffery, PhD

Dr Scott Jeffery is a lecturer, artist, and author of *The Posthuman Body in Superhero Comics* (2016). His latest publication, *Difference, Repetition, and the Superhero Comic* appeared in the collection *Superheroes and Excess: A Philosophical Adventure* (2021) and he was an artistic contributor to the recent *Tool Box* series of books providing creative games and activities for those in prison. Rumours that his role as keeper of The Fairy-Dog Calendar Count means he is an undercover warrior in the Lemurian Time-Wars are largely exaggerated.

Shannon Taggart

Shannon Taggart is an artist and author based in St. Paul, MN. Her photographs have been exhibited and featured internationally, including within the publications TIME, New York Times Magazine, Discover, and Newsweek. Her work has been recognized by PDN, Nikon, Magnum Photos and the Inge Morath Foundation, American Photography, International Photography Awards, and the Alexia Foundation for World Peace. Taggart's monograph, *SÉANCE* (Fulgur Press, 2019), was named one of TIME's 'Best Photobooks of 2019.' The book is being reissued in Fall, 2022 by Atelier Éditions and is currently traveling as

an exhibition, set to next open at the Pensacola Museum of Art in September 2022. Since 2019, she has been working with Dr. James McClenon to save the archives of The Society for Research on Rapport and Telekinesis (SORRAT), created by founding member John Thomas Richards (1937-2015). Their illustrated book on *SORRAT* will be released by Atelier Éditions in Fall, 2023.

Simon Magus, PhD

Dr Simon Magus BSc (Hons) MB BS MA PhD is a psychiatrist with a special interest in Early Intervention Psychosis. He studied medicine in London at Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School, now part of the Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine.

After qualifying, he taught Anatomy as the Royal College Prosector to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, and as an associate lecturer in Anatomy and Embryology at the University of Glasgow. After initially following a surgical path, he changed to psychiatry in 1996.

Simon's interest in esotericism predates his medical studies by a number of years. He completed an MA in Western Esotericism at EXESES (The Exeter Centre for the Study of Esotericism), The University of Exeter in 2008/9. His thesis was entitled *Austin Osman Spare and the Conquest of the Imaginal: Paranoia, Metanoia and Phronesis of the Magical Mind*. His specialist field of enquiry currently centres on Victorian and Edwardian literary expressions of occultism, having recently published the book of his doctoral thesis *Rider Haggard and the Imperial Occult: Hermetic Discourse and Romantic Contiguity*, Volume 31 in the ARIES Book

Series: 'Texts and Studies in Western Esotericism', Brill, Leiden Publishers. academia.edu/SimonMagus

Sonja Rendtorff

Sonja Rendtorff is a Copenhagen-based artist and filmmaker. She graduated with an MFA from The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in 2010. She has since been involved in filmmaking and has been an artist in residency at SALT Galata, Istanbul, and Townhous, Cairo. Together with a group of fellow artists, she ran the non-profit exhibition space Koh-i-Noor in Copenhagen for a decade, and she has collaborated with a wide variety of artists and writers.

Stephen Godfrey

Stephen Godfrey has been a professional photographer since 1989 and a practicing photographic artist since 2000, he has developed a dedicated skill set through his extensive work at the University of Northampton, where he provides key teaching skills to both students and staff. Stephen's love of the landscape has enabled him to explore the diversity it offers and through the photographic medium, he has explored the boundaries of the photographed environment. The elements and erosion play an important role in the developing process of Stephen's landscape photography. phototerragrams.co.uk/landscapes

The Inner Space Exploration Unit

Judith Noble (attending in person) is Head of Academic Research and Associate Professor at Arts University Plymouth.

Dominic Shepherd (attending in person) is a UK-based artist and associate professor of Fine Art at the Arts University Bournemouth.

Evie Salmon is an artist, writer, director and academic. She directs The Alchemical Landscape project and is chair of the Cambridge University Counterculture Research Group.

Ethan Pennell is a Devon-based (UK) artist and writer whose practice draws upon environmental issues, folklore and the Western Esoteric Tradition.

James Riley is the Muriel Bradbrook Official Fellow of English Literature at Girton College, University of Cambridge. www.iseu.space

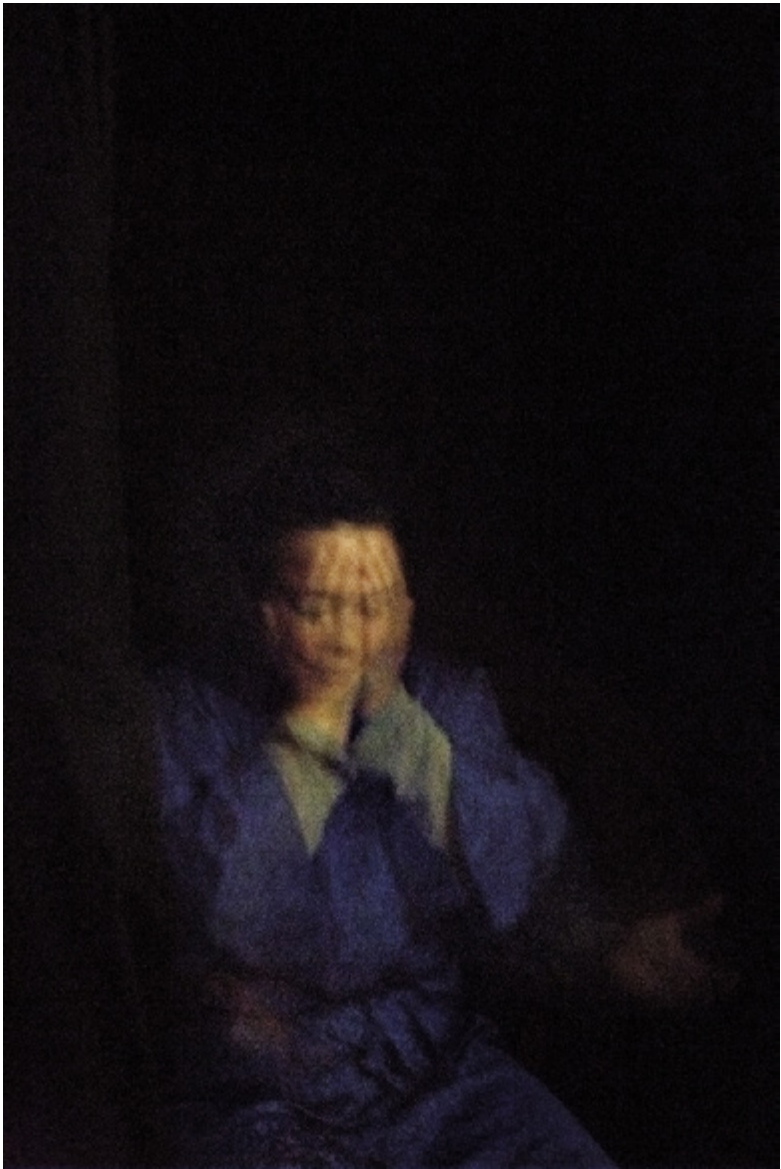
Tom Banger

Tom Banger has lectured internationally and has been published in *The Fenris Wolf*, *Rituals & Declarations*, *The Trapartisan Review* and many other publications. He founded the Temple of Psychick Youth North America in 1986. Over the next four odd years, he wrote numerous texts on contemporary magick and shamanism under the name Coyote *2 and helped facilitate the coming together of an unprecedented collaborative network of artists, magicians, shamans, and charlatans. During this time, TOPYNA published thousands of original occult research, including *Television Magick* and the first two editions of *EsoTerrorist* by Genesis P-Orridge. Banger stopped coordinating TOPYNA in 1990 in order to focus on his interest in engineering and technology. He now divides his time between gardening, cybersecurity, and his family. He's the Banger half of The Banger and Andrew Podcast.

Yoshe

Yoshe is a musician, dancer, and academic. She completed an MPhil in music at the University of Cambridge specialising in online subcultures, which has informed her ongoing research into cyberfeminist activism. Having performed from a young age in dance and music, her current work as a practitioner uses groundbreaking motion sensor technology to bring together these two art forms. She is passionate about the application of this technology in breaking down formal and ableist barriers in music making.

Yoshe has performed around the world as a travelling busker and is a co-founding member of the Northampton Arts Lab. When not dancing or making music, she dabbles in neo-expressionist painting and writing science fiction.



Shannon Taggart (2013) *Medium Sylvia Howarth enters a trance, England* [Photograph]
29.7cm (w) x 42cm (h)

INTRODUCTORY SESSION

Ferdinando Buscema: Keeper of Secrets

—10.30, Oratory

Performative Presentation – Keeper of Secrets

Conjuring, illusionism, prestidigitation, secular stage magic, sleight-of-hand artistry—these are different names for the mind-blowing performing art form par excellence.

Having our senses duped and our model of reality warped can bring us to a place where our rational mind and our feelings short-circuit: to experience something we know it's impossible, yet we see it happening. Potential outcomes of this situation can be astonishment, mystery, a non-threatening sense of uncertainty and not-knowing. This special kind of thrill partly calls to our primal childlike sense of wonder but often requires the intellectual maturity of an adult to affect us most powerfully.

To successfully transport an audience, the magician unabashedly deploys trickery, deception, ruses, subterfuges—a weird set of tools-of-the-trade that must remain hidden and secret, otherwise there'll be no magic.

Breaking the most basic of the magicians' rules, during a fast-paced and interactive lecture/show Ferdinando will share some of his secrets—secrets that are hidden in plain sight: through sleight-of-hand and sleight-of-mouth, flirting with revealing and concealing, he'll invite the participants to play with their perceptions and their notion of what is possible. Although some secrets can be revealed, in the realm of magic is

"secrets all the way down"; to paraphrase poet W.B. Yeats: The world is full of secrets, patiently waiting for our senses to grow sharper.

All in all, this lecture/show is designed to evoke the mysterious dimension that lies behind and beyond all experience.

PRESENTATIONS: FRIDAY

Panel 1A: Methodology, Esoteric Practices and Re-Enchantment

—14.00, Oratory

The Ghost in the Machine: Occultural Production and 'Alienated Agency'
Cavan McLaughlin

In my practice-based PhD project on occulture and occultural production I have identified 'alienated agency' as a key characteristic of occultural production. As I have discussed previously, occulture has a close relationship with radical alterity, or ineffable Otherness; and, moreover, given occulture is about the dissemination and mediation of a particular set of 'ideas, practices, beliefs and symbols' through the actors, networks and fora of the cultural field, it is inherently about communication and mediation. (Partridge, 2004, p.84).

Within culture, occulture is produced, read, interpreted, politically negotiated, and communicated, but is also always signposting, always pointing back to a mysterious, alienated, non-linguistic source. The extent to which something is occultural, therefore, can be evaluated by the extent to which it mediates unlanguageable and incommunicable experiences through networks, processes and actors within the language field of

human culture. Therefore, whereas cultural studies is the study of how culture is constructed and organised and the ways in which it evolves and changes over times, occultural studies is concerned with how incommunicable and ineffable experiences both enter and are disseminated through the cultural field.

Occulture is always, either directly or indirectly, about communication with others and, indeed, Otherness and the sourcing of noetic material beyond the boundaries of language. Whether it be the directly experiential and revelatory state of gnosis or other forms of mediated phenomena such as engagement with spirits, ancestors, godforms, angelic encounters, daemons, the genius or the HGA (Holy Guardian Angel), alien encounters, channelling, divination, visions, and so on, this paper will consider how occulture has a specific relationship with non-social actors, and/or the messages or actions of these alienated agents.

Acid Communisms and Anarcho-Mysticisms: Notes towards a History of Re-enchantment as Resistance
Scott Jeffrey

The figure of the magician is one whose sleight of hand and word can confound and upturn the audience's sense of "reality". This paper explores this idea by blurring the lines between social theory and occulture.

Mark Fisher's phrase *Capitalist Realism* described the ways in which the social and political imagination has become closed off to the possibility of other modes of life and social organization. By contrast, his later concept, *Acid Communism*, describes "a new humanity; a new seeing; a new thinking".

Specifically, this talk would like to place the concept of *Acid Communism* within a wider Occultural context by mapping a brief history of what might be called Magical Marxisms and Anarcho-Mysticisms; movements where politics, art, activism and occultism have converged in a series of efforts to disrupt what Deleuze once termed the Control Society.

If Control seeks to make subjects of us, bound in the consensual hallucination of Capitalist Realism and its 'slow cancellation of the future', the movements discussed here linked altered states of consciousness with class-consciousness, activism and occultism, re-enchantment and resistance. Drawing upon a selection of historical examples, I want to map out an alternative history (and potential future) of Acid Communism by considering them as acts of deliberate 'fictioning'; where myth-making combines with rituals and techniques that actualize new, collective subjectivities.

By drawing out these narratives we can reveal a history and a set of tools which demonstrate and encourage the possibility of (co-)creating new futures.

Alternative Rationalities and Esoteric Practices from a Global Perspective
Bernd-Christian Otto

The German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) recently approved the foundation of a new Center for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences (Kollegforschungsgruppe) on the topic 'Alternative Rationalities and Esoteric Practices from a Global Perspective' at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg. The Center's main goal is to

compare the interpretation, rationalisation and legitimisation strategies of esoteric practices from a global perspective, and to carve out why they are successful in different cultural and regional contexts. A mid-term goal is the development of a cultural theory of esoteric practices, which seeks to explain their resilience, their typological similarities across a large number of cases, and their different, culture-bound evaluations. DFG-funded Centers for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences are interdisciplinary research groups that combine an international fellowship programme with local high-profile research, whereby a large number of leading experts have the possibility to convene and explore an innovative research topic over a long period of time. With a local staff of at least nine employees, and available funding for up to seven fellowships per year, the Center will be one of the biggest esotericism-focused research projects in academia in the years to come. The paper will present the research agenda of the Center, and thereby stress its interest in collaborating with esoteric practitioners, thus transcending traditional academic boundaries. The goal of the paper is hence to announce and popularise the foundation of the new research center among scholars and practitioners alike, and to ponder possible ways of collaboration, cooperation and mutual inspiration.

The Inner Space Exploration Unit
Judith Noble & Dominic Shepherd

In May 2020, during the first COVID-19 lockdown, Judith Noble convened an online conversation between a group of artists working across a range of media. Noble, along with Dominic Shepherd, Evie Salmon, Ethan Pennell and James Riley discussed how the experience of lockdown

was affecting their inner worlds; how had this introversion influenced their imaginal landscapes? The group discovered overlapping interests, methodologies and began to experiment with shared sequential-experiential practices as a way of mapping their intersecting inner territories. Gradually these inner realms generated an uncanny common ground. As work continued, the group chose to conduct their activities under a collective label: The Inner Space Exploration Unit (ISEU). That the acronym ISEU became, phonetically, 'is you' was an additional point of significance not lost on those involved. Taking its cue from the alchemical legacies of Surrealism, particularly its perambulatory and cartographic trajectories, the ISEU's work could be described as a group ascent of Mount Analogue. Each artist seeks the keys to the personal landscapes the mediumship of the group brings into view. This presentation will offer an introduction to the ISEU and the work of the group's initial phase, 2020-21. Emphasis will be placed on its attempt at a return voyage. At various times during its movement through physical and psychic space, the group brought spirit presences back into this world. These presences were made manifest through the ISEU's collaborative processes and included an enigmatic fixture from a 1960s postcard, otherworld presences from the folklore of Dartmoor and the shade of Boris Karloff, amongst others. Such presences have variously acted as guides, tulpas and tricksters. Some of these transmissions were intentional, others occurred by way of a 'veritable occultation' of conscious intent. Either way, a door was opened. This group talk reflects on such conveyances and documents the keys involved.

Panel 1B: Methical Methods:
Case Studies and Reflections
—14.00, Town Hall

Voodoo-Brecht: Contemporary
Theatre and Magic
Levin Handschuh

The history of magic and theatre is strongly intertwined: from the beginnings of shamanic rituals to medieval mystery plays to modern magic shows. What was once the shaman for early societies is now the artist for the modern masses. But many artists no longer have this connection in mind when creating. Theatre in particular stands at the crossroads between entertainment and social responsibility. The project "M/EAT THE ARBEITERKLASSE" ("working class") from 2019 acted as a counterpoint to this development. Bertolt Brecht's play "Saint Joan of the Stockyards" and Karl Marx's "Das Kapital" served as templates for an expertly advised voodoo ritual mixed with doom metal and operatic singing. In this lecture, I will talk about the conceptual challenges of bringing magic into the theatre in a meaningful way and with social relevance and will show the results of this using the example "M/EAT THE ARBEITERKLASSE". In particular, I'd like to address the issue of cultural appropriation that challenged the team since there were no PoC involved in this project, although the theme was voodoo. Video excerpts from the production with English subtitles illustrate the project for the audience. Furthermore, I'll show more of my performances that have combined magic and theatre, such as "TechnoTarot" and the Lovecraft concert ritual "Native Outsiders", which was performed at Theater Bremen.

Ludomancy: Games as Occult
Practice in Between States
Jeff Howard

Games and the occult are deeply intertwined, from the first knucklebone dice used in both divination and gambling, to the ritualistically encoded ancient Egyptian board game of Senet, to the arcane tarot cards that serve simultaneously as card game and devices for cartomantic fortune telling. The Magician card to whom the Trans-States 3 Conference is consecrated is in French "le bateleur" (juggler or mountebank): a man whose altar doubles as a cardsharp's table. Games exist in a trans-state par excellence: between frivolity and profundity, the material and the digital, this world and the other(s). In this talk, the presenter will explore games as a means of shifting between states of being and consciousness, with particular focus on two case studies, both of which he works on as a designer: Deadhaus Sonata and The Arcana Ritual Theatre. Deadhaus Sonata's Trinary Archetype system allows players to shift between physical, magickal, and essential states. Similarly, Arcana is a ceremonial magick simulator which enables players to perform occult rituals in a magic theatre to summon spirits, perform astral projection, and unlock the mysteries of the multiverse. Similar examples of digital and tabletop games will reveal play as an occult practice. While the Satanic panic of the 1980's may have been literally false in its claims that Dungeons and Dragons was a route toward Satanism, games can function as imaginative gateways to other planes of existence (whether the Egyptian astrological magic of Nephilim, the Left Hand Path Qliphothic Gnosticism of Kult, the magisterial, multimodal magic of Invisible Sun, or the solitary hermetic magic of Seekers Beyond the Shroud). Through theoretical analysis and practical performance, the presenter will conjure

up a vision of ludomancy (the magic of play), suggesting that it can unveil the play at magic's heart and open up playful space within ossified traditions.

Escape Your Reality Tunnel:
Magical Methods of Cognition
Julian Vayne & Nikki Wyrd

Esoteric magic and stage magic rely on altering perception. What we perceive is largely based on our preconceptions and beliefs about the world. We see what we expect to see, rather than what is really there. Magicians engineer this process, by which means they might alter who we believe ourselves to be (the aim of much occultism), and also aspects of the physical world around us (a rabbit came out of that hat!). Our senses construct our reality tunnel from the clues they gather, deceiving us with a fabricated version of the physical environment. How much more fabricated then must those deduced versions of non-present reality be, upon we base our decisions?

From the power of placebo to the shamanic sleight of hand – many approaches to magic embrace the use of fakery to generate real effects. In this presentation occultists, Nikki Wyrd and Julian Vayne will explore the methods by which the unreal is made real in settings including shamanic healing, spirit communication, and spell casting. We'll show how fakery serves to articulate wide social concerns and ways in which it can initiate actual changes in society. Join us for a journey through the worlds of Ayahuasca-infused psychic surgery, the 'as if' philosophy of Austin Osman Spare, the mythical role of the trickster, and a discussion of the implications of a magical understanding of deception in the era of deep fakes,

fact-checkers, and dis-information.

On Meta-Sequential Art: Hyper-Objects, System Transitions, and other Magickings of the Cartoon
a6rax1s

Comics presents to us a medium that is exceptionally suitable to the plays of magic – it is congenial to implementing and impressing magical acts upon time/ becoming – hyper-sigils, mythologizations, world-creations. To make comics is to act as a magician. To read comics is to be enchanted and drawn into vivid other worlds and temporalities. The a6rax1s presents its own worlds – and their diversely layered temporal dynamics – for interest and consideration.

As an extension of traditional literacy into pictures-simulating-time, the comics medium inherits traditional text's magically deceptive role of mediating and remediating experience. This gives a new dimension to its expression – potentially liberating temporality from a unilinear frame. The medium's signature "trick" of laying out images as a means of deceiving the brain into inferring succession, opens a wide field of play for the mystic or esoteric artist interested in using cartooning as an experimental method.

In this presentation of forays into esoteric cartooning, the a6rax1s offers esoteric works that bewilder the comics medium in several ways. The a6rax1s will showcase nonlinear & out-of-position temporalities; layers of density, rate and texture; webs of intersecting causation; compressions; porousness of the gutters, and various other counterintuitive effects that allow the medium to explore notions of time and space far beyond what we normally consider.

Panel 1C: Historical Perspectives
on the Esoteric
—14.00, Forum

Full of Various Wiles

John-David Kelley

The art of deception hinges on the application of diegesis and mimesis. Narrative and representation are skills foremost among the magician, the artist, and the marketer. How we perform or promote a truth or falsity depends on much the same competencies regardless of motive. Within this tangle, we find the Mercurial of old full of various wiles.

To truly grasp this most cunning of characters, best described, I will argue, as the cosmic expression of heterogeneity, I will turn first to historical understandings and depictions of Mercury and the Mercurial arising from early observational astronomy, astrology, and astral magic. In this way, I will give a cursory sketch of an earlier conception of this most protean form within western esotericism and occultism.

Drawing on this, I will consider Mercury's malleability, how mercurial intelligence and impulse is shaped and adapted readily by context and motivation. Equally, how this form is to be most fully understood astrologically in relation to the polarity of which it is a part, that of the Mercurial-Jupiterian. Wherever we find Mercury we, too, find Jupiter. Thinking in polarities is implied in the logic of western astrology, but it also reveals novel pairings that have broad implications for the interrelated system it describes.

I propose that considering the Mercurial and its associated impulses within this pairing offers a fuller spectrum of expression to more clearly describe

this necessarily ambiguous force. With the mercurial isolated from the jupiterian, the tides of multifariousness are without motivation, or worse still only motivated by selfishness or a move towards the discontinuous. When refigured, the Mercurial is brought into fuller relationality, revealing the power of diegesis and mimesis in its various forms to reveal the ineffable.

The Transmissions and
Transmutations of Edward Kelley
Free Frame

This talk will focus on the alchemist and magician Sir Edward Kelley and his impact upon magic and history. Kelley was the scribe of the magus and alchemist John Dee and together they travelled across Europe performing angelic sessions for Emperors and Kings by accessing the angelic realm with the use of their so-called Shewstone. Kelley's self-claimed direct transmissions from angels of the enigmatic Enochian language brought them fame, but ultimately led to history's most infamous wife swapping incident which caused the pair to break up.

John Dee returned to England and Edward Kelley stayed in Bohemia to become knighted by the Emperor Rudolf II and became a wealthy landowner. Years later Kelley was accused of falsely claiming to transmute base metals into gold and was locked up in a castle tower. Kelley escaped from the tower only to be caught and locked up again in a different castle tower. He escaped again, but soon after died of injuries sustained from his escape.

Today Edward Kelley is seen by many as one of the greatest charlatans in history, but could Kelley have been in fact using psychotropic substances to deceive his

audience of Kings and Emperors into believing they were actually hearing from angels? This talk will look into new revelations that point to the possibilities that Kelley was actually using chemicals to transform people's consciousnesses and that the tale of transmuting base metals was just a cover story.

The Magic of Technology: Rudolf Steiner's Rosicrucianism and the UFO Phenomenon
Aaron J. French

In 1948, American astrophysicist J. Allen Hynek was tapped by the United States Air Force to join an U.S. government program studying unidentified flying objects. The project was called Project Sign. At the time, Hynek was ostensibly skeptical of UFOs and set out to study the reports obtained by the US Air Force to determine whether the UFOs were naturally occurring objects or the result of misidentification. By the 1960s, Project Sign had become Project Blue Book and Hynek, still a key member, had begun to publicly disagree with the official conclusions that had debunked the UFO sightings. This was the beginning of Hynek's "turnaround," after which he started believing in the UFO phenomenon. He began to study the phenomenon using a serious scientific approach. In 1977, at the First International UFO Congress in Chicago, Hynek remarked: "I hold it entirely possible that a technology exists, which encompasses both the physical and the psychic, the material and the mental. ... I hypothesize an 'M&M' technology encompassing the mental and material realms." Prior to this "turnaround," and throughout his career, Hynek was interested in the esotericism of Rudolf Steiner and Rosicrucianism. The impetus of Rosicrucianism, and of Steiner, was to bridge the gap between

science and religion, to develop a new science that would be practiced by an "invisible college." While the connection between Hynek and Steiner is not well known, it begs the question, did it play a role in Hynek's analysis of the UFO phenomenon? Similarly, is there anything in Steiner's oeuvre that contains something about UFOs? It turns out that there is. Furthermore, there appear to be key resonances between Steiner's esoteric Rosicrucianism and Hynek's ideas about the UFO phenomenon.

Toys of Torment and Transcendence
Harper Feist

The iynx of antiquity and the strophalos of the late Graeco-Roman era are often combined in today's historical and popular occult literature. The iynx was a wheel-shaped wooden disk suspended on a leather thong passed through two holes and was used to propitiate love spells. This device has been known since its appearance in Pindar's Pythia 4. Pindar and other authors describe the use of this apparently innocent spinning toy as a principal ingredient in the most brutal of love spells with the eye to drive the victim to madness if they do not yield to erotic persuasion.

The strophalos, a much more elaborate ritual device, described as a golden sphere with lapis lazuli at the centre, covered with characters and spun on a leather thong, was first described in the second century CE.

These two devices are conflated, confused for one another, and misunderstood in much of the popular literature concerning either one of them. Contemporary popular works involving the attraction and coercion of deity are witness to an

amalgamation of the two devices. By late antiquity, the spinning ritual devices – at that point called strophalos – were used in theurgical operations, and possibly in initiations into the Mystery Cults.

This presentation will argue that the devices were never equivalent and, further, neither of these devices have been historically documented as having been used to compel the presence or action of deities.

Time permitting, the presentation will include rituals for using both, and a demonstration of the actions of a iynx.

PRESENTATIONS: SATURDAY

Panel 2A: Esoteric Artists and (Oc)cultural Producers — 9.30, Oratory

Into the Welcoming Arms of the Amethyst Deceivers: The Music of Coil and Altered States of Time and Embodiment

Michael N. Goddard

This paper will examine the music of post-industrial electronic group Coil as fundamentally about and provoking of altered states of embodiment and consciousness. Formed by John Balance and Peter Christopherson out of the ashes of Throbbing Gristle and Psychick TV, Coil was profoundly informed by the intersections of occult practices, surrealist aesthetics, queer sensibilities and other elements, resulting in a singular trajectory over the 23 years of their existence. This paper will focus on key musical recordings by Coil that are especially focused on the alterations of embodiment and consciousness produced

by both hallucinogenic substances and occult rituals. This will begin with the Love's Secret Domain project which was a deepening of rave and techno aesthetics, and proceed via Coil's engagement with the entity known as 'Elph' which they claimed directly intervened in the recording process as can be experienced via the 'Coil vs. Elph' project 'Worship the Glitch'. Finally, it will turn to the mid-90s 'Time Machines' project as the intensification of these tendencies resulting in the creation of a form of drone music as literal time travel. throughout it will be examining the relations between experimental music, occult ritual and transformations of states of embodied sonic perception as a form of contemporary technologically mediated magick.

The Abominable Mercury': An Analysis of Frieda Harris's Anthropomorphised Concept of the Trickster God **Deja Whitehouse**

In order to fulfil Aleister Crowley's commission to illustrate his Book of Thoth, Frieda Harris became his magical pupil, working her way diligently through the grades of the A∴A∴. Her studies were blended with her work on the Tarot paintings during the course of which Harris developed a deeply personal relationship with the god Mercury.

This talk will explore the evolution and manifestations of Harris's relationship with the Trickster God and assess its impact on the creation of the Magus card, her personal life and her magical development.

For sixty years Harris conducted herself as she laughingly described 'an exceedingly well-bred & bourgeoisie [sic] lady with all the nice instincts of that section of Real

Life' To counter the societal expectations of 'Lady Harris, the wife of the Right Hon.' she created her alter ego, Jesus Chutney, first adopted when she was mingling with Surrealists in 1920s Paris. Used initially as an alias when exhibiting her paintings, Jesus Chutney became her independent bohemian identity, in correspondence, other writings, and even the telephone listing for her Richmond studio. Harris's playful sense of humour was not always appreciated by Crowley, especially in matters magical and she would sometimes employ 'J.C.' to convey serious issues amusingly to deflect a potentially hostile response. One such example is a letter in which she claims her delay in working on the Magus card is because 'J.C... has embroiled himself with a person called Mr. Mercury.'

As this lecture will argue, her anthropomorphising of Mercury, both as a manifestation in her everyday life and as the source for the Magus card caused genuine concern to Crowley who believed 'of all the Gods, Mercury is the easiest to offend, the hardest to propitiate.'

The Mystagogue: Writing Esoterica
Back into Art History

Gillian McIver

Phillip-Jacques de Loutherbourg was the youngest painter ever elected to the French Académie. As the first professional scenographer on the London stage, he virtually invented special effects and created the first proto-cinema, the Eidophusikon. He was a landscape and history painter of stupendous skill and vision and taught Turner how to paint light.

So why has de Loutherbourg been written out of art history? If he appears at all he is a footnote. He is almost totally absent in

accounts of Turner; occasionally he pops up elsewhere as a friend of someone more famous. But of Loutherbourg himself, and his art, art historians have long been silent.

Loutherbourg, dubbed 'the Mystagogue', was an alchemist and a magician. The special effects he made were devised in his alchemical lab. He attempted to set up a Temple of Freemasonry that would fully admit women. He was a successful faith healer, treating hundreds. Finally, he and his painter friend Richard Cosway had a sex magick circle, with their wives and assorted others.

Art history became a discipline in a more puritanical age than Loutherbourg's. Even during his lifetime, he was not immune to the accusation of deception and charlatany, an epithet also flung at his close friend Cagliostro. Is it time to retrieve both and replace them where they belong in history? This illustrated talk will focus on Loutherbourg and the challenge of writing him back into art history. In the process, I will reflect on the questions: what does academic research have to offer esoteric researchers and practitioners, and what can an understanding of the esoteric offer to the researcher?

Dree Your Own Weird: How the
Fictional Occult Bleeds into
the Real

Kasper Opstrup

In times of crises where established orthodoxies come under pressure, the weird has a particular attraction. In this talk, I examine how the reappearance of weird thought in recent years addresses the slowly eroding, deceptive border between fictions and facts. Weird fictions have informed not only our modern notion of the occult but also a type of politics

relying on memes, conspiracy theories, and other tricksterisms to get its message across. Because the weird thrives on a fascination of the Other and the Outside, and because what feels weird depends on who you are, the weird always poses a political question since any dream of potential futures needs to dream changes to the way we think and the way we are.

As humanity and the world change, so must religion, and, in the weird fictions of the Victorian age's fascination of combining science with religion, we encounter the occult goal of creating a new 'race' of 'supermen' who would work towards the 'regeneration' of the planet, where the magician is a prophetic representative of a new form of humanity. From Robert W. Chambers' *The King in Yellow* to the writings of William Burroughs, weird fictions have taken the form of a type of infectious stories that ultimately wants to rearrange reality. Like occult literature, they want to make something happen, and, often, there is an underlying consensus that world-building always entails fictionalisations. By analysing examples from the weird 20th century and its mix of alien communications, genre fictions and psychedelic metaphysics, this talk wants to discuss the weird as a space of deviancy that challenges established explanations. How does it open for new ways of thinking and being? In what ways does it prepare us for not only sudden change but also for new and unknown sensations?

Panel 2B: Artist as Magician (Part I)
—9.30, Town Hall

Séance

Shannon Taggart

American artist Shannon Taggart (born 1975) became aware of Spiritualism as

a teenager, when her cousin received a message from a medium that revealed details about her grandfather's death. In 2001, while working as a photographer, she began taking pictures where that message was received—Lily Dale, New York, home to the world's largest Spiritualist community—proceeding to other such communities as England's Arthur Findlay College. Taggart expected to spend one summer figuring out the tricks of the Spiritualist trade. Instead, Spiritualism's mysterious processes, earnest practitioners, and neglected photographic history became an inspiration. Her project evolved into an eighteen-year journey that has taken her around the world in search of 'ectoplasm'—the elusive substance that is said to be both spiritual and material.

With *SÉANCE*, Taggart offers haunting images exploring Spiritualist practices in the US, England and Europe: 150 of her original photographs, many of which have never been published, as well as rare historical photographs. Supported with a commentary on her experiences, a foreword by Dan Aykroyd, creator of *Ghostbusters* (1984) and fourth-generation Spiritualist, and illustrated essays from curator Andreas Fischer and artist Tony Oursler, *SÉANCE* examines Spiritualism's relationship with human celebrity, its connections to art, science, and technology, and its intrinsic bond with the medium of photography. The book concludes with the debate over ectoplasm and how Spiritualism can move forward in the twenty-first century.

Mythology & Magick in Art:
Dancing with the Trickster

Emma Watkinson

In this presentation, Emma discusses some of the magical journeys that unfolded in



Julian Vayne (2022) *The Detonation of Language* [Ink on Card] 42cm (w) x 59.4 cm (h)

the creation of her paintings. The process often feels like a dance with a trickster, or Creatrix, as the universe has a remarkable sense of humour in throwing extraordinary coincidences and clues in her path.

In each painting, we meet the Magician in their various guises. "The Magis Grail" depicts the Magus tarot card, the sword, grail, wand and pentacle, and the *hieros gamos* of the Alchemical work. In the Kabbalah painting, we encounter Hermes in the mercurial sphere of Hod. In Akhenaten, the rebel Pharaoh reveals the formulae for creation in balancing the elements within Metatron's cube.

Kali, first inspired by a Discordian pilgrimage, heralded the Kali Yuga & led to a psychopomp ancestor ritual. The Descent of Inanna was woven into a psychopomp ritual and shadow integration, while the Shri Yantra, a painting created after a Kumba Mela, later invoked a cosmic re-birth at the Men a Tol, the golden apples of immortality. The Judgement of Paris work-in-progress is a theme she has worked with for the past 30 years, reflected in the current political climate. Artemis wove her intentions into climate action, while Brigid sings of the earth.

Each story weaves in the microcosm and the macrocosm ... rituals held at sacred sites around the world, her personal journey and simultaneous world events, creating paintings that are a metaphor for the human experience and a reflection of the collective unconscious.

THRICE GREAT GIGER: An Auto-ethnographic Exploration

Ben Jeans Houghton

This presentation of practice-based research invokes an artist whose trans-

conscious-ethnographies revealed the xenomorphic-genus of Terra Incognita. I present through the generation of language and image an auto-ethnographic, chronological exploration, of my own oneiromantic relationship to the channelled embodiment of this plutonian-psychopomp. I mean to illuminate something of the magician's gnostic capacity to world-the-shadow; to reveal the transpersonal-panspermia of celestial, terrestrial, and infernal realms; contextualised-with and focused on the scorpionic archetypes and imaginal-ecologies of an astrological metaphysics.

This atavistic experimentalism is an explorative attempt to embody through praxis a visionary invocation of Giger's shade-as-guide, akin to Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker*; A figure whose ambulation permeates the boundaries of an imaginal-zone of profound and perilous psychic portent.

I mean to track Giger's atemporal resonances, whose inception ever-dawns and ever-dusks, from an ethereal event horizon beyond the ecliptic that feels equally ancient and futuristic. The images I present, arrive through my own generative trance-based encounters with the embodied-genitalia of scorpionic imaginal-ecologies. This möbius procreation of my own ritually channeled paintings is generated in-relationship-with writing; that both inspire it and are inspired by it.

This self-reflexive auto-ethnographic odyssey navigates an exploration of my own magical experiences through arts praxis: A plutonian initiation into Giger's world at 10 years old. Ecstatic states aberrantly reached through the organised brutality of intensive gymnastics training at 12. A skull fracture that rewired my thinking at 15. A decade of nightly 'Night Terrors';

awakening into an eternal, infinitely folding moment of total negativity. The manic-channeling of an Astro-magical system; describing the processional nature of transformation at 33. Giving consent to the gnostic-terror of being at 36 and opening an atemporal door to the fecund-tundra of the shadow at 37; from which the imagery I will present here arrived to communicate itself through me, in an act of cosmo-coital-co-creation.

Panel 2C: Explorations of Visual Texts —9.30, Forum

The Triumph of The Magus:
From *Trionfi* to Trumps /
Gertrude Moakley's *Originary*
Tarot Hypothesis
Simon Magus

In 1966, the American librarian Gertrude Moakley (1905-1998) published one of the first scholarly histories of the Tarot deck. In *The Tarot Cards Painted by Bonifacio Bembo for the Visconti-Sforza Family: An Iconographic and Historical Study*, Moakley presents a disquisition on her hypothesis of the origin of the imagery of the Tarot trumps. She argues that the sequence of the trumps represents the *trionfi* or 'triumphs' ('trump' and 'triumph' being cognate forms) of the processional cars of the yearly *Carnevale* parade before the Duke of Milan. This paper considers Moakley's hypothesis in some detail, and situates it in the wider context of what I have termed the *dramaturgy of Archetypes*. This broadens the compass for the origins of Tarot imagery to include characters and scenarios from the Mystery Plays, and draws parallels between the pageant wagons which were deployed for the latter in Medieval England, and the *trionfi* of the Milanese ducal processions. In the dramaturgical arena, it also includes

the evidence for character-inclusion in the Tarot from the *Commedia dell'Arte*.

The paper further contextualises Tarot imagery within the *Weltanschauung* of Renaissance Italy, notably in terms of the astrological ethos, and modus operandi of the Duchy of Milan. In this historical topos, it explores the possible causal relations of the emergence of the divinatory function of the Tarot. It elaborates upon the astrological purview of Milan, in order to examine the philosophical corollary a propos the persistence of Neoplatonic thought, especially with respect to the Platonic *εἰδωλον* ('eidolon'/image), through the Aristotelian Scholasticism of the Medieval period, to its resurgence in the Milanese Renaissance. In this context, it considers the imbrication of the imagistic flux of the Tarot with the dramaturgy of Archetypes.

Could the Tarot Still be Ancient
Egyptian in Origin?
Mogg Morgan

'You shall not make yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them.' (Exodus 20: 4, RSV)

The academic consensus seems to be that the images of the Tarot cards, including that which provides the leitmotif for this conference, are not, as esotericists often claim, Egyptian in origin. However, other, perhaps more recent research, is tending the other way; see, for example, Lloyd Graham's (2022) paper on the possible origin of Moon card in an ancient amulet. It seems to me that the Tarot fits within the Egyptian worldview, and I could even be tempted to argue that the Magician

card is also based on an Egyptian idea.

Award-winning scholar of magic, Robert Ritner (1993), tells us that

within its own “worldview” Egyptian HekA was of far more exalted significance than its Coptic descendant or Western approximation. [...] Heka did not fabricate the universe *ex nihilo* rather he reproduced as terrestrial “doubles” [...] the acts and logos of the demiurge. [...] The “magical” deity Heka, and the magician who manipulates this power and presides over the dissemination of *consecrated images*, the transformation of a numinous primordial unity into a myriad of *reflected* forms.

It's all about image. I'd like to share and visually explore some of these images, reflecting on how contemporary practitioners relearned how to use them as their Egyptian “ancestors” did.

Monstrous Possibilities: States
of Racial Transmutation in
FullMetal Alchemist
Cole J. Graham

FullMetal Alchemist, the 108-chapter manga written and illustrated by Hiromu Arakawa, first appeared in the July 2001 edition of the monthly manga anthology *Shōnen Gangan*, a staple for manga-lovers since the early '90s. Throughout its decade-long run, the immensely popular *FullMetal Alchemist* spawned various companion novels, licensed merchandise, two anime adaptations and an animated film, as well as a live-action adaptation that was picked up by Netflix in 2018. This is remarkable for a number of reasons, one

of which is the centrality of disability to Arakawa's narrative, particularly disabled subjectivities that do not find resolution in cure. This paper considers the related but distinctly articulated role of race, space, and place within *FullMetal Alchemist*, and in it, I will propose two methods of approaching this triangulation. The first hinges on the ways in which race and socio-political relationships in the transnational sphere receive explicit treatment in the narrative. The second (and potentially more subversive) method calls for a multimodal reading drawing on racial anxieties and possibilities that are not made explicit in the image-text synthesis of *FullMetal Alchemist*, but that I believe undergird Arakawa's portrayals of monstrosity. The concept of deception or trickery—as I see it, race trickery, or “passing”—is the crux of Hiromu Arakawa's employment of the monster as false/imitation human. Ultimately, I argue that the monster's threat (and its disruptive potential) lies in its ability to deceive, to appear to be what it is not and frustrate all positive attempts at legibility, and further, that attending to *FullMetal Alchemist's* monsters may equip us to better think and search beyond traditional ontologies for potential alliances.

The Magician Longs to See
Sarah Coflan

To engage with the work of David Lynch is to be led into the world of dreams, and requires us to enter with the proper spirit. We give ourselves up to dream logic, to heightened senses, nightmares, and, often, confusion. We encounter the known and the unknown all at once, encountering truths we have suppressed, sides of ourselves and our world we ordinarily choose to avoid. Lynch, as artist and magician, opens the door to these

subterranean but very present worlds.

Lynch has become something of a household name, a feat of magic in and of itself. He is as familiar yet unfamiliar as the worlds he offers up for us to explore. His work is shadowy, truly Underworld territory. A sense of confusion and disorientation are key pieces of engaging with his work. Even his more arguably traditional work, such as his 1986 film *Blue Velvet*, has elements of the strange, dreamlike, logically inexplicable. Films such as *Mulholland Drive* and *Lost Highway* are famously baffling, encouraging the viewer to reach their own conclusions as to what the films are truly “about”, and to be comfortable with not reaching one definitive correct answer.

In this paper, I will examine aspects of the dreamlike and shadow worlds to be found in his work, particularly *Blue Velvet*, *Mulholland Drive*, and *Twin Peaks*. How does Lynch’s approach to the story and themes relate to magic, and to a certain extent, trickery? What happens to the viewer as we give ourselves up to this form of magic? Narrative art takes us on a journey, and pieces of us may shift, and experience growth or change as a result. Lynch’s work has the unique power to create a powerful shift, on personal and broader cultural planes.

**Panel 3A: Technology,
Language and Code**
—13.00, Oratory

Liminal Means: Navigating
experiential magic and the
physical body within digital spaces

Heather D. Freeman

Magical practices (as defined and
interpreted by 21st-century religious

studies scholars and anthropologists) are often discussed as highly experiential. This embodiment of the invisible and intangible within the magician’s experience has inspired technologist-practitioners to bridge the gap between physical and digital spaces. In this presentation, I will first outline the (publicly known) history of occult practice in digital spaces, and how these experiments have navigated the need for physical, embodied experience with the binary of digital spheres. For example, occultists have performed group online rituals since the heyday of Bulletin Board Systems and later with Second Life. Today, outward-facing magical practice is most public on social media, including Instagram, ‘WitchTok’, and Discord. However, most magical practices are, by definition, occulted. Secrecy is often integral to the craft itself. This is particularly true for initiatory traditions, and the COVID-19 pandemic saw the end of many covens and working groups for lack of in-person group rituals. Yet other witches and occultists explored online ritual in a way that appeared antithetical to the core practice, yet had its origins in postal correspondence during the 1970s. I will conclude by discussing my own attempts within initiatory Wicca to craft virtual rituals, and how this informed my work as a digital artist as well as an occultist. Finally, I will discuss a VR temple space to the goddess Hekate, created in collaboration with technologist Tres Henry <https://treshenry.net/> In this case, we’re embracing VR as inherently liminal (a perfect platform for the goddess of thresholds). Through this collaboration, we are making discoveries not only about magic, but about the qualities of embodiment in virtual spaces and how embodiment may be enhanced (or detracted) through VR design.

Trans-parency: Hiding in Plain Sight

Tom Banger

The Internet has made us all Masters of Deception: filters, fake news, omissions, and yet the best deceptions are performed without props or curtains – by hiding in plain sight. When we appear obvious, we appear innocuous and are often overlooked. Transparency: the mark never believes you when you tell her exactly what you are going to do. Camouflage: although we have been taught to fear the wolf in sheep's clothing, these days, there seem to be more sheep posing as wolves. Alchemy is a form of steganography: hiding the secret in a picture or parable that nobody recognizes unless she already possesses the key. Spirit animals don't have to be dramatic – mice may see more than wolves, whether presenting as sheep or not. The virtual is before your very eyes: now you see it, now you don't. And it never changed. Or did it? The hand is faster than the eye, isn't it?

Language in the Age of AI:
Deciphering Voynich Manuscript

Karin Valis

In a few decades, digital technology spiralled out from linear and comprehensible, into mysterious and convoluted resembling complicated hermetic magical operations. Hackers and AI engineers, the present-day tricksters use their craft to manipulate one of the most fundamental aspects of our minds: language.

With the rapid rise of computational power, the possibilities to study the language on a superhuman level are finally available. This talk provides a crash course into computational linguistics and a brief genealogy of natural language processing.

We look at high-level principles behind the dismemberment of language into mathematical abstraction and the effects of these operations on our perception.

As the art of encryption and obscuration of language has always been tightly bound with the occult, we will look at one fascinating example that still haunts cryptographers: the mysterious Voynich Manuscript that has been referred to as the world's most important unsolved cypher.

The Voynich manuscript is a medieval codex consisting of 240 pages handwritten in a unique script accompanied by beautiful colourful illustrations. It was carbon-dated to the early 15th century and since then the manuscript fascinated and obsessed students of the occult, magic and alchemy. The author is unknown. So is the purpose. And so is its alphabet and language.

Scholars spent decades trying to decipher the 'Voynichese', first with manual approaches, now with the use of state-of-the-art algorithms. The research yielded many linguistic insights and theories, yet no one to date has managed to fully crack its code. With a bit of technical context, we skim through multiple papers published in the past few years, on machine translation of lost languages (Ugaritic and Linear B) and finally deciphering attempts of the Voynich Manuscript itself.

What does the computational approach to problems of language tell us about its nature and meaning in general?

Magickal Mycelia, Networked
Intelligence and the Mouldy
Way to Grow Your NGO
Danny Nemu

Psychedelics were traditionally shamanic tools used to protect the tribe – curing illness, finding game, resolving disputes etc. In today's global village we face different threats but the solutions are the same – collective intelligence, redistribution of resources, and communication across boundaries. What kind of egregore is created when our magick is mycelial, and how can we work with collective intelligence at this fragile moment in our history? How does collective intelligence work, and how can we create a mycelial egregore in the model of marginalised communities to help meet the threats our global village faces today? RAIN is modelled on mycelial networks that know how to share information and resources for collective resilience.



Discussion Panel: Thin Curation and
Intuitive Convocation: A Methodology
for Curating Esoteric Art and
Propagating Rhizomatic Occulture
—15.30, Oratory

Trans- States is a proponent of alternative forms of knowledge production through the construction of radical research methodologies for transdisciplinarity, practice-based research and esoteric scholarship. For the last two conferences, Cavan McLaughlin and Elizabeth Tomos have worked closely to develop a shared praxis. This has often been an intuitive, think/feel process and both of us recognise the agency of the entity of Trans- States itself in its manifestation. This discussion panel will unpack some of the epistemological, ontological and methodological considerations bound up in the production of Trans- States.

Cavan McLaughlin approached the occultural production of Trans- States using a two-pronged method. The organisation and conception of these convocations have included a great deal of consciously undertaken systematising and methodical thought; however, the project has also been understood to have a certain 'life' of its own and, as such, it has been afforded a measure of 'alienated agency', allowing space for intuitive leaps and unanticipated 'lines of flight' (Pasi, 2014; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

Furthermore, Cavan McLaughlin's commitment to rhizomatic, holistic and synergistic knowledge-building have led him to embrace non-normative approaches and transdisciplinarity, because this method of research requires 'innovation, emergence, creative thinking, flexibility, and high levels of cross-disciplinary collaboration and integration.' (Leavy,

2020, p.3) As skilled bricoleurs, esoteric researchers and members of the occultural community are been well-positioned to implement the subversive and creative potential of transdisciplinarity.

In response to this, Elizabeth Tomos' approach to curating the two Trans- States exhibitions built upon the concepts and practices developed by Ciara Healy (2016) for *thin curating*. In brief, *Thin curation* draws on the concept of *thin places* which can be described as a

marginal, liminal realm, beyond everyday human experience and perception, where mortals could pass into the Otherworld more readily or make contact with those in the Otherworld more willingly. In ancient folklore, Thin places were considered to be physical locations where it is easy to cross between two or more worlds. (Healy, 2016, p.6)

For Trans- States, Elizabeth Tomos has been developing expositions that utilise *thin curating* by creating spaces to embody liminal and thin place experiences and that support an ontology of *coinherence*. A term taken from Roger Corless (2002) which put simply is about human capacity to occupy multiple realities and multiple world views simultaneously (Healy, 2016). In addition, the curation has sought to recognise the value of the archaic avant-garde, a concept developed by Kiberd (2004 in Healy, 2016) to recognise knowledge and practices of the past to inform the present. The curation has sought to embody Kairos rather than Chronos time, collapsing, merging, and suspending time.

The panel will, therefore, discuss how subervise, thin, transdisciplinary, coinherent,

rhizomatic, holistic and synergistic approaches to knowledge-building might have agency for change in turbulent times.

Though initiated by the panel, this will develop into an open, round-table discussion where all delegates are welcome to reflect on, and voice, their own views and emergent themes and concepts arising from the conference.



Trans- States: The Art of Revelation (2019) art exhibition. Photograph by Stephen Godfrey.



CURATORIAL STATEMENT

As you step up to the threshold, the light of the outside world palpably dims. As you turn into the dark, the temperature drops, and you can feel the cool on your face. Everything feels damp and dark, sound echoes and rings out against the rock, and you can hear the dripping of water as it runs down off the sharp tips of the stalactites and patters into the pools of water underfoot. As you take a step over the threshold, your eyes adjusting to the gloom, if you listen, really listen, you can hear an overlapping of voices, whisperings of legends and magic rooted in the lifeblood of the land: Blodeuwedd is conjured from flowers and later cursed to take the form of an owl; in Myddfai, a girl arises from the lake; Pwyll the prince of Dyfed switches bodies and Rhiannon, a great, and possibly Faery, Queen has her child stolen, is accused of murder and as punishment must carry guests upon her back into the royal courts. These are just a few of the many other tales of the *Annwfn* (the underworld), the *Tylwyth Teg* (the beautiful folk), and this extraordinary land steeped in magic.

Welsh culture, my culture, is indeed rich with magic, it runs through the very veins of our people and our land. *Hiraeth* has no direct English translation but is a kind of mystical longing for the land and for its history. I am of Welsh lineage and the Griffiths family from which I am descended¹, is well-documented in what is now modern-day Pembrokeshire as far back as there is written record. However, in the early modern era, my family were deported to England due to the closure of the Pembroke Docks where my great-great grandfather worked at that time. My family were resettled in Portsmouth, along with almost all the rest of the community, clinging desperately to the vestiges of their Welsh culture. Slowly the language and culture died from my family, cut off from the land to which we had belonged for centuries. I was born elsewhere, a traveller, of no fixed abode, and it was only in my mid-teens that I was able to return to the *Hen Wlad Fy Mamau* (Land of My Mothers)² where I began to learn, falteringly, the language and history that should have been my first nature. This relearning brought back memories of a school trip taken many years before, to the caves in Machynlleth where I first learned of the king that slept under the mountain and who might one day return, when we most needed him, and of a mage so powerful, he could control the elements. I had been in awe, utterly taken in by the place and by the legends. The place had resonated for me in a way I could not articulate in words. I believe a form of *hiraeth* was awakened from a long slumber that day.

Magic entered my life in other ways too: in flower fairies, witches in wardrobes, chambers of secrets, and in the 'one ring to rule them all, one ring to find them, one ring to bring

¹ My great grandmother Violet May Griffiths married into the Thomas family, another Welsh family from the Vale of Glamorgan, from which my name is derived. I chose to return to the original Welsh spelling of our surname in my early twenties in an attempt to reconnect with my roots.

² This is a deliberate play on words based on the Welsh national anthem "*Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau*" (Old Land of my Fathers) to both acknowledge my maternal familial heritage, and because it has been to the women of Welsh legend that I have been most drawn.

them all, and in the darkness, bind them.³ As well as other tales from my religious heritage that spoke of water turned into wine, of weeping statues, tiny bits of muslin that could heal the deepest wounds, wells that gushed the water of life, of people being snatched from the jaws of lions and unburned by fiery furnaces.

It is perhaps unsurprising then, that the curation of this show has been informed by a deep love of storytelling, of fable, myth, legend, and a form of nostalgia; a drawing back, a drawing in, to the hills, to the caves, to the Thin places of my heritage where one might step into the spirit world more readily. That I might go home, transported through time and space, whilst simultaneously travelling somewhere deeply unfamiliar, out of time, out of space, out of matter, taken to the *Annwfn* to be with the *Tylwyth Teg*.

So, I invite you to enter into the exhibition, into our cave, our Thin place, to a liminal space between the real and the imagined, the material and the ethereal, even between life and death; to a place where a woman can become the land and the land can speak, a place of spirits, ghosts, fae folk and tricksters; a place of spells, sigils, and esoteric symbols. The art of the Magician is the art of deception.

Art is magic. The trick is YOU.⁴

—Elizabeth Tomos

Curator, Trans- States: The Art of Deception.

3 These are all references to literature; Cicely Mary Barker, CS Lewis, JK Rowling, and Tolkien, respectively.

4 This phrase is borrowed from LA-based street artist and storyteller, WRDSMTH, written for a collaborative project with our own master of stage-magic, Ferdinando Buscema.

PERFORMANCES AND EXHIBITED WORKS

ADAM MALONE

The Tarot Experience VR

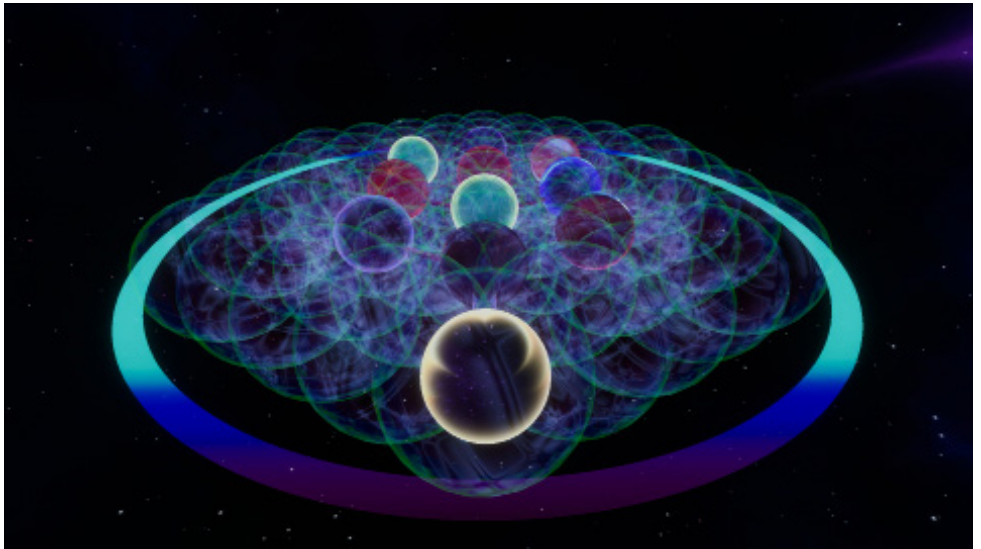
Exhibited Work

— Adam Malone (2022) *The Tarot Experience VR* [VR]

Not for sale

I will present my virtual reality experience called The Tarot Experience VR. This piece was created as both part of my MA in Immersive Storytelling at Royal Holloway in 2021, and the first development piece of my startup company called Astrolabe Immersive based in East Sussex. The piece was inspired by my previous work as both an Immersive Event Producer as well as a scholar of the Tarot. My previous MA was in Myth, Cosmology and The Sacred for which I wrote a dissertation (to be self-published as a book) entitled 'The Art of Transforming The World: Tarot and the Future of Immersive Experience'. My hypothesis in this paper was an attempt to solve the problem in the immersive arts of creating meaningful narrative experiences that change and adapt to each person as they encounter an immersive art experience. My work as a Tarot reader gave me the foundation to propose that the Tarot, in both form and function, can inspire new and meaningful narrative experiences for both audiences and creators of immersive experiences into the future. This represents a paradigm shift in narrative creation in the arts. The Tarot Experience VR is a second player VR experience that asks the user to bring themselves into the experience.

I propose that the form and function of the Tarot card system is able to offer a solution to the current problem in the immersive arts sector, of creating deeply meaningful art experiences that are able to change and adapt to each user. Tarot's form – a selection of images with over 250 years of multi-authored knowledge attributed to them, and function – the truly random moment of the shuffle, are for me key ingredients to understand for bringing meaning into narrative art experiences. I have chosen to focus on the 22 major arcana for this piece and have created my own deck for this purpose. As we enter a true era of Art as Experience, as argued for by John Dewey in 1934, it is my hope that the emergent technology of Virtual Reality can be used to touch us on a deep level, to offer us potentially transcendent experiences. In fact, it is vital that this is the aim for use of this very powerful technology. There is a huge risk that we may fall into ever-increasing illusory worlds. It is therefore important that we engage these technologies in the pursuit of deeper meaning and self-reflection.



Adam Malone (2022) *The Tarot Experience VR* [VR]



Alexander Small (2016) *The Unbinding* [Acrylic on canvas] 122cm (w) x 50.7cm (h)

ALEXANDER SMALL

The Unbinding [Triptych]

Exhibited Work

— Alexander Small (2016) *The Unbinding* [Acrylic on canvas] 122cm (w) x 50.7cm (h)

Price on request

The work explores the visual culture of the trickster archetype. The Unbinding Triptych includes an image of Puck, hands breaking chains, and a taper unravelling. All these images refer to various undoings and unbindings. The images are painted across the edges of three separate canvases and can be placed in a variety of ways to produce the



images or part images depending on the combination. The three canvases also have an expressive serpentine line or 'line of beauty' connecting the three canvases in one of the combinations. This work refers directly to the tarot deck of Austin Osman Spare as presented by Jonathan Allen at the 2016 conference and was made in response to that encounter. *Corvus* (Setting in motion this world of endless hunger) is a video piece showing a scavenging crow pecking at a bag of excrement in an open suitcase surrounded by used cups, discarded clothes and refuse. Here the crow a trickster symbol echoes the Tsimshian Raven cycle where a desire to escape the devouring of appetite is explored.

BENS JEANS HOUGHTON

Subaqueouscorpionicphenotypes

Exhibited Works

— Ben Jeans Houghton (2022) *A HAPTIC-HYMN TO VOTIVE-FLUX* [Performance]

— Ben Jeans Houghton (2022) *Subaqueouscorpionicphenotype 1, 2 and 3* [Liquid Crystal Paintings on Lightbox]
90.5cm (w) x 60.5cm (h)

Prices on request

After spending time with Phaidon's Giger retrospective, I began a process of being with him through digital painting. I assumed I was drawing these entities into being, but as they became clear I got the overwhelming feeling of being watched by them as they dressed themselves in my imagination.

A HAPTIC-HYMN TO VOTIVE-FLUX

Performance

A gothic-exoskeleton of black ceremonial armour, at once ancient and futuristic, organic and artificial, is worn to enable the artist's oneironautic immersion, through this non-denominational, devotional ritual.

This encounter unfolds atop a retrofitted rectangular flight case, splayed open as a book. One side is divided between a light box, topped with a sheet of opaque white perspex – as a frozen pool of glowing milk, alongside a twinned rectangle of black perspex – as the protean oil of unremembered flora and fauna. Secreted contact microphones amplify the arrival of combinations of objects arranged on these surfaces. The other side of the flight case houses a pedal-board of audio electronics, alongside a cornucopia of chromatic objects, whose individuality will come to populate the brief collectivity of the arrangements displayed.

This ritual performance is a möbius unfoldment, that persists through a dismembering and remembering of non-human fetishes, as transient artefacts of ambiguous presence. Briefly enthroned and engodded through haptic-hymns to votive flux. Each object exists in entwined and dislocated relationship to the esoteric technē of the body that moves them, and the hands that orchestrate their agency as alchemical apparatus. The delicacy and aesthetic pragmatism of refined ceremonial formality, enunciates the intuitive choreography of their arrangements.

The performance invokes the transient magician whose arrival briefly punctuates the normality of locality with luminous moments of non-understanding, through obfuscation and revelation alike. Each object at once invokes referents, collective and individual, that mirror the particularity of each mind's idiosyncratic cognition's search for and generation of meaning and its absence.

A psalm to the numinous non-human eroticism of being, to give voice to the mouthless things, is voiced over and under, through the improvised intonation of mantric glossolalia, prose, and poetry.



Ben Jeans Houghton (2022) *Subaqueouscorpionicphenotype 1, 2 and 3* [Liquid Crystal Paintings on Lightbox] 90.5cm (w) x 60.5cm (h)



Cavan McLaughlin (2022) (Copy of) *Mecurius - The Dual One #16 - Dogstar* [Digital Image Occultural (Re)Production]

CAVAN MCLAUGHLIN

(Copy of) Mercurius - The Dual One

Exhibited Works

- Cavan McLaughlin (2022) *(Copy of) Mercurius - The Dual One #1 - Icon* [Digital Image Occultural (Re) Production]
- Cavan McLaughlin (2022) *(Copy of) Mercurius - The Dual One #6 - Lucifer* [Digital Image Occultural (Re) Production]
- Cavan McLaughlin (2022) *(Copy of) Mercurius - The Dual One #7 - Major Arcana Fifteen* [Digital Image Occultural (Re) Production]
- Cavan McLaughlin (2022) *(Copy of) Mercurius - The Dual One #8 - Baphomet* [Digital Image Occultural (Re) Production]
- Cavan McLaughlin (2022) *(Copy of) Mercurius - The Dual One #10 - Initiate* [Digital image Occultural (Re) Production]
- Cavan McLaughlin (2022) *(Copy of) Mercurius - The Dual One #11 - Azrael* [Digital Image Occultural (Re) Production]
- Cavan McLaughlin (2022) *(Copy of) Mercurius - The Dual One #14 - Samael* [Digital Image Occultural (Re) Production]
- Cavan McLaughlin (2022) *(Copy of) Mercurius - The Dual One #16 - Dogstar* [Digital Image Occultural (Re) Production]
- Cavan McLaughlin (2022) *(Copy of) Mercurius - The Dual One #18 - Adept* [Digital Image Occultural (Re) Production]
- Cavan McLaughlin (2022) *(Copy of) Mercurius - The Dual One #21 - The Peacock Angel* [Digital Image Occultural (Re) Production]

Prices on request

Inspired, in part, by Jung's Alchemical Studies (1967) writings on the spirit Mercurius, this work draws on both the unitarian and dual nature of this god. Mercurius is the coincidentia oppositorum par excellence, both subsuming all conceivable opposites and mediating the very processes which lie between them—reflecting, effecting and transforming each into the other. Mercurius is active and passive, matter and spirit, heaven and earth, light and dark, good and evil. The Dual One 'corresponds not only to Christ' but is also 'the devil, a redeeming psychopomp, an evasive trickster, and God's reflection in physical nature'. (Jung, p.222;284) Jung further elucidates that,

Mercurius, the revelatory light of nature, is also hell-fire, which in some miraculous way is none other than a rearrangement of the heavenly, spiritual powers in the lower, chthonic world of matter, thought already in St. Paul's time to be ruled by the devil. Hell-fire, the true energetic principle of evil, appears here as the manifest counterpart of the spiritual and the good, and as essentially identical. with it in substance. (p.210)

This series of digital images are occultural (re)productions that seek to "echo" the fluid, shifting and ambiguous character of Mercurius and the dialogic disposition of this mediatory god of language, technology and communication. Each image is a conversation, and a collaboration, between the artist and multiple AI generators, blending the boundaries between alienated agency and conscious artistic creation.

DANIELLA VALZ GEN

(Be)longing

Exhibited Work

— Daniella Valz Gen (2019 – ongoing) (Be)longing [Land interventions documented through 35mm slide film]

Not for sale

(Be)longing is an embodied exploration of communion with the land through the process of embedding a body in the landscape. The work stems from ecological concerns that expand to urgent socio-political issues, and proposes reflections on the questions of: *Where does the migrant body belong? What does it mean to belong to more than one place? How do we forge our relationship to the land we occupy? And how do we forge belonging as an internal experience at every moment?*

At the heart of the project exist three landscape interventions which took place at various locations across the UK in the Summer and Autumn of 2019 in locations outside of London (Postling; Kent, Fermyn Woods; Northamptonshire & The Warren; Kent) -generating decentralised and urgent discussions surrounding migration. The first iteration of (Be)longing was funded by Arts Council England and produced by performance s p a c e[. These performative interventions became the genesis of further installation, text, and performance; which were exhibited at CUSTOM in Folkestone, as part of *Something Held In The Mouth* curated by Madeline Hodge in October 2019.

The documentation of the interventions was done through 35mm slide film by Rowan Powell.ance; which were exhibited at CUSTOM in Folkestone, as part of *Something Held In The Mouth* curated by Madeline Hodge in October 2019.

The documentation of the interventions was done through 35mm slide film by Rowan Powell.



Daniella Valz Gen (2019 – ongoing) *(Be)longing* [Land interventions documented through 35mm slide film]



Emma Watkinson (2014) *The Magis Grail* [Oil Painting reproduced on lightbox] 98.5cm (w) x 131 cm (h).

EMMA WATKINSON

The Magis Grail and Akhenaten

Exhibited Works

— Emma Watkinson (2014) *The Magis Grail* [Oil Painting reproduced on lightbox] 98.5cm (w) x 131 cm (h)

Lightboxes made to order £1200-850 depending on size.
Giclee prints on canvas available to order 24 x 32 inch £280

— Emma Watkinson (2012) *Akhenaten* [Oil Painting reproduced on lightbox] 98.5cm (w) x 131 cm (h)

Lightboxes made to order £1200-850 depending on size.
Giclee prints on canvas available to order 30 x 40 inch £310

Art, for me, is a dance with the mystery, a fantastical collaboration with the unseen. I draw upon the mythology from many esoteric traditions to explore human consciousness, working with archetypes in artistic practice that activates powerful forces within the psyche that can initiate healing and transformation.

It's an intuitive creative process, influenced by Jungian concepts. I follow clues, synchronicities and dreams, that guide me as to which archetype to work with. This can be relevant both for my individual journey and the wider collective unconscious and can be prophetic or divinatory. As I dive into working magickally with the energy, this invokes more experiences. Adventures unfold revealing the wisdom and lessons of the deity.

The experience is integrated into the paintings, which can reveal many surprises in the design process, as drawn directly from the subconscious onto the canvas. The result is paintings that embody the lived experience of the mythology.

GILLIAN MCIVER

La Mort Toujours

Exhibited Work

— Gillian McIver (2007) *La Mort Toujours* [Film]

Not for sale

Based on audio and visual field recordings from the Paris catacombs and the forest surrounding Buchenwald, *La Mort Toujours* is a meditation on the mysteries of time and mortality. The way I often choose to work is best described as “expressionist documentary.” Darkly poetic explorations of places. Stories and explorations of real things, real places, reinterpreted through an expressionistic, subjective, and wholly immersed direct experience. The deep role of time and change is the basic subject matter for all my work. I am interested in the “reintegration of fragments” or what Anselm Kiefer has described as “bringing together what has come apart.” I am interested in revealing images that offer a glimpse of past worlds and indistinct realities. I seek the liminal spaces where the boundaries between fiction and documentary blur, mysteries are half-revealed, and memories take on a life of their own.



Gillian McIver (2007) *La Mort Toujours* [Film]



John Moletress (2022) *Sonic Sigils* [Performance]

JOHN MOLETRESS

Sonic Sigils

Performance

— John Moletress (2022) *Sonic Sigils* [Performance]

Current performance work is compelled by sonic ritual methods and sigilisation. Constructed digital sonic environments as ritual tools combine found objects and natural materials with technologies both ancient and contemporary. For instance, a hand-scribed sigil utilizing Austin Osman Spare's method will be uploaded into a software engine which translates the symbol into frequencies, compelling the sigil forth as a sonic element. These sonic sigils are combined with rhythm from field recordings and other instrumentation to create an ambient score.

JULIAN VAYNE

Sigils

Exhibited Works

- Julian Vayne (2022) *The Detonation of Language* [Ink on Card] 42cm (w) x 59.4 cm (h)
- Julian Vayne (2022) *Occult Sun* [Ink on Card] 42cm (w) x 59.4 cm (h)
- Julian Vayne (2022) *Shamanic Costume* [Ink on Card] 42cm (w) x 59.4 cm (h)

£123 each

My work is an expression of my magical practice. I am interested in liminal psychological and philosophical spaces where meaning is untethered. What do these symbols mean? Are these signs asemic writing? Are they pregnant with novel ideas? Are they transient scrambled sigilic forms or specific arcane glyphs which, by and large, seems to escape from the convention iconography of occultism? I am reminded of the way that floating, shifting text can be read in the glowing logs of the fire or the textures of stones. Many of these drawings are based on visions received in entheogenic ceremony. Look at all the little faces in the trees... Each work includes an Enchantment associated with the theme of the ritual from which the work arises. A Technology or practice is also provided with each work.

Enchantment for *The Detonation of Language*

"In the Wind of the mind arises the turbulence called I
It breaks; down shower the barren thoughts.
All life is choked.
This desert is the Abyss wherein is the Universe
The Stars are but thistles in that waste.
Yet this desert is but one spot accursed in a world of bliss.
Now and again Travellers cross the desert; they come from the Great Sea, and to the
Great Sea they go.
As they go they spill water; one day they will irrigate the desert, till it flower.
See! five footprints of a Camel! V' V' V' V' V'"

The Book of Lies, Aleister Crowley

Technology for *The Detonation of Language*

In silence is the seed of Wisdom gained.

Enchantment for *Occult Sun*

"There was nothing more. Dyson let the little pocket-book fall, and turned and looked again at the opal with its flaming inmost light, and then with unutterable irresistible horror surging up in his heart, grasped the jewel, and flung it on the ground, and trampled it beneath his heel. His face was white with terror as he turned away, and for a moment stood sick and trembling, and then with a start he leapt across the room and steadied



Julian Vayne (2022) *Occult Sun* [Ink on Card] 42cm (w) x 59.4 cm (h)

himself against the door. There was an angry hiss, as of steam escaping under great pressure, and as he gazed, motionless, a volume of heavy yellow smoke was slowly issuing from the very centre of the jewel, and wreathing itself in snake-like coils above it. And then a thin white flame burst forth from the smoke, and shot up into the air and vanished; and on the ground there lay a thing like a cinder, black and crumbling to the touch."

The Inmost Light, Arthur Machen

Technology for *Occult Sun*

Contemplate the occult sun; the ever-receding Mystery as you focus attention on the centre of this image.

Enchantment for *Shamanic Costume*

"A shaman wears regalia, some part of which usually imitates an animal—most often a deer, a bird, or a bear. It may include a headdress made of antlers or a band into which feathers of birds have been pierced. The footwear is also symbolic—iron deer hooves, birds' claws, or bears' paws. The clothing of the shamans among the Tofalar (Karagasy), Soyot, and Darhat are decorated with representations of human bones—ribs, arm, and finger bones. The shamans of the Goldi-Ude tribe perform the ceremony in a singular shirt and in a front and back apron on which there are representations of snakes, lizards, frogs, and other animals."

Encyclopedia Britannica

Technology for *Shamanic Costume*

Dance while wearing ribbons, metallic charms, bones, old cables, feathers and so on.

KIRSTY WAGSTAFFE

Los Cinco Espiritus

Exhibited Work

—Kirsty Wagstaffe (2022) *Los Cinco Espiritus* [Film Installation]

Not for sale

My work comes from a paradigm of arts-based research and utilises psychotherapeutic and shamanic techniques as a process for image making. The artwork itself, is the goal, as a communicative tool both for the self and others. I usually start with a dream, emotion, or active imagination and spend time exploring the visual content contained within them. By using photography, the challenge of finding a tangible item from imaginary imagery allows for an amplification and exploration of the internal landscape through a visual language. Letting myself 'sit' with these images and spend time beginning to know them, which is part of the creation, and creative process, allows for both subjective and objective evaluations to be undertaken. The nature of photography contains similarities, as the lens or the screen creates a barrier, where the artist, myself, can be both present within the image, either literally, or metaphorically, whilst also physically being outside of the creation of the work. The final part of the process involves the audience or viewer, to engage with the art, as a creative experience that may resonate with them, that can then become the starting point of a conversation, where words have previously failed.



Kirsty Wagstaffe (2022) *Los Cinco Espiritus* [Film Installation]



Lara Luna Bartley (2022) *Financial Divinatory Advice* [Performance/ Installation]

LARA LUNA BARTLEY

Financial Divinatory Advice

Performance

— Lara Luna Bartley (2022) *Financial Divinatory Advice* [Performance/ Installation]

Over the past 30-40 years, those of us in the Anglo-American world – in particular – have been encouraged to become mini-speculators, taking an investors approach to our education, careers, housing and more (Haiven, 2014). But what tools and guidance do we have to aid us in this endeavour? What predictions or assumptions are we basing our investments on? And how sound are they?

Parallels between financial speculation and divination have been drawn by academics, including Ramey (2015), Appadurai (2015) and Bear (2020; p.8) – who claims that financial “Speculation, like divination, aims to reveal a hidden order of human and non-human powers that explain the past, present and future, making it possible to act”; as well as by artists, including Desorcelier la Finance (2018), The University of the Phoenix (2018) and RYBN – who created a series of nine trading algorithms, titled ADMXI (2015), which automatically buy and sell shares in accordance with esoteric forms of divination such as astrology and geomancy.

This 1-to-1, desk-based performance – part financial overview, part esoteric experiment – offers participants the opportunity to: pin-point their financial speculations; examine the vision of the future these are based on, and test the validity of these assumptions with traditional divinatory techniques such as pendulum reading.

Given that the “Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, wrote in 2018 that if we want to avoid the worst of the catastrophe, we had 12 years left for “rapid far reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society”” (Fremeaux & Jordan, 2021; p.19), this piece seeks to disrupt the notion that the future will be anything like the present. It also offers participants the opportunity to try currently overlooked forms of knowledge production, which may help in navigating what Mervyn King (2020) refers to as radical uncertainty.

LEVIN HANDSCHUH

M/EAT THE ARBEITERKLASSE

Exhibited Work

— D. Levin Handschuch (2020) *M/EAT THE ARBEITERKLASSE* [Film]

Not for sale

M/EAT THE ARBEITERKLASSE (m/eat the working class) was a performance event at Markthalle Hamburg in September 2020. Inspired by German playwright Bertolt Brecht's "Saint Joan of the Stockyards" (1959) it tackled the scandal surrounding billionaire Clemens Tönnies, owner of one of Germany's biggest meat processing companies. The so called "Tönnies scandal" showed the abysmal conditions people had to work under at the meat factories, which resulted in rapid spreading of COVID-19 – a process sounding eerily similar to what Marx describes with the case of Mary Ann Walkley in "Das Kapital". *M/EAT* draws from all these inspirations and compiles them into a voodoo-inspired ritual, where a diverse cast of performers and musicians comes together. And when the gods are called upon it is music that answers.

With: Michael Gaschler, Franziska Buchner, GAZE und Wolfgang M. Schmitt sowie XelK-Kollektiv, MieNeko, Ille Starlet, NineLives und Nanni van Hamburg

Music: Klassenkrampf, Samuel Penderbayne und Moritz Eggert

Director: Levin Handschuh

2nd unit director: Leon Winkel

Lights: Boris Eldagsen

Video "Schweineballett": Saeborg



Director: Levin Handschuch (2020) *M/EAT THE ARBEITERKLASSE* [Film]

LIBBY BOVE

The Museum of Roadside Magic and The Oracles

Exhibited Works

— Libby Bove (2021-2022) *The Museum of Roadside Magic* [Installation] 119cm (w) x 183cm (h) x 40cm (d)

Price on request; contains the following items:

- Early ceremonial welding mask #1* [Sculpture] 19cm (w) x 29cm (h) x 8cm (d) - £120
- Early ceremonial welding mask #2* [Sculpture] 18cm (w) x 38cm (h) x 8cm (d) - £100
- Early ceremonial welding mask #3* [Sculpture] 22cm (w) x 36cm (h) x 10cm (d) - £120
- Early ceremonial welding mask (fragments) #4* [Sculpture] 21cm (w) x 28cm (h) x 10cm (d) - £100
- Large gold welding goddess* [Sculpture] 25cm (w) x 33cm (h) x 22cm (d) - £310
- Small welding goddess* [Sculpture] 17cm (w) x 22cm (h) x 11cm (d) - £160
- Early welding goddess* [Sculpture] 7cm (w) x 19cm (h) x 6cm (d) - £65
- Small welding mask amulet* [Sculpture] 12cm (w) x 14cm (h) x 5cm (d) - £70
- Recovery Driver's Jacket* [Sculpture] 75cm (w) x 120cm (h) x 12cm (d) - £380
- Plant Magic Jump-starter* [Sculpture] 38cm (w) x 60cm (h) x 20cm (d) - £320
- Auto-electrical ceremonial mask* [Sculpture] 33cm (w) x 26cm (h) x 7cm (d) - £1108
- Mask to ward off an infestation of rodents in an engine compartment* [Sculpture] 22cm (w) x 28cm (h) x 11cm (d) - £120
- Gasket leak ceremonial mask* [Sculpture] 18cm (w) x 24cm (h) x 7cm (d) - £100
- Various Charms/Spanners* [Sculpture] Variable dimensions - £30 each

The Museum of Roadside Magic is an exploration into an imagined reality where the persecution of witches and cunning folk never took place. If history had taken this route, then our modern day might look very different, with herbal medicine, intention, and spirituality forming part of everyday life, ingrained in the mundane and the practical. There would be no reason why the mechanic who comes to your aid in a breakdown, would also be versed in shamanic practices, herb knowledge, and other unknown magic. By inviting the viewer to imagine a reality where the natural world and the spiritual are deeply ingrained into the everyday, I hope to offer a different perspective and question how these elements are given value in our own reality.

The Oracles

Exhibited Works

— Libby Bove (2021) *The Oracles* [Various sculptures, a deck of cards and a book] Variable dimensions.

Pieces priced individually:

- Hanging On* [Sculpture] 12cm (d) x 28cm (w) x 90cm (h) - £420
- The Gleaner* [Sculpture] 44cm (d) x 21cm (w) x 84cm (h) - £310
- The Wail* [Sculpture] 19cm (d) x 35cm (w) x 35cm (h) - £320
- The Martyrs' Bath* [Sculpture] 6cm (d) x 8cm (w) x 11cm (h) - £90
- The Gods of the Weighbridge: Two figures* [Sculpture] 13cm (d) x 13cm (w) x 45cm (h) - £120 per figure
- The Oracles* [Framed Deck of Tarot Cards] 52cm (w) x 42cm (h) x 4
- The Oracles* [Book] 32cm (w) x 23cm (h) - £30 for the deck and the book

The Loose Note

Mania, Uncontrollable Dance, often
accompanied by an air of
unbearable smugness.

The space in between the piano keys is an
acquired taste.

To the most sophisticated of pallets,
it tastes as sweet as honey.

The loose note is about letting go of inhibitions,
trying new things and taking a long old toot
on that trumpet even though you know it will
sound like tripe. It is a joyous card. Reminding
us to embrace our untamed creative energy in
whatever form that may take.





Melissa Artemis Shemanna (2019) *Inner Alchemy Cypher* [Painting reproduced on light-box] 90.5cm (w) x 60.5cm (h)

MELISSA ARTEMIS SHEMANNA

Dream of Artemis Rising

Exhibited Works

— Melissa Artemis Shemanna (2020) *IRIS Spectral Chromatopia* [Painting reproduced on lightbox] 98.5cm (w) x 98.5cm (h)

— Melissa Artemis Shemanna (2019) *Inner Alchemy Cypher* [Painting reproduced on lightbox] 90.5cm (w) x 60.5cm (h)

Lightbox £1200

All orders will be for A2 size lightbox with print

‘Deception’ is when a personally acquired viewpoint that is perceived as ‘Reality’, is challenged, deconstructed and or smashed apart! The art of deception, is an intricate act of chaos and order that are entwined in an infinitely spinning dance of particles and consciousness.. fractal patterns that emerge from the vortexual union, render entirely limitless perceived spaces. Creation and destruction are the eternal dual force pair, with their love child ‘consciousness’ forming the trinary action needed to project the emanation of an observing force into Form.



ORRYELLE DEFENESTRATE-BASCULE

Hermes

Performance and Exhibited Work

- Orryelle Defenestrade-Bascule (2022) *Hermes* [Film Installation and Performance]
- Orryelle Defenestrade-Bascule (2021) *Hermes* [Bronze sculpture, Garnet Ajna] 11cm (w) x 36cm (h) x 30cm (d)

£770

This is a presentation of recent multi-media praxis with the Ancient Greek God of communications, travel and magic. Hermes is evoked and invoked in a musical video piece timed to a song by Orryelle (violin, voice) and Antwerp electronic musician UrZon. The track will be released on the album 'Esezezus' to accompany the book of the same name to be released late 2022 which also contains the poetic evocation of Hermes which is the foundation of the song.

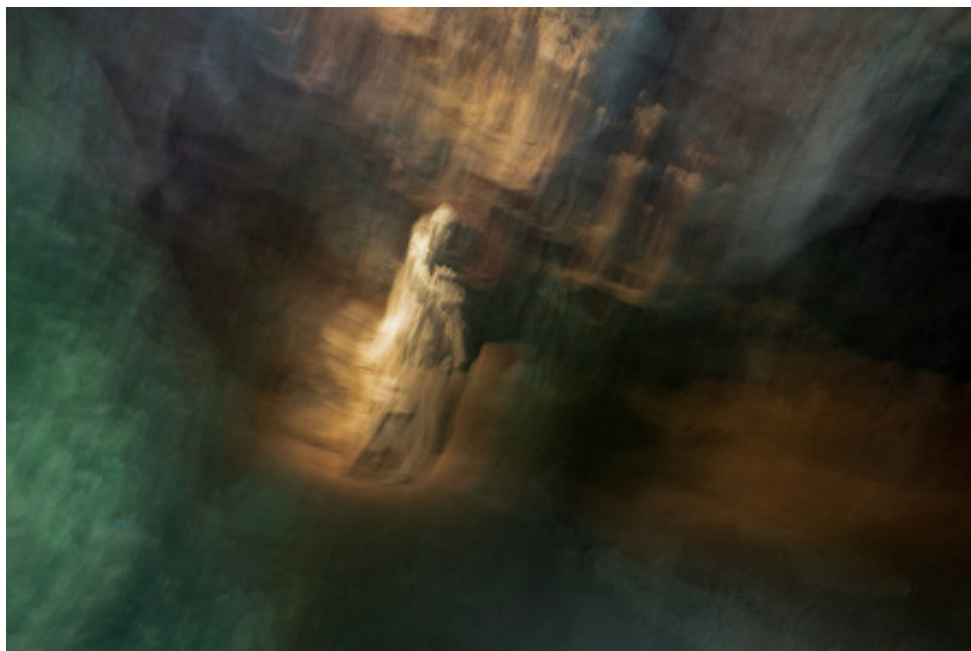
A live performance will accompany and intertwine with the music-video in this



presentation. I will alternately orate and sing some of the verses, while others will be pre-recorded freeing me to move (butoh and other such experimental dance forms) to the music. The performance will be an expression of the malleability of time and space (as Hermes' domain/s, being both patron of travellers and psychopomp moving between the realms). Sped up movement in the video will often be accompanied by slowed down movement in the live elements, and vice-versa, to suggest a multi-dimensional flux of transcendent yet telluric travel.

Most of the video was filmed in Monsanto, Portugal where the ancient narrow cobbled lanes and monumental boulders around the old village houses (all topped by a spectacular Templar castle) provided an enigmatic atmospheric vista to move through. These labyrinthine streets as viewed from atop the mountain will at one stage be overlaid with computer circuitry which Hermes will also be running through in a more modern extension of the hyper-communicative realms of the Messenger.

A small bronze statue of Hermes will be in the exhibition for the duration of the conference.



Sara Hannant (2021) *In the presence of hidden things which are there* [Photograph: Archival C-Type print] 61 (w) x 41.5 cm (h)

SARA HANNANT

Mother Shipton Series

Exhibited Works

- Sara Hannant (2021) *Coming forth, and back* [Photograph: Archival C-Type print] 41.5cm (w) x 61 cm (h)
- Sara Hannant (2021) *Summoning the Future* [Photograph: Archival C-Type print] 41.5cm (w) x 61 cm (h)
- Sara Hannant (2021) *Coming into being* [Photograph: Archival C-Type print] 61 (w) x 41.5 cm (h)
- Sara Hannant (2021) *In the presence of hidden things which are there* [Photograph: Archival C-Type print] 61 (w) x 41.5 cm (h)

£285, Edition of 30 each

Mother Shipton was a legendary prophet, witch, and outsider. Stories tell she was born in 1488, during a violent thunderstorm in a cave on the banks of the River Nidd in Knaresborough, Yorkshire. Her predictions, first published in 1641, including the fates of several rulers, as well as the invention of iron ships, the Great Fire of London in 1666, and the defeat of the Spanish Armada.

When visiting the site in 2021, I became open to the possibility of history and legend revealing themselves. Using experimental photographic techniques, I decided to animate the stone statue of the prophet, which is situated in the cave. The illusion of motion is created in a single exposure, as Mother Shipton moves across the cave and appears behind a veil to summon visions of the future.

SHANNON TAGGART

SÉANCE

Exhibited Works

- Shannon Taggart (2013) *Medium Sylvia Howarth enters a trance, England* [Photograph] 29.7cm (w) x 42cm (h)
- Shannon Taggart (2018) *Medium Kai Muegge emits an ectoplasmic hand, Switzerland* [Photograph] 29.7cm (w) x 42cm (h)
- Shannon Taggart (2013) *Instrumental-transcommunication and smoke-scrying experiment outside the séance room, England* [Photograph] 29.7cm (w) x 42cm (h)

Not for sale

- Shannon Taggart (2019) *Ectoplasm* [Film]
- Shannon Taggart (2022) *SÉANCE* [Hardcover Book] 29.8 cm (w) x 24.2cm (h)

Available for pre-order, \$65.00

Selected works from *SÉANCE* will be included in the exhibition to coincide with the launch of the new book and Shannon's talk on the same project.



Shannon Taggart (2013) *Instrumental-transcommunication and smoke-scrying experiment outside the séance room, England* [Photograph] 29.7cm (w) x 42cm (h)

SONJA RENDTORFF

DAIMON SAYS

Exhibited Work

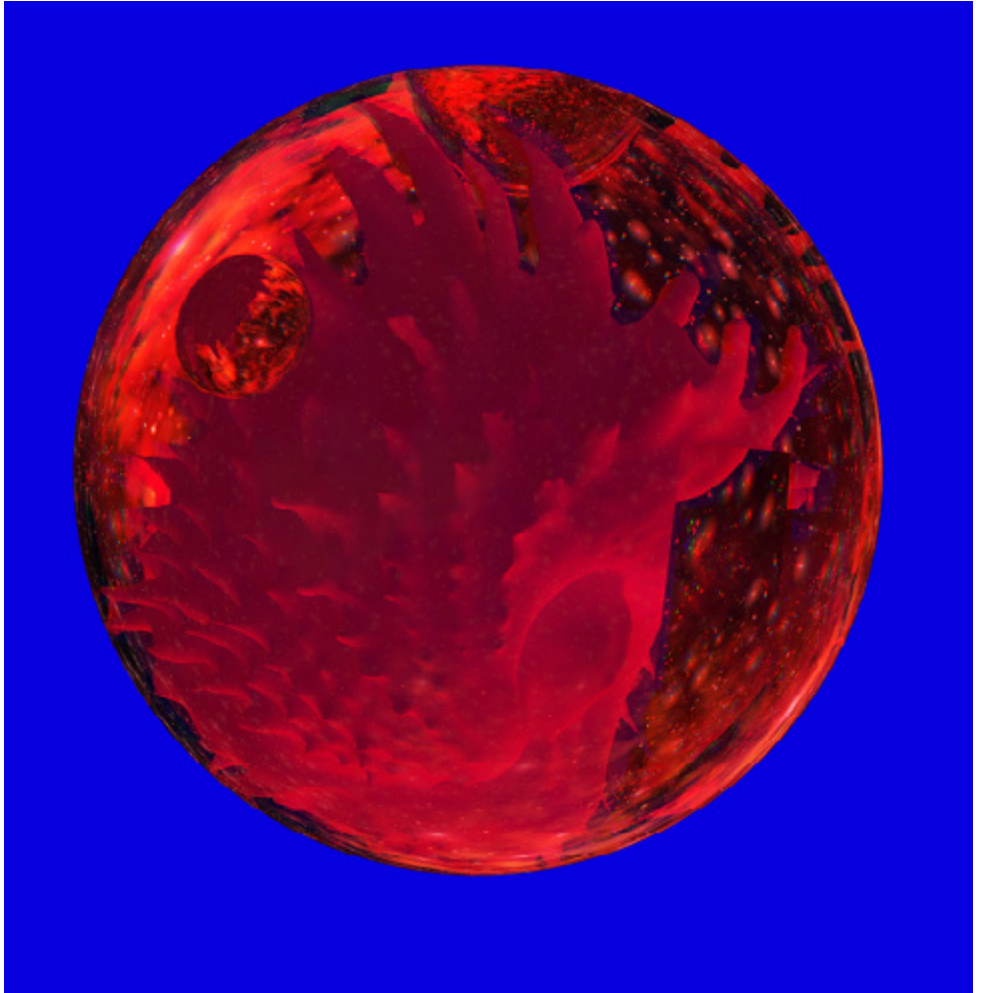
— Sonja Rendtorff (2022) *Daimon Says* [VR]

Not for sale

At the Trans- States exhibition, I present a virtual reality environment that interfaces with the interactions, communications, and symbolic forms of, what I call, my 'dream daimon'. My project explores the transference of meaning between dream states and wakefulness through computer-generated virtual reality (VR). The digital context of the code-produced mathematical parameters that result in VR is able – when done well – to trick our brain into perceiving that the presented universe is real even if we have a preconceived notion that it is an illusion. The project experiments with ways of manipulating the brain to activate pathways that enable a lucid dialogue with that shapeshifter of the night, the dream.

By pulling these dream dialogues apart, creating dynamic symbols and testing their communicative strength, I am creating a dream alphabet, aiming to find patterns across the different states of consciousness that enable a meeting of the two. The symbols can be activated in different virtual reality environments under the power of mathematics but are guided by dreams. The feedback from VR to dream and visa versa creates trans-narratives centred around a communication pathway to the what, it, or who that lurks under the veil of sleep.

I use my work as a tool to explore the surreal and virtual nature of reality while, at the same time, problematising the category of not only the real but also the human by facilitating a dialogue with the digital and non-human. The works are the result of a concrete back-and-forth between the realm of the subconscious and the digital space, the inner psyche versus the outer inter-face. My overall concern by enacting this meeting between different states is to explore an expanded type of consciousness and open up a space for not only deviancy but also for the new to reveal itself through experimentation. By proposing perspectives on new ways of thinking and dreaming that is open for a plethora of different meanings, fleeting as the very nature of dreams, the meeting between human and machine thinking facilitates a dialogue with the digital and non-human.



Sonja Rendtorff (2022) *Daimon Says* [VR]



Stephen Godfrey (2021) *3 Boats* [Original framed print: 1 of 5] 84cm (w) x 61cm (h)

STEPHEN GODFREY

De-composition

Exhibited Works

— Stephen Godfrey (2021) <i>Dwelling</i> [Original framed print: 1 of 5] 84cm (w) x 61cm (h)	£450
— Stephen Godfrey (2021) <i>Smithy</i> [Original framed print: 1 of 5] 41cm (w) x 51cm (h)	£150
— Stephen Godfrey (2021) <i>3 Boats</i> [Original framed print: 1 of 5] 84cm (w) x 61cm (h)	£450

De-composition: Synergistically sees Stephen Godfrey going back to his roots of exploring experimental instant large format photography where the content of his images, distressed and eroded objects pair up with the degradation of using outdated Polaroid Type 55 film stock.

The chemical formula and structural integrity of the large format negative film is continually breaking down after its limited expiry 'use by date'. Godfrey's unique style of pushing the photographic instant film beyond its normal limits mimics the erosion and decay caused by some of the four elements acting to decompose the objects left behind from bygone age.

Inviting a dialogue on both the processes/experience of decay that are evident in landscape where the chemical destruction manifest in the image itself. The Magician card refers to bringing elemental tools together synergistically which is optical-chemical-organic alchemy at its best! Subject and process are in a constant state of change and decay which aligns to the image itself in a state of change and decay produced by the energy of the earthly realms. These three images are part of a larger retrospective of work spanning 20 years of intentionally compromising the optical-chemical-organic adaptation of each image and the developmental technique to create alternative landscapes.

YOSHE

Cyberfeminist Reimaginings

Performance

— Yoshe (2022) *Cyberfeminist Reimaginings: The Transformative Power of Motion Sensor Music Technology*
[Performance]


This performance will explore the imaginative nature of the magician, and the power of spectacle in breaking out of tradition and making way for new modes of being. Through electronic music and contemporary dance, I will envisage new conceptions of the body with a focus on confronting and subverting the male gaze.

Using motion sensor technology through Imogen Heap's MiMu gloves, I conceptualise the body as a wand – and in a musical sense, as an instrument. Through this convergence of the physical, spiritual, and virtual, I set out to explore a cyberfeminist reimagining of the body's relationship to dance, and the possibility of transcendence that this technology offers us. As the body is transformed, so too is our relationship to the creative process, as we are enabled to move beyond traditional instrumentation and the compositional restrictions this can present. This fundamentally mystical method of performance further plays on ideas of trickery and magic, as sound is spellbindingly and invisibly controlled through the air and movement.

Drawing inspiration musically from a range of artists including Ladytron, Nine Inch Nails, Robyn, and Steve Reich, I seek to find space sonically between pop and the avant garde. This is set against visual projections that incorporate data art with elements from nineties cyberfeminism and contemporary explorations of the body in online spaces. This audiovisual performance will be introduced with an outline of motion sensor music and its potential in dismantling current modes of composition, as well as ableist barriers in music performance.



Yoshe (2022) *Cyberfeminist Reimaginings: The Transformative Power of Motion Sensor Music Technology* [Performance]



trans- prefix meaning: across, beyond, through, on the other side of, to go beyond

state: a condition or way of being that exists at a particular time

An unabashed play on words, a 'trans- state' is, among other things, a *coincidentia oppositorum*. An alchemical wedding that defines the fixed place, where boundaries are actively transgressed.

The theme of this conference is The Magician card. The contemporary Tarot Magus is an adept of the mystical arts, but the forebearers of this image are even more firmly rooted in the mercurial archetype of the Trickster. Master of stage(d) magic, sleight of hand, spectacle, and misdirection; everything they do is for show—the Magician is nothing without their spellbound audience. Juggler, gamester, huckster, provocateur, and virtuoso performer, The Magician occupies the streets and avenues, the highways and byways, the thoroughfares and village squares. Places of commerce and community, of trade and treachery, of discovery and deception. Quick-witted, unfathomably dexterous and expertly skilled, The Magician appears to perform the impossible and produce the hitherto unimaginable: making space for the virtual to emerge within the bustling midst of the everyday.

The Art of Deception is the art of *technē*. It is the art, skill, craft, and means by which practice brings about accomplishments that are quite simply—beyond belief.

trans-states.org