

## Call for Papers

### Conference on ‘Multimodality: Illusion, Performance, Experience’

Date: October 24–25, 2019

Venue: Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark

#### *Conference focus*

This conference seeks to expand the methodological scope of current research on multimodal perception through a transdisciplinary and transhistorical perspective. We invite proposals that address the conference theme from various theoretical approaches, such as perceptual psychology, cognitive science, anthropology, ethnography, and performance and media studies. Performance genres—often mediated by technology, as with stage magic, illusions, theater, the arts of projection, illustrated lectures, performance arts, film, and other media—offer rich opportunities for exploring multimodal sensory experience. Those that focus on the media archaeology of illusory performance genres, like the magic lantern or magic shows, are particularly welcome. Possible research topics include (but are not limited to) **multimodal perception and the following:**

- Artworks (e.g., literature, film, visual arts)
- Performative mediums and practices (e.g., dance, theater, opera, music, magic lantern performance)
- New media (e.g., digital games, virtual reality)
- Conjuring and theatrical magic
- Synesthesia
- Illusions of motion or proprioceptive movement
- Attentional focus

While perception is multimodal, researchers in most disciplines have studied it through a predominantly unimodal lens. Studies that examine visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory phenomena often do so in isolation from each other, neglecting the fact that our everyday environment stimulates multiple sensory modalities simultaneously. Researching multisensory experience requires different theoretical and empirical approaches acknowledging not just concurrent but integrated modalities. Recent trends in philosophy, cognitive science, psychology, and media and performance studies indicate that researchers are starting to meet this challenge.

For researchers working in the arts, media, and technology, a better understanding of multimodality might further enrich the intermedial studies that have already risen to prominence in the past few decades. Media-archaeological and media-historical research indicates that multimodality has always been the practitioners’ working ground; artists, performers, educators, and even politicians seek to move and persuade spectators by appealing to multiple senses. These practices, too, have a long history, reaching back to nineteenth- and early-twentieth century debates in the fields of pedagogy, didactics, psychology, philosophy, and theories of theater and film, oratory, and rhetoric, among others.

Multimodal effects are key to artistic and theatrical media, whether they stimulate a sense of wonder and astonishment or deploy other strategies of appealing to the senses, producing rational or emotional responses for the purpose of learning, persuasion, dissemination of knowledge, and critical reflection. In the past decade, neuroscientists have, for example, discovered the value in

conjoining studies of perception and illusion, collaborating with magicians to uncover the perceptual mechanisms that make conjuring effects work. These types of studies, which reach across different historical periods and bridge disciplinary gaps between psychology, cognition, media, theater, and performance art, have helped illuminate longstanding puzzles concerning the nature of multimodal perception. Their implications have yet to be fully realized in a number of other disciplines, including musicology, literature, and the visual arts—fields in which researchers often attend to simultaneous sensory experiences, but less commonly examine cases of one sense modality altering perception in another.

We invite proposals for individual papers and themed panels. Papers will be 20 minutes long, followed by 10 minutes of discussion; themed panels comprise three papers totaling 90 minutes. Abstracts for individual papers should be no more than 300 words. Proposals for themed sessions should include a 150-word abstract for each paper and a rationale (up to 300 words) for the session. Please send abstracts and proposals to [multimodality2019@gmail.com](mailto:multimodality2019@gmail.com) by **May 24, 2019**. The conference program will be announced in June.

### **About the venue**

Aarhus University, ranked in the top 100 world universities by several indices, is located in the second-largest city in Denmark on the east coast of Jutland. The city of Aarhus, European Capital of Culture in 2017, houses internationally acclaimed museums, including [ARoS](#) and [Moesgaard](#), both of which are recognized for their distinctive architecture. The concert hall ([Musikhuset](#)) is the largest in Scandinavia and presents a wide variety of entertainment, including symphonic music, opera, dance, theater, and jazz.

The conference is convened by the Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS), Aarhus University, in association with B-Magic, an EOS research network (Excellence of Science / FWO-FNRS, Belgium); Les Arts Trompeurs, an international research network; and CRILCQ (Centre de recherche interuniversitaire sur la littérature et la culture québécoises).

### **Scientific committee**

Marc Malmdorf Andersen (Aarhus University)

Jessie Fillerup (AIAS, Aarhus University)

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