Magic (Montreal, 19-20 Feb 16)

McGill University, Feb 19–20, 2016
Deadline: Nov 20, 2015

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Magic: Between Embodiment & Ontology

Department of Art History and Communication Studies
McGill University
7th Annual Emerging Scholars Conference

Keynote Speaker(s): TBD

“The act of magic, via the measured repetition of the ritual, reveals the ordinary object as extraordinary and impacts its meaning within the objective fabric of reality. Paradoxically, in magic, the object speaks of both familiarity and otherness, revitalizing man’s awareness of the uniqueness of his surroundings, but also pointing out the continuity between the human subject and the phenomenal object.” [Emphasis ours] ---Aga Skrodzka Magic Realist Cinema in East Central Europe (2014)
The Department of Art History and Communication Studies at McGill University is pleased to announce this year's Faculty and Emerging Scholars symposium, “Magic: Between Embodiment and Ontology.” The two-day interdisciplinary symposium will be held at McGill University on February 19th-20th, 2016. Graduate students at the M.A. or Ph.D. level from all disciplines in addition to artists, curators, and professors are invited to submit abstracts for presentations of twenty-five minutes. Participation in the conference provides an opportunity to present original scholarly research, and benefit from engaged discussions as well as valuable responses to papers.
The aim of this symposium is to examine the ways in which magic, in any incarnation, is used as both a transformative element to inspire civil action as well a communicative channel for intersubjective relations. The symposium seeks to trace magic’s communicative capacities through material culture.
Critical scholarship concerning magic has primarily focused on magic’s spiritual or “sacred” aspect. But as George Bataille argued, “profane activity” is what leads to the so-called sacred (Bataille, 1954). Thus, how can we destabilize the prioritization of the “sacred” in scholarship concerning magic? This symposium seeks to re-situate embodied practices in scholarship surrounding the ontological properties of magic. For instance, how might recent scholarship surrounding object oriented ontology (OOO) expand when engaged with discourse surrounding affect, embodiment, decolonization, critical race studies, gender and feminist studies, queer theory, etc.

The scope in which magic interacts and/or informs scholarship is broad and we hope for the

conference to capture a snapshot of the ways in which magic affects material culture. The symposium will examine the roles in which magic or the mystic has played and generate a productive dialogue around such topics as alchemy, the occult, esoteric, rituals, science, early technology, spiritualism, etc. From Hieronymus Bosch's alchemic art practices to Neil Gaiman's Sandman comics, no paper topic is too broad or narrow for this symposium.
Possible areas for exploration:
-In what ways has the voice, music, sound, etc. been used to access the "unknown"?
-How has magic been used during the period of colonization as a tool of resistance against colonizers (Voodoo and Hoodoo culture practices)?
-How is magic manifested through sound?
-What are magic's properties in performative witchcraft?
-How is sound used in music and films that deal with magic or mysticism?
-What is the role of magic in artistic practices (cinema, paintings, comics, etc)?
-What are some trans-historical/geographic approaches we can apply to the study of magic?
-What role has magic played in early modern material culture (paintings, architecture, etc)?
-How has the concept of magic/mysticism influenced the perception of early technological and scientific achievements?

In addition, we extend the opportunity for an emerging scholar to be one of our Keynote speakers. Keynote speakers are paid and compensated for their travel and hotel costs. Please submit a CV, and an abstract (750 words or less) of your proposed paper to the e-mail address below. Keynote presentations should aim to be around 50 to 60 minutes in length.

Papers in both English and French are welcome.
Please email abstracts for submission of no more than 300 words, accompanied by a short biography or abridged CV, to ahcs.pgss@mail.mcgill.ca by November 20th, 2015.
Successful applicants will be notified by December 20th, 2015.
Please send general inquiries to: ahcs.pgss@mail.mcgill.ca
If you have specific questions regarding your abstract or keynote details, contact the conference chair at: ayanna.dozier@mail.mcgill.ca
For more information about the conference please refer to our website:
ahcspgss.wix.com/mcgill

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Reference:
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