

## The Secret Arts and the Art of Secrets (Toronto, 10 Mar 17)

University of Toronto, Mar 10, 2017

Deadline: Jan 29, 2017

Tia Sager

The 2017 Wollesen Memorial Graduate Symposium, hosted by the Department of Art at the University of Toronto presents:

The Secret Arts and the Art of Secrets:

A symposium exploring the relationship between art and esotericism

Friday March 10, 2017

East Common Room, Hart House

7 Hart House Circle

University of Toronto

Toronto, Ontario

Keynote address: Serena Keshavjee, Associate Professor, University of Winnipeg

Justly or not, esotericism has been universally excised from modernist perceptions of the world: the practice of astrology has been distanced from astronomy; alchemy has been distilled from chemistry; and magic has been calculated out of the numerous equations of physics. The modern antipathy to Esotericism, however, has been tempered by exciting research over the past thirty years with increasingly more papers, periodicals, conferences, and academic programs that seek to rehabilitate, reveal, and interrogate the formative role that Esoteric traditions have had and continue to have on contemporary culture.

This symposium aims to participate in this movement by investigating Esotericism in the context of visual culture from Antiquity to the present. It seeks to provide a forum for scholars from a wide variety of fields who are keen about this engaging topic, but who may be finding it difficult to connect with other researchers on a subject that has only recently gained momentum within established academic curricula. We invite participation from students and scholars, new to the field or not, who may be deploying systems of visual and material culture in their research as a basis for illustration or argumentation. Acceptable topics may generally include, but are by no means limited to, the following:

- The role of visual representation in Antique, Medieval, or Renaissance hermeticism.
- Images in the Mystery religions of Antiquity.
- Art and illustration in astrology.
- Symbolism in alchemy or the kabbalah.

- Anthroposophy or theosophy in modernist visual culture.
- Gesture and performance in magic, witchcraft or ritual.
- Esoteric imagery in contemporary interpretations and appropriations.
- Renaissance magic and the language of emblems.
- The illustrations of the tarot.
- Spiritism and spirit photography.
- The spiritual and occult revival in avant-garde art movements such as Symbolism, Expressionism, Orphism, or Surrealism.
- Talismanic magic and the power of image in Medieval esotericism.
- Interactions of the body in sacred geographies or architectures.
- The supernatural or the paranormal in film and cinema.
- Esoteric imagery through the lens of contemporary theoretical models such as gender and queer theory.
- The iconography of Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism, or other Secret Societies.
- The Esoteric aspects and influences of non-Western art and architecture, including Chinese, Asian, and South Asian visual and material cultures.

Presentations should be 20 minutes in length and will be followed by a 10-minute question and answer session for each presentation. Selected presentations will be chosen for publication in the University of Toronto Art Journal, an online publication of the symposium proceedings.

For more information, please visit: <https://gustasymposium.wordpress.com/>

Please submit an abstract of no more than 300 words and a biographical sketch of no more than 150 words to the Graduate Union of the Students of Art at [gustasymposium@gmail.com](mailto:gustasymposium@gmail.com) by January 29, 2017.

Symposium Chairs:

Tia Sager, University of Toronto

John Koenig, University of Toronto

Reference:

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