

Magic. A Companion

Deadline: May 10, 2020

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Call for Papers for a collection of essays

"Magic. A Companion"

Edited by Katharina Rein

For the longest time, magic has been devalued as both a concept of belief and as an artform. Western philosophy conceived of magic in opposition to itself: Aristotle, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Hegel, and Marx considered it as a dangerous deception, standing in the way of understanding. Among the performing arts, magic has been underresearched for a long time, associated with children's birthday parties and not deemed worthy of academic attention. Slowly but steadily, however, it has in recent years made its way into the visual field of academics, becoming the topic of a number of research projects. Performance and other magic have also invaded popular culture in the last two decades: Starting with J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, magic and magicians appeared increasingly in cultural artefacts from Hollywood blockbusters with star casts, to TV series, literature, games and the arts.

This edited volume aims to explore a variety of concepts of magic, providing a historical overview as well as investigating representations and translations across various media. Topics covered include magic in anthropology, as well as rituals, shamanism, spiritualism, occultism, performance magic, Magick and Pagan Witchcraft. We encounter these magics, if you will, in literature, film and TV, art, (video) games, graphic novels, music, exhibitions and advertising. In what ways does magic influence our perception of reality and subjectivity? How and why can it be and was it construed as opposing reason or have they never been intertwined with one another? How can magic and illusion be understood as producing new ways of viewing the world instead of as something blinding us to reality? How does magic change in modernity or with increasing digitization? In what ways does magic and do its representations broach issues of different bodies, abilities, ethnicities and sexualities?

Each short essay is dedicated to a single cultural artefact that serves to shed light on the larger context of the various guises of magic in past and present cultures. Contributions focusing on non-Western artefacts and minority discourse are very welcome. The range of artefacts, media, topics and questions is by no means limited to the list above.

To propose an essay, please send an abstract of no more than 300 words to:
magic.a.companion@gmail.com no later than the 10th of May 2020.

Reference:

CFP: Magic. A Companion. In: ArtHist.net, Apr 14, 2020 (accessed Jan 22, 2026),

<<https://arthist.net/archive/22974>>.