

Espacio, Tiempo y Forma VII, no. 14: Occulture

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Occulture: Glimpses of an Emergent Culture in Post-World War II Audiovisual Arts.

In 2004, Christopher Partridge, a professor at the University of Lancaster, introduced the concept of occulture into academic research in his two-volume work *The Re-enchantment of the West: Alternative Spiritualities, Sacralization, Popular Culture and Occulture* (Partridge 2004; Partridge 2005). He defined it as the emergence of a culture with a strong esoteric component, advocating ideas that had previously remained underground within Western society but were now coming to light, even appearing in works of art aimed at mass audiences. This social phenomenon, observable in recent decades, manifested in works with a pronounced occult element, evidencing the re-enchantment of Western cultures.

Although the term already existed, Partridge's volumes enjoyed considerable academic success and led to its adoption by numerous researchers, initially mainly in Central and Northern Europe. In his research, Partridge applied the term to forms of popular art, often infused with or derived from a strong countercultural spirit, such as B-movie fantasy films, heavy metal movements, dub music, vampire fiction, and similar genres.

Since its original framing, occulture has expanded and acquired new variants. One example is *The Occult World*, a volume edited by Partridge himself, in which several scholars specializing in esotericism reflected on the concept, extending it to other historical periods, beginning with Antiquity. In this context, occulture was used more as a synonym for occultism and its history than as a concept tied to its representation in artworks (Partridge 2015). Thus, research into occulture has often intertwined with the academic study of hermeticism or esotericism, as for example at the University of Amsterdam (Hanegraaff 2021). Finnish scholar Nina Kokkinen also added a nuance: she used the term to refer to artworks from other periods, created by artists seeking to reveal hidden truths through their creations, turning the artworks into vehicles of revelation (Kokkinen 2013).

While occulture achieved significant academic recognition, it gained even greater popularity among general audiences. Today, there are occulture fairs, for example in Berlin—one of the oldest and likely the largest in the world—as well as in Las Vegas and even Zaragoza. However, this phenomenon has been scarcely reflected in Hispanic academia; indeed, Spain is one of the countries where this subject has been the least explored.

To address this research gap, the special issue of *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Serie VII. Historia del Arte* will publish various analyses on the esoteric in audiovisual arts from very diverse perspectives. Articles may explore this influence through any of the four manifestations described by his-

torian of Western Esotericism Marco Pasi, who in a book chapter outlined four ways in which such beliefs and practices appear in art: 1- The representation of esoteric symbols or associated imagery. 2- The creation of artworks understood as objects with magical potency. 3- The artwork as a trigger for magical, mystical, shamanic, or similar experiences. 4- The artwork as inspired by mystical, subtle, astral entities, thus deriving from visionary experiences (Pasi 2010).

However, contributions may also approach the topic from a formal perspective, exploring how experimentation with unusual visual textures, strange sounds, and disturbing audiovisual elements fosters mystery, the enigmatic, and the exploration of an otherness that opens new ways of reality.

The thematic issue will limit the analysed works to those created after World War II. Articles on art forms that possess a visual or sonic dimension will be accepted: film, television series, comics, music, video games, etc.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

The most successful traditional line of occulture studies, centred on fantasy audiovisual works—films, TVseries, and similar—that depict characters within this cultural horizon (witches, mediums, contactees...) and supernatural entities.

Analyses of features within the auteur tradition, a type of filmmaking often rich in representations of magic.

Occulture-themed comics, with key authors like Alan Moore clearly fitting into this cultural trend. Moore has even written essays on the influence of magical thought on art (Moore 2014).

Essays focusing on the historiography of the term, its objects of study, and the delineation of its field.

Studies on video games that feature relationships with occultist ideas, either in a superficial way (wizardpotions) or more complexly woven into the virtual universe of the game.

Visual culture emerging from esotericism, expressing its ideas, such as occultist imaginaries developed in painting.

The presence of esotericism within sonic arts, with its influence on psychedelic rock, cosmic rock and krautrock, avant-garde electronic music, dub music—on which Partridge has published several articles (Partridge 2014)—, heavy metal, and subgenres like dark metal and post-rock, always examined from their occultist aspects.

Cited References:

Hanegraaff, Wouter J.: *Esoterismo occidental*. Vitoria-Gasteiz, Sans Soleil Ediciones, 2021.

Kokkinen, Nina: "Occulture as an Analytical Tool in the Study of Art", *Aries* n.º 13, 2013, pp. 7–36.

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Partridge, Christopher: *The Re-Enchantment of the West*. Volume 1. London / New York, T&T Clark International, 2004.

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Partridge, Christopher: "Esoterrorism and the Wrecking of Civilization: Genesis P-Orridge and the Rise of Industrial Paganism", in Weston, Donna; Bennet, Andy (eds.), Pop Pagans. Londres, Routledge, 2014, pp. 189-212.

Partridge, Christopher (ed.): The Occult World. Oxon / Nueva York, Routledge, 2015.

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Vaillant, Alexis (ed.), Options with Nostrils. Rotterdam, Sternberg Press-Piet Zwart Institute, 2010, pp. 103-112.

Deadlines:

Contributions must be submitted by December 31, 2025, via the ETFVII journal website after registering at the following links:

<https://revistas.uned.es/index.php/ETFVII/index>

<https://revistas.uned.es/index.php/ETFVII/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>

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