

Humanities Research Centre at the Australian National University
PRESENTS

Scientific Knowledge & Creative Imagination

Circus and related cultural phenomena, such as freakshows and 19th century 'scientific museums', are reminders that science and its pursuits are matters of perspective, and the products and producers of good stories.

What do these stories tell us about the 'two cultures' of the humanities and science?

IMAGINEERS in **CIRCUS** & **SCIENCE**

3–5 April 2018

hrc.anu.edu.au/events/imagineers-conference

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IMAGINEERS in CIRCUS & SCIENCE

One of the most productive breeding grounds for the invention, staging and amalgamation of scientific knowledge and creative imagination is the circus and related cultural phenomena, such as freakshows, carnivals, and 19th century ‘scientific museums’. These sensational, kaleidoscopic institutions present(ed) manifold wondrous exhibits – including living automatons, magical lanterns, wax figures, mummies and extra-terrestrial beings – but they also presented new scientific discoveries. Oscillating between respectability and fraud, science and fantasy, ritualised exposé and aesthetic obfuscations, they made hundreds of previously unseen phenomena – including lab specimens – accessible to a broad audience.

Exhibitions and shows of this type united science with mystery, acted as mediators of knowledge, and were often the primary public source of information about new scientific research. Their imaginaries and hyperbolic aesthetics live on in contemporary science shows, film, and circus fiction. They are reminders that science and its pursuits are matters of perspective, and both the product and the producer of good stories. What do these stories tell us about the ‘two cultures’ of the humanities and science?

Who are the ‘performators’ of nature and culture in the Australian context? ★ How is Circus relevant to Bioethics? ★ What is innovation in Circus contexts? ★ How does electroacoustic circus music instil nostalgia? ★ What is the role of the circus in the 4th Industrial Revolution? ★ What is the cybernetic circus body going to look like in the future? ★ What are the relationships between Frankenstein and Circus themes? ★ And what are the relationships between clowns and scientists?!

Monday, 2 April 2018
Pre-Conference Ice Breaker
6.00 pm – Location: TBA

Tuesday, 3 April 2018
All Locations: TBA

8.00 am+	Registration & Coffee	
8.15 am	Official Conference Welcome by Professor Will Christie & Dr Anna-Sophie Jürgens	
8.15–8.45 am	Will Christie & AS Jürgens	Introduction
8.45–9.45 am	Jane Goodall	Frankenstein in the Circus
9.45–10.15 am	Morning Tea & Coffee	

Big Top Science: Writing Australian Circus History		
10.15–10.45 am	Mark St Leon	Imagineering Legitimacy: Circus as Laboratory
10.45–11.15 am	Gillian Arrighi	Australian Circus and Variety Culture at the turn of the 20th Century: Sites where Science, Art, and elite human Skill converged
11.15–11.45 am	Wendy Holland	Re-imagining the Hurricane Hurdler
11.45–12.45 pm	Lunch	

Natural Magic in Optics: Eyes wide shut?		
12.45–1.15 pm	Thomas Conner	Pepper’s Ghost and the Augmented Reality of Modernity
1.15–1.45 pm	Erica Seccombe	An ocular Possession
1.45–2.15 pm	Deirdre Feeney	The imaged Theatrics of Time-light: A Contemporary re-fathoming of the magical Dynamics of glass-light-image Interplay
2.15–2.45 pm	Grab-a-Coffee Break	

Magically performed Science in Australia		
2.45–3.15 pm	Lynne Kent	Conjuring Unseen Forces: The Magic and Science of Rainmaking
3.15–3.45 pm	Martyn Jolly	The Apparatuses of Science, Entertainment and Belief in colonial Australia
3.45–4.15 pm	Martyn Jolly and Elisa deCourcy	An actual Magic Lantern Show demonstrating scientific Truths
4.15–4.30 pm	Coffee Break	

The Magic of Science on Show		
4.30–5.00 pm	Natalia Bateman	The breathtaking and light-hungry Circus of Photosynthesis
5.00–6.00 pm	Graham Durant	Showing Science from the Sublime to the Ridiculous
6.00 to 7.00 pm	Snack & Bus to Questacon	
7.00 pm	Questacon – Science Show	
8.15 pm	Bus to Campus	
8.15 pm+	Dinner (optional – Location: TBA)	

Wednesday, 4 April 2018

Zoopoetics		
9.00–9.30 am	Alexander Maier	Power unseen – The Parasite Extravaganza
9.30–10.00 am	Maria Fernanda Cardoso	Patience and Science: On the making of the Cardoso Flea Circus
10.00–10.30 am	Coffee Break	

Two sessions from 10.30 am to 12.00 am

SESSION 1/2

‘Performators’ of Nature and Culture		
10.30–11.00 am	Rebecca Hendershott	Ape-men and Man-apes: What have we scientifically and culturally learnt through Circus Freak Shows and Animal Performances?
11.00–11.30 am	Adam Broinowski	Experimental Gameshow Performance in the Post-Cold War
11.30–12.00 am	Stefan Buchenberger	Evil as Performance, Performing Evil – Three early clownish Superman villains: Mr. Mxyzptlk, Toyman and Prankster
12.00–1.00 pm	Lunch	

SESSION 2/2

Perfecting Physicality: Precarious Circus Bodies		
10.30–11.00 am	Mia Harrison	A manifesto for Zombies: Undead Organs and the Ethics of Transplantation
11.00–11.30 am	Yasmine Mucher	An Examination of the Prevalence of Eating Disorders in Professional and Semi-Professional Aerialists in North America
11.30–12.00 am	Carolyn Watt	Social Circus enhanced by digital Technologies to foster female Empowerment
12.00–1.00 pm	Lunch	

multi-disciplinary
inspiring
highly collaborative

Two sessions from 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm

SESSION 1/2

‘Ethno-Entertainment’ 1: ‘Savage’ Na(rra)tives		
1.00–1.30 pm	Mahamat Ali Alhadji	A Synthesis of Chemistry and the Oriental: Locating Rafik Schami between Literature, Circus and Natural Sciences
1.30–2.00 pm	Ólafur Rastrick	Repugnance, Reform and the Figment of Civilisation in early 20th century Iceland
2.00–2.30 pm	Kim Baston	Australia, well lit, for a Shilling: Geographical Knowledge and fabulist Invention in the early modern Circus
2.30–3.00 pm	Coffee	

‘Ethno-Entertainment’ 2: Re-enacting the ‘Wild West’ in Museums		
3.00–3.30 pm	Vanessa Finney	The ‘Wild West’ at the Australian Museum
3.30–4.00 pm	Nancy Marie Mithlo	Seeing American Indians: Scientific Interventions and Museum Fictions
4.00–4.15 pm	Coffee Break	

SESSION 2/2

Performing on the (Sawdust) Stage – Practice as Method and Result		
1.00–1.30 pm	Anna Saarelainen	Media use in the Activities of Social Circus – Perspectives from Brazil and Finland
1.30–2.00 pm	Kristy Seymour	Embodiment, Risk and Trust in Gravity and Other Myths, A Simple Space: ‘A rhythm of bodies’
2.00–2.30 pm	Fleur E.C.A. van Rens	“My Trampoline Coach never told me ‘Show me what you feel inside’”: Transition Experiences from Gymnastics to Circus
2.30–3.00 pm	Coffee	

The Sound of Circus		
3.00–3.30 pm	Loes van Schaijk	Music and Sound Design in the <i>Spectacle</i> : Ghosts from Circus Past, Present, and Future
3.30–4.00 pm	Marie-Andrée Robitaille	Exploration of sonic Interaction Designs in Circus Composition
4.00–4.15 pm	Coffee Break	

Clowns and Scientists		
4.15–4.45 pm	Sue Broadway	Funny Feminists: The subversions of female Clowns in Australia now
4.45–5.15 pm	Ira Seidenstein	The Nature of the Mind-Body in Performance
5.15–6.15 pm	Richard Weihe	CLOWN or Homo sapiens insipiens – The Anthropology of the Circus
6.15–7.00 pm	Extensive Snacks	
7.00 pm	Arc Cinema – Movie Night Part 1: Tara Marynowsky from the National Film and Sound Archive presents rare footage from the NFSA's Australian circus film collection Part 2: Tod Brownings' Freaks (feature film) All conference speakers are invited by the HRC.	
10 pm+	Drinks (optional)	

Thursday, 5 April 2018

Engineers and Imagineers		
8.30–9.00 am	Coffee	
9.00–9.30 am	Bob Williamson	The Engineer as Performer
9.30–10.00 am	Chris Browne	'Letting go': Inspiring Creativity in Engineering Education
10.00–10.30 am	Andrew Feitz	Capturing the Magic of Carbon Dioxide
10.30–11.00 am	Morning Tea	
11.00–12.00 am	Rosemarie Garland-Thomson	Wonder, Inclusion, and Bioethics
12.00–12.30 pm	Russell Smith	Frankenstein in the Automatic Factory
12.30–1.00 pm	Susan Ford	Transcendent Calculation: Charles Babbage's engines of Analysis in Brass
1.00–1.30 pm	Erika Kerruish	'Robotic Geologists': Scientific Images, cool Pictures and the MER Mission
1.30–2.30 pm	Lunch	

trans-disciplinary
astounding
cross-cultural

Circusrobotics		
2.30–3.30 pm	Peta Tait	Replacing Injured Horses, Cross-Dressing, and Dust: Modernist Circus Technologies in Asia
3.30–4.00 pm	Katie Lavers and Jon Burt	The Extended Body: Imagineering Performers for Future Circus
4.15–4.30 pm	Mini Coffee Break	
4.30–5.00 pm	Yuji Sone	Hiroshi Ishiguro: Android Science and Fabulation
5.00–5.30 pm	Ruth Richards	Beyond Disney: Imagineering in Cinema on and off the Screen
5.30–6.00 pm	Coffee & Final	

Blowing away – Final Performance – School of Art

6.00 pm (about 30 min)	Mark Elliott	The itinerant Glassblower
Evening	Cool down – Location: TBA	

Friday, 6 April 2018

Post-Conference Breakfast
9.30 am to open end – Location: TBA

Debrief & Formation of a Circus & Science Network!

Convener [Dr Anna-Sophie Jürgens](#)
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For more Circus & Science events follow Anna-Sophie on LinkedIn!



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