

The Newsletter of the  
European Society for  
the Study of Western  
Esotericism

# ESSWE Newsletter

Summer 2020  
Volume 11, Number 1

## Words from the Editor

– *Chris Giudice*



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Welcome to the summer issue of the ESSWE newsletter: I hope you are all keeping safe and healthy. In this issue, for obvious reasons, there will be no reviews of past conferences, but I have balanced the lack of conference write-ups with more book reviews and upcoming events, which I hope we will all be able to attend in 2021. The call for papers for the 8<sup>th</sup> ESSWE is out, and it will be wonderful to meet you all in Cork, where the wide-ranging theme of ‘Western esotericism and Creativity’ will surely be tackled in many different ways. A special message by the president of ESSWE can be found on page 2, along with all the new dates for future ESSWE activities.

The member’s book showcase, as by now is usual, occupies more than one page, and it’s a pleasure to see the field of Western esotericism blossoming and making its presence felt in many different fields, through the interdisciplinary approach of many authors. As to the scholar interviews, this time I wanted to highlight the work in the field by Zurich’s ETH: therefore Professor Andreas Kilcher and PhD scholar Chloë Sugden have been kind enough to provide me with very interesting answers. Hope you are all enjoying your summer and that we will all be able to reconvene in Cork in 10 months’ time! ♦

## A Communication from the President of ESSWE

### Report of the president of ESSWE to the members of ESSWE, July 15, 2020

Dear members of ESSWE,

I hope you are well and healthy in this challenging time of the Corona-virus. Like all academic events, this also affects the work of ESSWE.

- **Board meeting 2020:** the board meeting has been held online in an abridged version on July 9.
- **ESSWE8:** The next biannual ESSWE-conference will be held in July 5-7 2021 hosted by the Study of Religions Department at University College Cork, Ireland. Information and the call for papers will be published soon on our website. <https://www.esswe.org/>
- **Thesis workshop 2020:** The thesis-workshop that should have taken place in Budapest in July 2020 parallel to the board meeting, had to be canceled. The next thesis workshop is scheduled for 2022. Special sessions for student members are being planned for ESSWE 8 in Cork.
- **Meeting of the members 2020:** The meeting of the members had to be canceled and will be postponed to 2021 at the occasion of ESSWE 8 in Cork; the report of the board to the members at that time will cover two years.
- **Elections of new board members 2020:** will be executed online in a few weeks.
- **ESSWE online:** In order to promote lectures in times of reduced possibilities for lectures and conferences, ESSWE will establish an online platform for lectures as well as a YouTube channel. The online-program consists of two parts: a) our own series of lectures, organised by a committee of the ESSWE-board; b) room for lectures that are organised by ESSWE-members.

Thank you for your understanding of these reorganizations in this difficult time.

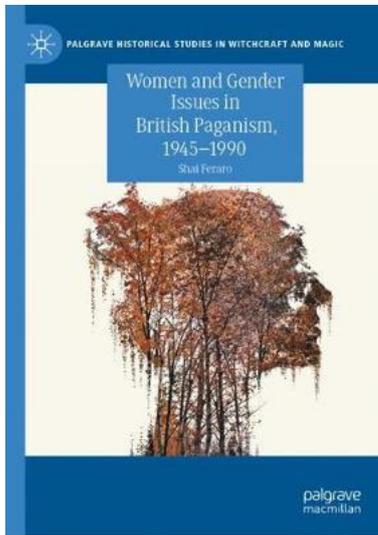
I am looking forward to seeing you all well and healthy at ESSWE8 in Cork. Take care!

Andreas Kilcher

President of ESSWE

## New publications by ESSWE members

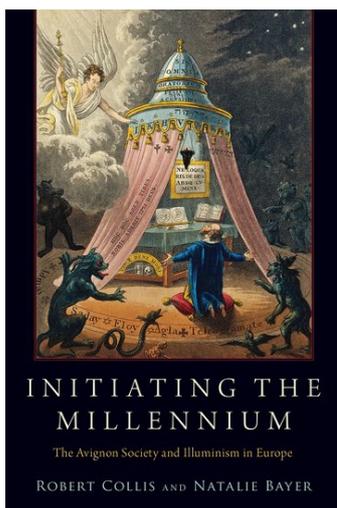
### Shai Feraro Women and Gender Issues in British Paganism, 1945-1990 (London: Routledge, 2020)



This book explores the ways in which changing views on gender and the place of women in society during the latter half of the twentieth century affected women's participation and standing within British Paganism. More specifically, it examines how British Wiccans and Wiccan-derived Pagans reacted to the rise of 'second-wave' feminism and the Women's Liberation Movement in the UK – with a special emphasis on the reception of feminist theory hailing

from the USA – and to the emergence of feminist branches of Witchcraft and Goddess Spirituality during the 1970s and 1980s. The book draws on primary sources never before analyzed in an academic context and makes a valuable contribution to the growing body of knowledge on gender and religion during the twentieth century, as very little research has been conducted on the relations between the history of modern Paganism and that of second-wave feminism in the UK. ♦

### Robert Collis and Natalie Bayer *Initiating the Millennium: The Avignon Society and Illuminism in Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020)



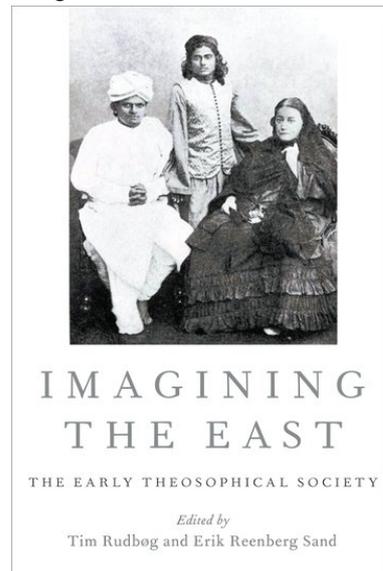
In *Initiating the Millennium*, Robert Collis and Natalie Bayer fill a substantial lacuna in the study of an initiatic society—known variously as the Illuminés d'Avignon, the Avignon Society, the New Israel Society, and the Union—that flourished across Europe between 1779 and 1807. Based on hitherto neglected archival material, this study provides a wealth of fresh insights into a group that included members of various Christian confessions from countries spanning the length and breadth of the Continent. The founding

members of this society forged a unique group that incorporated distinct strands of Western esotericism (particularly alchemy and arithmancy) within an all-pervading millenarian worldview. Collis and Bayer demonstrate that the doctrine of premillennialism—belief in the imminent advent of Christ's reign on Earth—soon came to constitute the *raison d'être* of the society.

Using a chronological approach, the authors chart the machinations of the leading figures of the society (most notably the Polish gentleman Tadeusz Grabianka). They also examine the way in which the group reacted to and was impacted by the tumultuous events that rocked Europe during its twenty-eight years of existence. The result is a new understanding of the vital role played by the so-called Union within the wider millenarian and illuministic milieu at the close of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century. ♦

### Tim Rudbøg and Eric Sand (Eds.) *The Early Theosophical Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020)

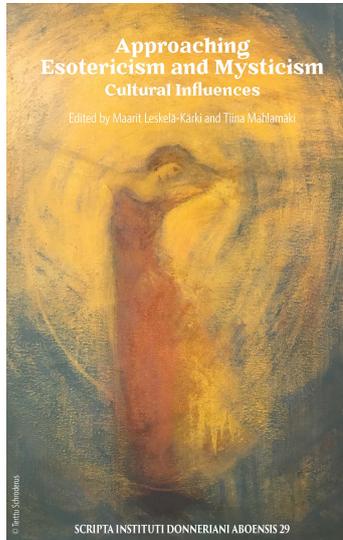
The Theosophical Society (est. 1875 in New York by H. P. Blavatsky, H. S. Olcott and others) is increasingly becoming recognized for its influential role in shaping the alternative new



religious and cultural landscape of the late nineteenth and the twentieth century, especially as an early promoter of interest in Indian and Tibetan religions and philosophies. Despite this increasing awareness, many of the central questions relating to the early Theosophical Society and the East remain largely unexplored. This book is the first scholarly anthology dedicated to this topic. It offers many new details about the study of Theosophy in the history of modern religions and Western esotericism.

The essays in *Imagining the East* explore how Theosophists during the formative period understood the East and those of its people with whom they came into contact. The authors examine the relationship of the theosophical approach with orientalism and aspects of the history of ideas, politics, and culture at large and discuss how these esoteric or theosophical representations mirrored conditions and values current in nineteenth-century mainstream intellectual culture. The essays also look at how the early Theosophical Society's imagining of the East differed from mainstream 'orientalism' and how the Theosophical Society's mission in India was distinct from that of British colonialism and Christian missionaries. ♦

**Maarit Leskelä-Kärki and Tiina Mahlamäkie  
(University of Turku), Bjorn Dahla and Ruth  
Ilman (The Donner Institute) (Eds.)**  
*Approaching Esotericism and Mysticism:  
Cultural Influences*  
(Turku, *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis*,  
29, 2020)



The current volume of *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis* is based on a symposium 'Approaching Esotericism and Mysticism: Cultural Influences' arranged in June 2019 by the Donner Institute together with the research project 'Seekers of the New: Esotericism and the transformation of religiosity in the modernising Finland' (University of Turku). The articles approach the traditions of Western esotericism and mysticism from multidisciplinary perspectives of cultural history, study of religion, art history, popular culture studies, and

folkloristics. The aim is to analyse the diverse influences of esoteric ideas and practices and the various forms of mysticism in their cultural-historical surroundings. The articles focus on both individuals, groups and networks, and benefit from various archival source materials, as well as published texts such as journals, novels, and different genres of popular culture.

The articles demonstrate the multidisciplinary essence and the vitality of the study of esotericism and mysticism, with special attention given to art in its different forms and shapes. The esoteric and mystic are also interpreted as they are reflected in various art forms, and the influence of different esoteric thinkers – such as Emanuel Swedenborg, Aleister Crowley, G. I. Gurdjieff, and Rudolf Steiner – on contemporary, modern and earlier art, as well as popular culture are analysed.

<https://journal.fi/scripta/issue/view/5772> ♦

**Henrik Bogdan (Ed.)**  
*LIR Journal: Western Esotericism and Literature*  
(Gotheburg: *Lir Journal*, 12, 2020)

**Table of Contents:**

**Henrik Bogdan:** *Introduction. Esotericism and Literature.*

**Sten Wistrand:** *Gustav Meyrink's The Golem: A Sensationalist Shlock Novel or an Esoteric Vision of the World?*

**Manon Hedenborg White:** *From Chorazin to Carcosa. Fiction Based Esotericism in the Black Pilgrimage of Jack Parsons and Cameron.*

**Dag Hedman:** *Frank Heller's Novel Andarna och Frustolpe (The Spirits and Frustolpe and His Short Stories on Séances.*

**Andreas Onnerfors:** *Esoteric Encounters. The Queen of Shiba in Solomon's Temple.*

<http://ojs.ub.gu.se/ojs/index.php/LIRJ> ♦

**Marco Respindi (Ed.)**  
**The Journal of Cesnur III:6 (Nov.-Dec. 2019)**

CESNUR, the Center for Studies on New Religions, was founded in 1988. In thirty years of activity, more than 1,000 scholarly papers have been presented at its international conferences and seminars.

**Table of Contents:**

Soka Gakkai in Italy: Success and Controversies  
Massimo Introvigne

Soka Gakkai's Campaigns for Nuclear Disarmament  
Rosita Šorytė

The Limits of Religious Tolerance in France: The Case of Soka Gakkai

Yanis Ben Hammouda

New Religions and Lifelong Learning in Taiwan: The I Ching  
University of Weixin Shengjiao

Jimmy Ching Ming Chang

Tantric Traditions in the Spiritual Teaching of Guru Jára  
Pavel Hlavinka. ♦

## Scholar Interviews

- *Chris Giudice*

In every issue of the *Newsletter* one junior and one senior scholar of Western esotericism are interviewed.

**Professor Andreas Kilcher, Department of Literature and Cultural Studies, ETH Zurich, Switzerland**



**How did you come to be interested in Western esotericism?**

The fact that I grew up in the immediate neighborhood to the Goetheanum in Dornach, the world center for the Anthroposophical movement, can hardly be seen as a serious encounter with esotericism; as an adolescent my understanding of Anthroposophical ideas was very limited, even though I might have anticipated ‘something’, e.g. when I was attending the performance of Goethe’s “Faust” in the Goetheanum – a major event of an entire week. My first serious access to the field was however the study of the Kabbalah, the topic of my MA thesis in 1991, and my Doctoral Dissertation on the “Linguistic Theory of

the Kabbalah”, which I wrote partly in Israel in 1991-1993 as a graduate student of Moshe Idel and Stéphane Mosès, and published in 1998 in Germany. My interest in the Kabbalah included mainly the adaptation and transformation of kabbalistic texts and ideas in European contexts from the Renaissance to Romanticism and Modernity. I encountered a huge polyphonic field of transcultural migration of texts and ideas not only within the disciplines of theology and philosophy but also essentially in literature and art. In analyzing this circulation and transformation of kabbalistic texts and concepts, I learned that especially in the field of esotericism, fixed definitions (e.g. of “Kabbalah” or “esotericism”) are of little help. What we call “esotericism”, is always already transgressing the classical boundaries of disciplines and cultures and histories. It is situated between religion, science and art as well as culturally between Europe and the Orient, etc. and thus questioning and challenging every attempt to be located and fixed by politics of identity and demarcation.

**What is your most fun memory so far from your time in the field?**

There are so many good moments since I have been involved in the field of the study of esotericism in the early 1990s. But I can say that the time of the founding of ESSWE around 2000 had a very special appeal and enchantment. The preparation of the Society, the meetings in Aups in Southern France took place in a unique atmosphere of pioneering, of a fresh start. If “fun” can be meant by this, I can say that these meetings were of special wit and inspiration in a marvelous place, made possible by Rosalie Basten. In addition, I can easily say that this applies to each of our large conferences; they are “fun” in the best sense possible – despite the potential for stress and conflicts.

**What are your interests aside from Western esotericism?**

Indeed, esotericism is by far not my only field of research. I am trained as a literary scholar in German and comparative literature. In my research, I however do not study literature in a classical and strictly philological way. Much more I locate literature in the larger fields of the history of ideas and knowledge. Esotericism is one of them. This means in turn, that my interest in esotericism is flanked and contextualized by my interest in literature on the one side and the history of knowledge on the other side. My actual research project on esotericism is mirroring this double companionship: The scientification and aestheticization of esotericism in modern occultism. This project also makes obvious that I cannot nor do I want to separate my interests. I am much more convinced that new insights come from new combinations. What I mean is not to think in categories of inside and outside (of e.g. esotericism). The sparkle of insight comes much more from the combination of different subjects, methods and fields of study. This is what in the 18<sup>th</sup> century has been understood as “wit”: the intellectual capacity and fruitfulness to bring together seemingly unfitting subjects

and thus to generate innovative insight.

**What do you feel are the major challenges for our field at present and in the future?**

I see at the moment mainly three challenges and developments for our field.

1) When ESSWE was founded in 2002, the academic study of esotericism was about to develop from a very specialized and limited field in a few central European institutes of religious studies into a large global network at the intersection of disciplines that include not only the science of religion but essentially also philosophy, history of science, history of literature, history of art, etc. This process of expansion and diversification of a hitherto very specialized field has to be further enhanced and refined on various levels in the future. Why not include also the sciences and invite historians of physics and mathematics to contribute to analyzing esotericism?

2) Hand in hand with this thematic diversification goes a methodological change. The goal of research in esotericism lies not anymore in systematical definitions and historical representations of esotericism as a genuine, closed and separated set of ideas and traditions. What is necessary and appropriate is (in my eyes) much more a broad contextualization of esotericism. We shall strive for complexities, entanglements, transgressions in order to understand esotericism in its larger connectedness with the history of knowledge, ideas and culture, art, literature etc.

3) This expansion is necessary also on a cultural, geographical and political level.

**Are you referring to the (heated!) debates towards the end of the last ESSWE-conference, where the old debate on whether Esotericism should be defined as Western at all was sparked anew. If so: Where do you stand on this thorny issue?**

Indeed, that is also what I am referring to. I do have great sympathy for the critical questioning of the containment of our field to “western” esotericism. Actually, the notion of “western esotericism” was – when coined around 2000 in the founding phase of ESSWE – thought as a modest and useful concept in order to limit the field of our studies, meaning also that we cannot claim to be experts in non-European forms of esotericism at the same time. But this pragmatism at the same time also excludes and separates, whereas already our subject, the so-

called “western” esotericism from Antiquity and Renaissance up to the present time has a strong universalistic tendency, a claim just to transgress the “European” and the “Western”. Furthermore, to claim the “Western” as a program may be understood as gesture of exclusion, insofar as the “western” not only contributes to the suggestion of a defined and homogeneous body of texts and ideas within the boundaries of Europe and Northern America but also may imply – even though unintended – a cultural and political exclusion, as well as a nonreflective attitude towards postcolonial critique. These questions arise especially in view of the so called “oriental” paradigms of esotericism like Sufism, Kabbalah, Buddhism etc.

**In what direction do you see ESSWE move toward - also after the success of last year's conference, both in terms of quantity and quality of papers presented?**

Actually my ideas for ESSWE as an *institution* are rather loosely linked to the three points I just made for the future development of our field of research. In my opinion, the society itself – i.e. as an institution – is not there to make stronger suggestions or even regulations regarding the content or the method of research - as long as we work on the basis of scientific methods (of history, philology, theory etc.). But within this frame, the society should be as open as possible (and also because of this, I would be in favor of “ESSE” – without “W”). As an institution, the society should work like a vessel, like a stage, or a tool. It is a formal structure in order to enable collective and individual scientific projects. Therefore, the main challenge on the institutional level is to improve our formal structures, where possible or necessary. Not everything is as visible as the seven large ESSWE-conferences since Tübingen in 2007. Besides this, I e.g. very much stimulated the formation of more decentral and smaller structures like networks and workshops on a more regional or thematically specialized basis. Indeed, the dynamics of our society is very much depending on such smaller scaled structures. New experiments, differentiation of new research questions, and extended fruitful discussions are easier to enable by smaller structures than by large scale conferences with very general topics and very short time for presentation and discussion. It is clear that we need both sizes, yet since you addressed the large Amsterdam-conference, I in addition want to suggest also the further diversification of smaller structures. To this belongs maybe also the need for online platforms, not only because we have been forced to use such tools because of the Corona lockdown. We should think about maintaining some of the useful digital tools for future ways of cooperation within the society – why not e.g. open online lectures or workshops? ♦

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**Chloë Sugden, Department of Literature and Cultural Studies, ETH Zurich, Switzerland**

**How did you come to be interested in Western esotericism?**

As a teen in Australia, I recall trading heavy metal tapes for Aleister Crowley's *Diary of a Drug Fiend* and Anton LaVey's *Satanic Bible*. My academic interest in esotericism came later through my art history studies at the University of Queensland. During my Bachelor, I was blessed with a fantastic lecturer in

Italian and Northern Renaissance art, Professor Andrea Bubenik. Her classes on mysticism, religiosity and alchemical symbolism in such artworks contributed to an early curiosity.

While on exchange at Glasgow University in my early twenties, my interest was further piqued by a course on the witch-hunts in early modern Europe and contemporary Africa. Through a second exchange at the University of Copenhagen, I also had the

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good fortune to meet Dr. Dylan Burns, who hired me as a research assistant. This experience was formative, as I learned of ancient corpora, such as the Nag Hammadi Library and the Hekhaloth *Synpose*, and the relationship of ancient Gnostic texts with later Platonic and early Jewish mystical traditions.



Several years passed where I worked in independent arts publishing. I commenced my own research in esotericism when I moved to Geneva to undertake a Master of Fine Arts. In an occult reading room of the Bibliothèque de Genève, I found Kurt Seligmann's *The Mirror of Magic* and Margaret Murray's *The God of the Witches*. From there on, I spent two years familiarising myself with primary and secondary literature in our field. I wrote my thesis on the complex occult cosmology of the Australian artist, Rosaleen Norton.

### **What is your most fun memory so far from your time in the field?**

My fondest memory of my time in the field so far is the 2019 ESSWE7 Conference in Amsterdam. Until last summer, my studies in esotericism had been self-guided and solitary as I was at Geneva University of Art and Design, where such research is uncommon. The opportunity to meet academics whose work I read during Masters was invaluable. I also made some close friends, and found the lectures fascinating and beneficial to my research trajectory.

### **What are your interests aside from Western esotericism?**

Aside from esotericism, I'm interested in German Romanticism, Decadent literature and Symbolism, Surrealism, and Art Brut. I enjoy reading about European folk traditions, Northern Renaissance art, and Italian art and architecture of the Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque periods. In my spare time, as I'm in Switzerland, I enjoy hiking! Most evenings, I watch films, and love those by Éric Rohmer, Luis Buñuel, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Dario Argento, and many others.

### **What are the worst things about having this as your specialty?**

The downside of specialising in esotericism for me, thus far, has been a lack of literacy and interest in the field from the wider arts community, both in Australia and Europe. During a thesis defence, I was told by a prominent art critic that the study of occultism is irrelevant to contemporary society, antisocial, exclusionary, and in short, a waste of time. Across many institutions and humanities departments, esoteric scholarship is not given the credibility that it deserves. I'm glad to be pursuing a PhD on the aestheticisation of occultism in the long nineteenth century under Professor Andreas Kilcher. At the Chair for Literature and Cultural Studies of ETH Zürich, art history and esotericism are seen as entangled fields, equally worthy of attention.

### **What are the best things about having this as your specialty?**

I am paid to read and write for pleasure daily! I'm grateful that I'm able to educate myself on art and occult subjects for a living.




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## **Upcoming Conferences**

**8th International ESSWE Conference -  
Esotericism, Art and Creativity  
(5-7 July, 2021, University College Cork, Ireland)**

Call for Papers:

**8th Biannual Conference of the European Society for the  
Study of Western Esotericism (ESSWE)**

*Western Esotericism and Creativity:  
Art, Performance and Innovation*

University College Cork, 5-7 July 2021

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Website: [www.esswe8.com](http://www.esswe8.com)



This conference brings together scholars who seek to examine the intersections of Western Esotericism and artforms, creative performance and production. The theme is open to broad interpretation, as well as geographical scope and historical and cultural context from antiquity to the present day. The relationship between diverse genres of the arts and Western Esotericism are close and multivalent; many artists, historical and contemporary, are practicing occultists or influenced by esoteric philosophies or practices. The theme encourages explorations of manifestations of spiritual creativity and the relationship between esoteric symbols, principles and religious frameworks, and the production of artwork. A multitude of examples of esoteric-inspired art can be identified, from literature and music to painting and photography. Examinations can also be made of the interconnection between innovation and esotericism, and attention paid to historical and philosophical developments in alchemy and other so-called 'occult sciences', or this aspect can be explored in terms of scholarly theoretical and methodological innovations in the field of Western Esotericism. Specific sub-themes could include:

- Esoteric themes in art
- Otherworldly encounters and creativity
- Ritual, performance and esotericism
- Esotericism and literature
- Art and music as techniques in esoteric practice
- Aesthetic dimensions of Western Esotericism
- Occultism, artistic expression and popular culture

The broad conference theme encourages cross-disciplinary engagement, from scholars of religion, philosophers, historians, art historians, musicologists, literary scholars, psychologists and anthropologists as well as allowing the integration of perspectives and dialogue in relation to examinations of different dimensions of Western esotericism, whether in historical

contexts or contemporary social and popular manifestations, in its experiential aspects or its philosophical strands.

The year 2021 is a commemorative year in Ireland as in 1921 the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed, bringing an end to the War of Independence. Artists of the 'Anglo-Irish Literary Revival' or 'Celtic Twilight' artistic movement, such as William Butler Yeats, Ella Young, and George Russell, were involved in political movements and nationalist endeavours as well as folklore collection, and were practicing occultists, and the conference aims to explore such intersections of esotericism, art, politics and nationalism in Ireland and far beyond.

**ESSWE8 is a Special Conference of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR).**

**Keynote lectures:**

**Dr Marco Pasi**, Associate Professor, University of Amsterdam, Department of Humanities, "The Occulture of Contemporary Art"

**Dr Claire Nally**, Associate Professor, Northumbria University, Department of Humanities, "Ireland's Funerary Culture and Ancestral Memory: W. B. Yeats's Early Poetry and Prose"

**Dr Christopher Webster**, Senior Lecturer, Aberystwyth University, "Stone, Symbol and Face: Photography and Ethnos in the Third Reich"

**Call for Papers / Panels**

While the aim is for ESSWE8 to be a large, cross-disciplinary and inclusive conference, paper and panel proposals will go through a careful selection process so as to ensure that the final programme will be of high academic quality as well as focused on the conference theme. We encourage scholars across disciplines to creatively consider the theme and to come up with innovative analytical perspectives and frameworks that examine specific historical and cultural contexts, source materials, unique cases and topics.

As always, the ESSWE wants to provide a platform for intensive exchange and collaborative networking between scholars from diverse perspectives, regions and on all levels of the academy. In this regard, postgraduate students as well as more experienced and established scholars are all encouraged to participate and submit proposals for papers or panels. In the many intersections that this conference theme shines a light on, we are confident that ESSWE8 will be a foundational event for developing collaborations in the field and establishing new research avenues for the future.

Individual paper presentations should have a length of 20 minutes, leaving 10 minutes for discussion.

The conference language is English.

Please send your paper or panel proposal to [esswe8\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:esswe8[at]gmail.com)

**Submission Guidelines:**

**Individual paper proposals** must include basic information about the author (title, institutional affiliation/independent scholar), a paper title and an abstract of no more than 300 words and 3-5 keywords about the proposed presentation.

**Panel Proposals** must include the following information:

- Title of panel
- Panel Description of approximately 300 words
- Purpose, goals, expected outcomes and contribution to the conference theme (approximately 300-350 words)
- Panel Convenor(s) (Organizer(s))' names, email addresses and affiliations
- Chosen Length: Panels can be 90 minutes or 120 minutes in length
- Special requests/equipment needs

Please Note: panels are expected to generate discussion and active exchange of ideas rather than simply presenting a series of papers. The convenor(s) thus have the option to choose a different format (for example, roundtable discussion or a series of short position papers with audience/discussant response). The format choice should be included in the Panel description.

**Important dates**

Deadline for submission of paper and panel proposals: 1 November 2020

Notification of acceptance by: 15 January 2021

Beginning of Registration: 15 February 2021

Early bird conference fee until: 1 April 2021

Normal conference fee: 1 April to 25 June 2021

Please Note: In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we reserve the option to postpone the conference to the following year should travel restrictions or university safety guidelines require it. If this is the case, delegates will be informed no later than 15 February 2021 (and in this eventuality, registration will not open).

**Conference bursaries**

The ESSWE provides a limited number of travel bursaries for participants from economically disadvantaged countries. For further information, see <http://www.esswe.org/Bursaries>

ESSWE8 will feature a special symposium event for students of the ESSWE Student Network, facilitated by Mriganka Mukhopadhyay.

As part of its support of ESSWE8, the IAHR will provide two individual bursaries (of EUR 500 each) specifically for postgraduate students from weak currency countries in Europe. To apply, please email [esswe8\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:esswe8[at]gmail.com) with your name,

thesis title, any links (website/social media) and notification of paper acceptance at ESSWE8.

**Conference Organizer:**

Dr Jenny Butler (Link: <http://research.ucc.ie/profiles/A040/j.butler@ucc.ie>)

**Scientific Committee:**

Jenny Butler, Henrik Bogdan, Egil Asprem, Christian Giudice, Crystal Addey

**Location**

ESSWE8 will take place in University College Cork in Cork city, Ireland.

**Accommodation**

It will be possible to stay in the UCC campus accommodation, with rooms reserved for

delegates at a special price. A list of suggestions concerning hotels, hostels, and B&Bs will be

provided on the ESSWE8 website and the ESSWE Facebook page.

**Contact**

All questions and inquiries should be directed to [esswe8\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:esswe8[at]gmail.com)

For further information, please see the conference website: [www.esswe8.com](http://www.esswe8.com) ♦

## The 2021 CESNUR Conference Quebec City (Quebec, Canada), 17-19 June 2021, Université Laval

### RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN AN ERA OF GLOBALIZATION LE PLURALISME RELIGIEUX À L'ÈRE DE LA MONDIALISATION

*Thursday June 17, 2021*

**8.30 a.m. - 9 a.m. / Registration**

**9 a.m. - 10.30 a.m. / Session 1 - Opening Plenary Session**

## Religions and Their Critics Between Globalization and Localization

Chair: Massimo INTROVIGNE

Greetings from Academic Authorities

*Once Upon a Time, There Were Three New Religions: Global, Local and Glocal. But Wherein Lies the Difference?*

Eileen BARKER (London School of Economics / INFORM, London, UK)

*Transformations of the Quebec Religious Field (1950-2020)*

Alain BOUCHARD (Université Laval, Quebec City, Quebec, Canada)

*Are There "Cults" in China? Branding Religions as "Xiejiao" in the Peoples' Republic*

J. Gordon MELTON (Baylor University, Waco, Texas, U.S.A.)

Movie: *Bitter Winter* presents *The Long Arm of the Dragon: Chinese Persecution of Refugees Fleeing Religious Persecution*

**10.30 a.m. / 11 a.m. Coffee Break**

**11 a.m. - 1 p.m. / Session 2 - Plenary**

### Scientology Studies 2.0

Chair: George CHRYSIDES

*Game Maker: Reassessing L. Ron Hubbard's Life and Legacy Beyond Biography/Hagiography*

Donald WESTBROOK (Claremont Graduate University, California, U.S.A.)

*Scientology as a Modern Gnosis*

Eric ROUX (European Interreligious Forum for Religious Freedom, Brussels, Belgium)

*Scientology's Disconnection Policy in Comparative Perspective*

Massimo INTROVIGNE (CESNUR, Turin, Italy)

*Scientology's Human Rights Campaigns and Their Enemies:*

*Who Hates Scientology and Why*

Rosita ŠORYTĖ (European Federation for Freedom of Belief, Vilnius, Lithuania)

*Hubbard College of Administration*

Bernadette RIGAL-CELLARD (Bordeaux Montaigne University, France)

**1 p.m. - 2 p.m. / Business Lunch**

**1 p.m. - 2 p.m. / Meeting of the members of the International Society for the Study of New Religions (ISSNR members only; box lunch provided)**

**2 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. / Session 3**

## Saints and Sinners: Old and New Stories and Controversies

Chair: Chris HARTNEY

*New Developments in Native North American Catholicism: The Opening of Black Elk's Canonization Cause*

Bernadette RIGAL-CELLARD (Bordeaux Montaigne University, France)

*Already Globalized; How Jehovah's Witnesses Maintain a Unified Organization*

George D. CHRYSIDES (University of Birmingham, UK)

*The Wandjina of Lurline Street: A Successful Blasphemy Case in Australian Law?*

Zoe ALDERTON (University of Sydney, Australia)

*The Satanic Temple and Religious Pluralism in the US*

Mathieu COLIN (Ph.D. candidate, University of Montreal, Quebec, Canada)

**2 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. / Session 4**

### Shincheonj and the Deprogramming Controversy in South Korea

Chair: Eileen BARKER

*What Is Shincheonji?*

Massimo INTROVIGNE (CESNUR, Turin, Italy)

*An Introduction to the Theology of Shincheonji*

Holly FOLK (Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington, U.S.A.)

*Deprogramming in South Korea and Its Political Context*

Rosita ŠORYTĖ (European Federation for Freedom of Belief, Vilnius, Lithuania)

**2 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. / Session 5**

### A New, Emerging Italian Movement: Archeosophy - A Panel Discussing Issue 4:1 of *The Journal of CESNUR*

Presiding and introducing:

*A Presentation of the Issue 4:1 of The Journal of CESNUR*

PierLuigi ZOCCATELLI (Pontifical Salesian University, Turin, Italy)

*Introduction to the Life of Tommaso Palamidessi*

Elisa BURGIO (Cólegio Bernardette Romeira, Quelfes, Portugal)

*Introduction to the Archeosophical Works of Tommaso*

*Palamidessi*

Daniele CORRADETTI (PhD candidate, University of Algarve, Faro, Portugal)

*Archeosophy, Scuola Archeosofica, Associazione Archeosofica:  
Religious Liberty and Unity of Religions*  
Francesco CRESTI (Attorney at Law, Rome, Italy)

**3.30 p.m. - 4 p.m. / Coffee Break**

**4 p.m. - 6.30 p.m. / Session 6**

**Religion et spiritualité, célébration et controverse [in French]**

Chair: Alain BOUCHARD

*Impératif du bien-être et sociologie des religions : étude des croyances et pratiques du développement personnel*  
Virginie BEAULIEU (Quebec University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada)

*La fête des Morts ressuscitée*  
Denis BOIVIN (Université Laval, Quebec City, Quebec, Canada)

*La laïcité dans le pluralisme juridique religieux au Canada et la liberté de culte pour les musulmans dans un système glocalisé*  
Rachida HASSANE (Abdou Moumouni University, Niamey, Niger)

*Les croyants non-catholiques dans un sanctuaire catholique : Défis du vivre-ensemble*  
Jonas ST-MARTIN (Université Laval, Quebec City, Quebec, Canada)

*Réactions de la communauté de Bountiful aux allégations d'entorses aux lois. De 1990 à 2018 : de l'ouverture à l'autre à la réclusion ?*  
Dianne CASONI (University of Montreal, Quebec, Canada) and Marie-Andrée PELLAND (University of Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada)

*Maurice Chabas (1862-1947) et les mondes de l'au-delà*  
Myriam DE PALMA (Art Historian, Quebec City, Quebec, Canada)

**4 p.m. - 6.30 p.m. / Session 7**

**Polygamy and the Police: The Case of the Ambash Family**

Chair: Constance JONES

*The Ambash Family: History, Life Style, and Accusations*  
Liselotte FRISK (Dalarna University, Falun, Sweden)

*Daniel Ambash and Israel's Anticult Narrative*  
Susan PALMER (McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada)

*Na Nachs and Neo-Kabbalism: Ambash Family Theology and the Message of Israel Dov Odesser*  
Holly FOLK (Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington, U.S.A.)

Respondents: Aderet Dorit AMBASH and Shiran Aslan AMBASH

Followed by the projection of the movie *The Ambash Ladies*, introduced by its director, Jessica VATURI-DEMBO

**4 p.m. - 6.45 p.m. / Session 8**

**Popular Minorities, Contested Minorities, and Religious Experience**

Chair: Fiona CHANG

*Spiritual Tourism in Glastonbury, UK*  
Eriko KAWANISHI (Professional Institute of International Fashion, Osaka, Japan)

*Challenges to Religious Pluralism in Contemporary Lithuania: the Case of the Ancient Baltic Faith Community Romuva*  
Milda ALISAUŠKIENĖ (Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania)

*A Legitimate Component of the Nepalese Religious Polytypy? Toward Christian Politics of Recognition*  
Guillaume BOUCHER (University of Montreal, Quebec, Canada)

*Mainstreaming Scientology*  
Phil LORD (McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada)

*50 Shades of Pinks and Grays: L. Ron Hubbard, Drugs, and OT III*  
Ian CAMACHO (Independent scholar, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.)

*Notes on a Survey Among Religious Studies Scholars*  
PierLuigi ZOCCATELLI (Pontifical Salesian University, Turin, Italy)

*William James and Seon Master Daehaeng on Religious Experience*  
KIM Chae Young (Sogang University, Seoul, South Korea)

**4 p.m. - 6 p.m. / Session 9**

**A Rumor of Spirits**

Chair: Massimo INTROVIGNE

*"More Knowledge and Less Faith": Arthur Conan Doyle's Quest to Restore True Religion*  
Michael W. HOMER (Attorney and Independent Scholar, Salt Lake City, Utah, U.S.A.)

*Dutch Mediumistic Art of the Interwar Period: Artistic, Religious and Social Aspects*  
Wim KRAMER (Utrecht University, The Netherlands)

*Séance: Contemporary Spiritualism and the Iconography of Ectoplasm*

Shannon TAGGART (Author and photographer, New York, U.S.A.)

*Spiritualism and Science on the Canadian Prairies Between the Wars*

Serena KESHAVJEE (University of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada)

*Friday June 18, 2021*

**9.30 a.m. - 11 a.m. / Session 10**

**The Alternative Altars of Quebec**

Chair: Mike KROPVELD

*The Mystical Geography of Quebec Since the Quiet Revolution*

Susan PALMER (McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada)

*Roch Thériault's Ant Hill Kids/Holy Moses Mountain*

*Community: An Exploration of Violence in a Quebec Commune*  
Andrew AMES (McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada)

*Contesting Traditional Parenthood: The Upbringing of Children in Ecoovie*

Marie-Eve MELANSON (McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada)

*Secularism and Jewish Schools in Quebec: The Right to Education and the Threat of Assimilation*

Shane DUSSAULT (McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada)

**9.30 a.m. - 11 a.m. / Session 11**

**Canada's Strange Neighbor, the United States**

Chair: Michael W. HOMER

*Afro-American History in Christian Science: Local (Seattle), National (USA), and Global*

Cindy Peyser SAFRONOFF (Independent Scholar, Seattle, Washington, U.S.A.)

*"Insane over Christian Science"? Contests over Madness and Faith at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*

Alexandra PRINCE (University at Buffalo, Buffalo, New York, U.S.A.)

*Evangelical Schism: Mark Galli, Christianity Today, and Donald Trump*

James A. BEVERLEY (Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, Ontario, Canada)

*What it Means to Kneel: Religion, Civil Religion, and Controversies Surrounding the #Takeaknee Movement in American Football*

Mathilde VANASSE-PELLETIER (University of Ottawa, Canada)

**9.30 a.m. - 11 a.m. / Session 12**

**East Asian New Religions: Vietnam, Taiwan, South Korea**

Chair: Rosita ŠORYTĚ

*Cosmology, Soteriology, Chronology: Outlining Caodaism's Complex Millenarianism*

Christopher HARTNEY (University of Sydney, Australia)

*The Re-invention of Chinese Culture Orthodoxy: The I Ching, Fengshui, and Religious Practice of Taiwan's Weixin Shengjiao*

Fiona Hsin-Fang CHANG (National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan)

*The Visual Arts in Daesoon Jinrihoe*

LEE Gyungwon (Daejin University, Pocheon City, South Korea) and LEE Jeeyoung (Daejin University, Pocheon City, South Korea)

*Religious Pluralism in Korean New Religions: Focused on the Harmonization of Three East Asian Religions in Daesoon Jinrihoe*

LEE Suhyun (National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan)

**11 a.m. - 11.30 a.m. / Coffee Break**

**11.30 a.m. - 1 p.m. / Session 13**

**Providence: A Church in the News Between South Korea and Taiwan**

Presiding and introducing:

*A Pastor Goes to Jail but His Church Grows*

Massimo INTROVIGNE (CESNUR, Turin, Italy)

*The Pursuit of Subjectivity and the Evangelization of Intellectual Elites by an Emerging Religion: Providence Church in Taiwan as an Example*

TSAI Chih-Che (National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan)

*The Creation of Feminism in the Religious Field: Providence Church in Taiwan as an Example*

Haisul PALALAVI (National Cheng-Chi University, Taipei, Taiwan)

Respondent: CHOU Hsueh-Hua (National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan)

**11.30 a.m. - 1 p.m. / Session 14**

**The Victory Altar: "Immortal Faith," Religious Revolution and Veganism**

Chair: LEE Gyungwon

*Religious Revolution by the Victor Christ & a Vision of the Victory Altar*

HAN Gang-Hyen (International Academy of Neo-Humans Culture, Bucheon City, South Korea)

*The Immortal Science as a Religious Innovation by the Victor Christ: Centering on the Theo-Science of the Victory Altar and Veganism*

AN Byung-Chun (World Immortality Association, South Korea)

*The Secret of Nirvana from Birth to Aging, Sickness and Death by the Principle of Mind and Blood*

KANG Yun-Min (International Academy of Neo-Humans Culture, Bucheon City, South Korea)

*The Faith of the Flesh: Eternal Life in the Case of Victory Altar and Pluralism*

KIM Jongsuk (The Institute of the History of Korean Messianic Movement, Chunan City, South Korea)

**11.30 a.m. - 1 p.m. / Session 15**

**Viewing Doctrine and Tradition: How Popular Television and Film (Mis)Represent the Doctrines, Beliefs, and Traditions of New Religious Movements**

Chair: Zoe ALDERTON

*Shining a Light on Sabrina's 'Church of Night' – How Religious Communities Interact with Their Depiction Onscreen*

Chris MILLER (University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada)

*Virtuous Vampires and Sinful Shape-Shifters: Racial Implications of Mormonism in the Twilight Series*

Brooke Kathleen BRASSARD (University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada)

Respondent: Susan PALMER

**1 p.m. - 2 p.m. / Business Lunch**

**2 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. / Session 16**

**The Luz del Mundo Church in Scholarly Perspective: A Panel Discussing Issue 4:2 of *The Journal of CESNUR***

Presiding and introducing: Holly FOLK

Panel: *A Fast-Growing Religious Movement, a Global Charitable Work, and an Apostle in Jail*

Panelists:

Massimo INTROVIGNE (CESNUR, Turin, Italy)

Sara POZOS BRAVO (Sámann University of Jalisco, Guadalajara, Mexico)

J. Gordon MELTON (Baylor University, Waco, Texas, U.S.A.)

Rosita ŠORYTĖ (European Federation for Freedom of Belief, Vilnius, Lithuania)

Donald WESTBROOK (Claremont Graduate University, California, U.S.A.)

Respondent: Bigvai ESTRADA

**2 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. / Session 17**

**Pluralism, Globalization, and the Future of Religion**

Chair: Eriko KAWANISHI

*"Glocalization" and the Paradox of Religious Pluralism: A Challenge to Globalization*

John R. POTTENGER (University of Alabama, Huntsville, U.S.A.)

*Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and the Future of Religion*

Roland SHAINIDZE (York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada)

*Religious Pluralism between Acceptance and Rejection: Dilemmas of a Believer*

Robert T. PTASZEK (The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland)

*The Delicate Equilibrium Between Religious Freedom, Pluralism and Preservation of Traditional Worldviews in North-Western Amazonia*

Bair PUIG ZHAMAGANOV (Universidad del Rosario, Bogotá, Colombia)

**2 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. / Session 18**

**Meanwhile in India**

Chair: Alessandro AMICARELLI

*Secularism as a Foundation Stone of Religious Pluralism: Glimpses from India*

Vedpal DESWAL (Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak, India)

*Responses to Current Hindu Nationalism: The Case of "Hindus for Human Rights"*

Constance A. JONES (California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, U.S.A.)

*Pahela Baisakh Festival in Bengali Diasporas: How Performances and Material Culture Work in creating Space and Collective Identity*

Jannatul MAOA (University of Kansas, Lawrence, U.S.A.)

*Sacred on Stage: Pluralism, Controversy and Need. Clashes of Ritual, Enactment and Performance in India*

Svetlana RYZHAKOVA (Russian Academy of Science, Moscow, Russia)

**3.30 p.m. - 4 p.m. / Coffee break**

**4 p.m. - 6.30 p.m. / Session 19**

**A House Divided? A Conversation on the Unification Movement in 2020**

Chair: Eileen BARKER

*The Future of the Unification Community in Montreal*  
Franco FAMULARO (Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, Toronto, Ontario, Canada)

*Unificationism and Pluralism: A Paradox of Triumphalist Universalism*  
Dan FEFERMAN (Unification Theological Seminary, Barrytown, New York, U.S.A.)

*“One Family Under God” as a Transformative Vision for Interreligious Dialogue in an Era of Globalization*  
YOO Yunkwon (Claremont Graduate University, California, U.S.A.)

*The Word on the Substantial Word Research Group: Latest Unification Schism*  
Alexa BLONNER (Independent scholar, Gold Coast, Australia)

*The Unification Church’s Movement for Unification, Pluralism, and its Degeneration*  
KIM Jongsuk (The Institute of the History of Korean Messianic Movement, Chunan City, South Korea)

*Recent Developments in Litigation Involving the Family Federation/Unification Church*  
Michael MICKLER (Sunhak Institute of History, U.S.A.)

*The Mainstream Religious Tradition of Sun Myung Moon versus the “Only Begotten Daughter” Movement of Mrs. Moon*  
Mark BRAMWELL (Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, Germany)

**4 p.m. - 6.30 p.m. / Session 20**

**Nouvelles spiritualités et ésotérismes [in French]**

Chair: Mathilde VANASSE-PELLETIER

*Transmariophanies contestataires, un cas québécois : l’Ordre du Cœur Immaculée et de saint Louis-Marie de Montfort*  
Alain BOUCHARD (Université Laval, Quebec City, Quebec, Canada)

*Stratégies d’adaptation d’une communauté de la Mission de l’Esprit-Saint à la suite de conflits au sein de l’église et à l’égard de l’exo-groupe*  
Dianne CASONI (University of Montreal, Quebec, Canada) and Marie-Andrée PELLAND (University of Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada)

*Pluralisme religieux et interprétation du bahaïsme par la Première Nation Innue (Quebec)*  
Marine CHAVANNE (Bordeaux Montaigne University, France)

*La Commission de l’immigration et du statut de réfugié du Canada devant l’épreuve du Falun Gong*  
Pierre-Simon CLEARY (Université du Québec à Montréal, Montreal, Canada)

*Le sacré féminin au Nouvel Âge: le retour de la Déesse et ses significations culturelles dans la pratique ésotérique du nouveau millénaire*  
Alex KIEFER DA SILVA (Université Laval, Quebec City, Quebec, Canada)

*Universalisme contre mondialisation. De l’usage de René Guénon*  
Jean Pierre LAURANT (University of Paris - Sorbonne, France)

**4 p.m. - 6.30 p.m. / Session 21**

**Studying, Watching, Living in, and Defending in Court New Religious Movements**

Chair: J. Gordon MELTON

*Reflection and Analysis on Info-Cult’s 40 Years of Existence*  
Mike KROPVELD (Info-Secte, Montreal, Quebec, Canada) and Marie-Andrée PELLAND (University of Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada)

*Guwonpa-Good News Mission: A Dynamic Grassroots Group in Contemporary Korean Christian NRM History*  
David W. KIM (Australian National University, Canberra, Australia)

*Non-Religion a Gateway to Global New Religions and Religious Creativity: A Case of Messianic Jews and Messianic Muslims*  
Richard CROFT (University of Eastern Finland, Helsinki, Finland)

*Tantra, Yoga & Sacred Sexuality: Spirituality, Enlightenment, and Controversies*  
Alessandro AMICARELLI (European Federation for Freedom of Belief, London, UK)

*Forms of Practice and Psychological Aspects of Tantra According to Guru Jára*  
Pavel HLAVINKA (Palacky University, Olomouc, Czech Republic) and Kristyna TOMANOVÁ (Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic)

*Legal Status and Human Rights Perspective in the Case of a New Religious Movement, the Guru Jára Path*  
Martin KRAJCA (Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic)

*Saturday June 19, 2021*

**9.30 a.m. / Field Trip: The Wendat (Huron) Nation**

Buses leave from the Pavillon La Laurentienne (1030 Avenue du Séminaire) at 9.30 a.m, to visit a Wendat (Huron) settlement. The Wendat representatives will guide us to visit a reconstructed traditional village and to discover their culture and religion. After a traditional Wendat meal, based on bison meat (vegetarian option available), and a show of Wendat dances (to which we will be invited to participate), we will return to Quebec City in the late afternoon. ♦

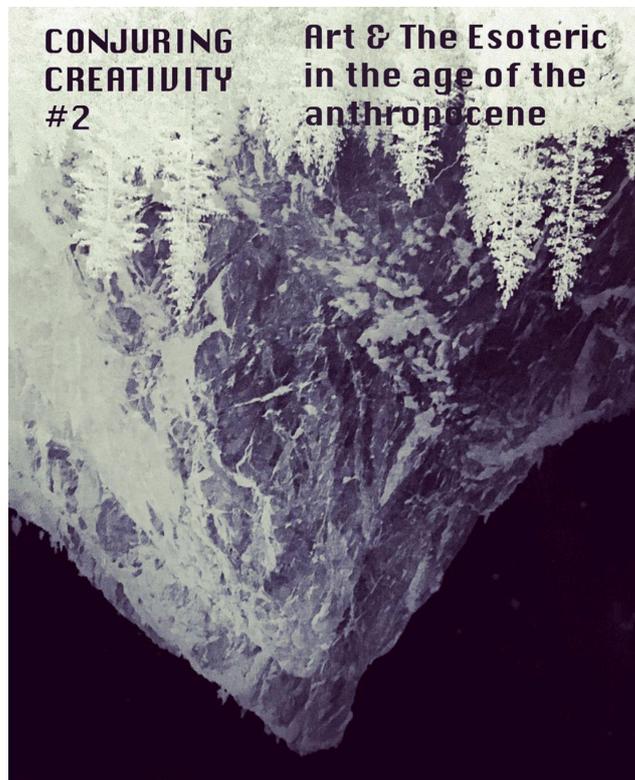
## **Conjuring Creativity #2 2021**

### *Art & the Esoteric in the Age of the Anthropocene*

#### **26-28 March 2021, Fylkigen, Stockholm, Sweden**

A biennial, 3 day multidisciplinary conference/symposium encouraging cross pollination between scholars, practitioners and contemporary artists working within the framework of Western Esotericism.

The first event took place in Stockholm, April 2018, the 2<sup>nd</sup> being postponed for obvious reasons is now taking place over the weekend of 26-28 March 2021.



Conjuring Creativity, Art & the Esoteric, in the age of the Anthropocene - is specifically looking at how esoteric/occult and indigenous knowledges, alongside otherwise mystical strategies are being/have been utilised within art and culture as valid vehicles for change when in relation to the anthropocene, future ecologies and the metaphorical/physical impending decline or reclaim of a western civilisation.

Particularly focusing on a high standard of academic research within Western esotericism, combined with experiential knowledges and the language of contemporary art as vehicles of

understanding and communication.

Conceived and curated by interdisciplinary artist Geraldine Hudson, other experts within the field are invited to co-curate and act as academic advisors, to date Dr. Per Faxneld and Dr. Christian Giudice.

As this is an interdisciplinary event we are looking at proposals for papers, workshops, performances, artists talks, film screenings and other creative interventions after some thought we have decided not to have a hierarchical line up with keynote speakers, rather a choice of presentation structure 45 mins or 25 as part of a panel group thereby hoping to foster a healthier horizontal cross pollination.

Next years Conjuring Creativity is specifically looking at how esoteric/occult and indigenous knowledges, alongside otherwise mystical strategies are being/have been utilised within art and culture as valid vehicles for change when in relation to the anthropocene, future ecologies and the metaphorical/physical impending decline or reclaim of a western civilisation.

If you are an artist (visual or sound) academic, independent scholar, writer, architect, researcher, esoteric practitioner, psychologist or performer working within these fields then you are warmly invited to send an abstract of no more than 300 words to us at [conjuringcreativity@gmail.com](mailto:conjuringcreativity@gmail.com) along with a current short bio and your artist cv if relevant.

Please send all enquiries to this email.

Deadline for applications is midnight 1st October 2020

This event is based in Stockholm, Sweden. ♦