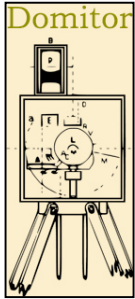


# Performing New Media, 1890-1915

*Twelfth International Domitor Conference*  
**Monday, 18 June to Friday, 22 June, 2012**  
*University of Brighton, Brighton, UK*

*New Dates!*



From the 1890s to the start of the First World War, a new media culture of projected images emerged. Showmen and women, entrepreneurs, educators, scientists and others employed magic lanterns and cinematographs in a variety of contexts that shaped and expressed the social, cultural and commercial significance of these new media. Given that these silent screen technologies almost always demanded accompaniment (words, music, sound effects) and that the combined use of lantern slides and short films implied varied and sometimes complex programmes, these events were effectively always performances. Projectionists, exhibitors, onstage talent, musical accompanists, backstage crews – all contributed to performances that could include live music, song, lectures, narration or sound effects in union with projected images. The growth of this new media also precipitated the rise of the new film industry and gave birth to the concept of ‘the cinema’. Around the world purpose-built cinemas opened in the 1900s, creating new and distinctive venues. However this screen practice was not yet ‘pure’ (i.e. film only) as these early venues were also active sites for the exhibition of films within multi-media performances. Exploring the nature and uses of these hybrid and multifaceted new media performances at this pivotal historical moment (‘the invention of cinema’) and analysing their social, cultural, economic and ideological meanings provides this conference with its subject and purpose. By engaging these concerns in Brighton three and a half decades after the famous 1978 FIAF conference, we wish to address and expand the historiography of early cinema in light of recent explorations of the intermedial and performative nature of contemporary new media.

Papers will explore such areas as:

- old and new histories and theories of media / screen practice 1890-1915 – challenging the established historiography through the study of screen history / theory in the context of its ‘performance’
- new media performance practices - origins and histories: the role of showmen and their creation of programmes; the combination of the lantern and the cinematograph within performance; the use of lecturers, narration, music, song and sound; the rise of the new media travelling show and the use of networks / circuits of venues; the history and dissemination of performance techniques
- the role of gender, race and class in shaping these practices
- the social, cultural, commercial and ideological natures of these programmes
- performance and professionalization
- the industrialisation of the lantern from the 1880s and its impact on performance (e.g. the rise of manufacturers devoted to lantern projectors and slides, the standardisation of slide formats, the production of catalogues and the introduction of distribution systems)
- the particular relationship between the magic lantern and the cinematograph
- the use of recorded sound as a performance component
- new media performances in the context of both national and trans-national practices
- the venues for this history and their new media programmes, cultures and audiences (this includes the first purpose-built cinemas); architecture and performance
- new media programmes and the city 1890-1915: tourism, culture, entertainment and economic development (e.g. Brighton and late Victorian seaside resorts)
- new media and its intermedial and intertextual relationships with other performance practices (e.g. the circus, the music hall / vaudeville, pantomime, theatre and the travelling show)
- the relationship between performance theory and new media performance, 1890-1915
- researching new media and its performance: the archival challenges and opportunities
- the (sometimes historiographically and theoretically fraught) relationships among new media of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries

The proposal deadline was 31 October 2011. Acceptances will be announced by early February 2012. The program will be posted on the Domitor website shortly thereafter. For more information about Domitor and its conferences, visit [www.domitor.org](http://www.domitor.org)