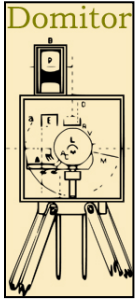


## Performing New Media, 1890-1915

*Twelfth International DOMITOR Conference*  
*Monday, 25 June to Thursday, 28 June, 2012*  
*University of Brighton, Brighton, UK*



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.

We invite papers that 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
- educational, religious, or scientific new media performances
- the 'news' on stage and on screen: employing the lantern and the cinematograph within performances that addressed such events as Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, the Spanish-American War and the Delhi Durbars
- 'textual variability': from page to performance through new media presentations (e.g. Dickens or the New Testament)
- 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

Although we imagine the general time frame for the period covered by papers in the conference to be 1890 through 1915, we realise that cinema developed unevenly across the global stage. For that reason, papers treating cinema after 1915 in countries where early cinema practices postdate the proposed time frame will be given full consideration. Similarly, papers that examine the history and current status of early cinema's place in the archive and museum specifically related to the concept of "new media performance" are also welcomed.

Proposal Submission Process: Those wishing to submit a proposal should do so no later than **31 October 2011** to: [domitor2012@gmail.com](mailto:domitor2012@gmail.com)

Proposals for pre-constituted panels of 3 or 4 participants will also be considered; such proposals should be submitted by the panel chair and consist of the collected individual paper proposals in addition to a brief rationale for the pre-constituted panel.

Proposals for individual papers should be no longer than 300 words and be written in either English or French. Only a paper written in one of those two languages can be presented at the conference. Papers prepared for conference delivery should stay within a word limit of 2500 words and be able to fit within a 20-minute presentation format (including any audiovisual material used to supplement the paper). We request that all papers be submitted by 30 April 2012 to allow for simultaneous translation.

While membership in DOMITOR is not required to submit a proposal, anyone presenting a paper at the conference must be a member. To become a member, please visit this site: <http://www.domitor.org/en/About/member.html>