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Recent events

The [circus dramaturgy research](#) June intensive produced some off-kilter work of note with the National Circus School students and a team from Concordia University. The three year research program will resume this school year and conclude with presentations, an exhibition, and a series of talks and workshops in June and early July of 2018.

Louis Patrick Leroux gave a keynote in June at the [UpSideDown Circus and Space International Conference](#) at the University of Münster (Germany) and a plenary talk, a paper and coordinated backstage commented tours of Cirque du Soleil productions in July in Las Vegas for the Association for Theatre in Higher Education conference. Both were opportunities to engage with many colleagues and students working on contemporary circus scholarship. Academic publications will emerge from the Münster conference and there are discussions to propose a journal issue from the Las Vegas papers. A special note of thanks and recognition to Franziska Trapp in Münster and Carlos Alexis Cruz in North Carolina (who coordinated the circus presence at the ATHE Vegas conference) for their pioneering work in their respective geographical spheres and their ability to bring such interesting established and emerging scholars together to discuss circus!

Karen Fricker and Charles Batson have also been at work ensuring that circus studies continue to engage with cultural and performance studies themes and approaches with their ongoing work on the ["Circus and its Others"](#) [Performance Matters](#) forthcoming issue.

Also, [Circus and its Others](#) will hold a panel discussion in Las Vegas in October as part of the Association for Canadian Studies in the U.S. Panel participants will include Karen Fricker, Charles Batson, Michael Eigtved, and Louis Patrick Leroux.

The Apparatus and the Performer L'appareil et l'artiste

Mario Cossin, Erin Ball and Vanessa Furlong

**Thursday 21 September, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.,
National Circus School of Montreal Library.**

11:30

Modélisation biomécanique de l'interaction homme-structure dans la performance acrobatique circassienne

Biomechanical modeling of the human-structure interaction in the acrobatic circus performance (talk in French)

Marion Cossin (Université de Montréal)

Dans le cadre de ce projet doctoral, on propose d'étudier la phase d'impulsion et de réception de l'acrobate sur la planche coréenne, ainsi que l'interaction homme-planche dans la réalisation du mouvement acrobatique. L'objectif est d'améliorer la technique acrobatique des acrobates ou la conception de la planche coréenne. En comprenant le lien entre la technique de l'acrobate et le type de planche sur laquelle il saute, il sera possible de personnaliser la conception de la planche selon l'acrobate qui l'utilise (selon sa morphologie, son potentiel acrobatique et son objectif de performance) afin qu'il puisse développer au mieux sa performance acrobatique.

Marion Cossin est candidate au doctorat en génie biomédical

Cirque Global: Quebec's Expanding Circus Boundaries

(MQUP) continues to gain readership, it has been adopted in a few schools and colleges and has had excellent reviews from *Performance Matters*, *Theatre Research in Canada*, *Theatre Research International*, *Quebec Studies*, *French Studies: A Quarterly Review* and it has been mentioned in *Circus Talk* and other online venues.

Concordia University held its first **circus-centered graduate seminar** in the context of the Faculty of Arts and Science International Field School.

<https://www.concordia.ca/artsci/academics/summer.html>

Louis Patrick Leroux led the 10-day (very) intensive seminar which was in part embedded into Montréal Complètement Cirque and the Marché international de cirque contemporain. Many Working Group regulars, artists and scholars alike participated as students or as guest speakers.

Academic lectures were held in the morning, panels, discussions and guest talks in the afternoon and students attended performances in the evening in order to discuss and write about them. The 17 students from the USA, Mexico, Italy, and Canada wrote strong papers and fascinating blogs.

A small selection of those blogs has been published online, on Spiderweb's *CDN Times*. Alison Bowie,

<https://spiderwebshow.ca/editors-note-on-quebec-performing-arts/>; Louis Patrick Leroux:

<https://spiderwebshow.ca/notes-from-a-field-school-in-a-burgeoning-field/>; Dana Dugan:

<https://spiderwebshow.ca/quebecois-circus-and-the-global-stage-national-narrative-or-not/>; Alisan Funk:

<https://spiderwebshow.ca/can-you-defy-death-with-a-little-more-artistry-please/>

and Katalin Lightner:

<https://spiderwebshow.ca/connecting-with-audiences-in-the-digital-age/>

Circus research in Canada has received additional stately recognition with the election of Louis Patrick Leroux as a member of the **Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars, Artists, and Scientists**. He joins other dynamic colleagues such as Erin Hurley from McGill, a co-founder of the Working Group.

Congratulations to the following Working Group regulars on successfully completing their degrees over the past few months:

- **Joanie Leroux-Côté**, MSc in Arts Management from HEC-Montreal, with a pedagogical management case study on Les 7 doigts de la main
- **Alisan Funk**, MA in Independent Studies from Concordia with a focus on circus pedagogy. For a layperson's enticement to read her thesis:

à l'Université de Montréal et à l'École Polytechnique, Avant cela, elle a complété une maîtrise recherche en génie mécanique à l'École Polytechnique de Montréal. Ses travaux portent sur l'interaction entre l'équipement de cirque et l'acrobate d'un point de vue de la sécurité, de l'amélioration des performances ou de l'innovation technologique.

Noon to 1 p.m.

Erin Ball (Kingston) and Vanessa Furlong (Halifax), circus artists and members of LEGacy Circus, talk about their work with prostheses and adaptable acrobatics.

LEGacy Circus is a duo contemporary circus collective featuring artists Erin Ball and Vanessa Furlong. The multi-disciplinary duo have focused their performances on adaptable acrobatics, aerial arts, flexibility, strength, dance and theatre. Their performances are unique, evocative and often humorous. What sets them apart is their focus on legs and leg attachments. Erin Ball is a double amputee who works both with and without her leg prostheses. Vanessa Furlong is a stilt dancer who also works with and without leg attachments (stilts).

A Brief History of The Golden Age of Stage Conjuring, Vaudeville and Circus in Montreal (1880-1930)

Guided tour and discussion animated by Dr. Joseph Culpepper (Concordia University) at the McCord Museum.

Wednesday 8 November, 10 a.m. McCord Museum (McGill University)

*** A very much reduced admission rate of 11\$ will be charged to enter into the museum upon confirming your presence in advance. RSVP: patrick.leroux@concordia.ca**

The Golden Age of Stage Conjuring (1880-1930) in North America and Western Europe encompasses a period of rapid technological advances in the performing arts, cinema,

(Unexpected) Circus Mobilities

Dr. Jessica Kendall, Elena Kreuzsch, and Tracy Zhang

Wednesday 11 October, 10 a.m. Concordia University

"African Fever"; a Corporeal Economy of 'African' Circus in China?

Dr. Jessica Kendall

Dr. Jessica Kendall's research is based on multi-sited fieldwork through six different countries in which she tracked the movements of a troupe of circus performers. Informed

<https://circustalk.com/news/whats-the-point-of-a-degree-in-circus-arts/>

- [Sofija Jovanovic](#), MA in Independent Studies from Concordia with a focus on character and circus dramaturgy.
- [Catherine St-Arnaud](#) (our regular videographer), MA in Études françaises from Concordia in research-creation.
- And to [Francisco Cruz](#) for the completion of his BA in Education, again at Concordia, with an eye, we're sure, to bringing high-level circus teaching in our high schools.
- And a nod to [Kristy Seymour](#) in Australia (who nevertheless manages to keep in touch with the Working Group), whose work on circus and autism has generated much interest, including this TEDx Talk: https://youtu.be/2_I5P85CTEc
- Welcome to very recent PhDs [Jessica Kendall](#) (University of London) and [Marie-Eve Skelling Desmeulles](#) (University of Ottawa) who will be actively joining in this year's activities.

Call for papers, interventions, ideas! Appel à contributions, interventions, idées!

Send your proposals by 15 November for our study day to be held Friday 12 January 2018. afunk@enc.qc.ca and patrick.leroux@concordia.ca

Envoyez-nous vos propositions d'ici le 15 novembre. La journée d'études se tiendra le vendredi 12 janvier 2018. afunk@enc.qc.ca et patrick.leroux@concordia.ca

Circus and Education Study Day

Journée d'études sur l'enseignement du cirque (et des études circassiennes)

Organized by Alisan Funk (McGill), Dr. Marie-Eve Skelling (Concordia), and Dr. Louis Patrick Leroux (Concordia), with speakers to be confirmed.

This study day will be an opportunity to openly discuss pertinent issues of training and education in the circus, from teacher training, professional training to the emergence of a broad emerging academic field of circus studies.

What are the aims and objectives of circus education?
What are the existing forms of circus education and who or what markets do they benefit?

photography, lithography, and transportation. It also marks a fifty-year period of social and cultural transformations across the globe: power shifts in Europe and North America's colonial empires, a new wave of Orientalism, disillusionment during WWI, the zenith of spiritualism, victories in women's suffrage, and the stock market crash of 1929. How did the work of stage conjurers and circus artists mix during this tumultuous period? How do we see illusions from this period adapted to contemporary circus productions — *Raoul, Queen of the Night, Le soir des monstres, Rêveurs définitifs, Particle # B* — today?

Dr. Joseph Culpepper is a performance scholar, magician, and magic consultant. He teaches magic history and its adaptation to the circus arts at Montreal's National Circus School. He is an Affiliate Assistant Professor at Concordia University, a cofounder of the performance troupe Ars Mechanica and consults for both private and public organizations.

by the causes and conditions that have contributed to the recent growth of 'African' circus as a unique niche within the broader global economy of spectacle, her research focuses on how the rise of Ethiopian circus performers working as independent players within an increasingly international circus industry, involves strategically (and precariously) operating for the sake of building successful careers. Dr. Kendall explores how, within the liminal spaces of 'Otherness' present in the ambiguous realm of circus, articulations of cultural differences cut through assemblages of extreme bodily practices, negotiations of ethnicity (on stage and off), and experiences of brutal moments of racial segregation. Within these happenings and processes, she claims, new and creative strategies of selfhood are produced that are initiated and elaborated across time and space (Bhabha 1994: 2). These hybrid and extreme forms of habitus reflect new and flexible ways in which culture, the body and politics collide in the production of the body and self within drastically shifting global, and culturally spectacular, contexts.

Dr. Jessica Kendall holds a PhD in Social Anthropology from SOAS, University of London. As a visual extension of her multi-sited

Is professional training viable on its own in supporting a circus ecology without instituting a wider field of circus studies?

Guest speakers will be invited to present brief position papers (10 minutes) and participate in panel discussions and a larger forum on the state and future of circus education, particularly in its North American context.

Dr. Louis Patrick Leroux is a Professor at Concordia University and Associate Researcher at the National Circus School in Montreal. Director of the Working Group on Circus Research, he is involved in many research projects pertaining to circus across the disciplines.

Alisan Funk is enrolled in the Integrated Studies in Education PhD at McGill University. She previously completed her MA at Concordia University. Her focus in both degree programs has been curriculum in circus education. She also teaches in the Instructor Training Program at National Circus School.

Dr. Marie-Eve Skelling Desmeules is a postdoctoral fellow at Concordia University, studying circus training experiences in different contexts. She previously completed her PhD at Ottawa University. Her research focus has been corporal work in professional actor training. She also teaches artistic education at University of Ottawa.

anthropological research, Dr. Kendall's photographs have been displayed in galleries (Brunei Gallery, London) and published photographs in books (Wiley-Blackwell), Journals (JRAI) and online (BBC). She has also toured for several years in the circus industry, working most recently as a manager within the area of Talent and Production.

"Circus Mobilities" **Elena Kreusch**

Elena's current research project in the field of contemporary circus focuses on the interface between mobility life style and artistic practice. In her research she touches upon questions of artistic mobility, identity, belonging, negotiations of spaces and meanings while navigating between theory and practice.

Elena Kreusch is a PhD candidate at the Department of Theatre, Film and Media Studies at the University of Vienna, Austria and a producer to different contemporary European circus companies.

Discussant: **Dr. Tracy Zhang**

Dr. Tracy Zhang, Post-doctoral Fellow in the Department of Film and Media at Queen's University. Dr. Zhang's research is situated in the fields of cultural studies and feminist political economy, focusing especially on issues of

labour, gender, race, nationalism, and cultural production in the global creative industries. Her current project examines Chinese acrobatics as both an institution and a cultural medium. She has taught interdisciplinary courses on gender, labor, activism, feminist media and postcolonial geographies at Concordia University. Currently, she teaches a course on Performance and Media at Queen's University.

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