

# The BSA Workshop on the Art & Aesthetics of Illusion Call for Abstracts

**11th July 2023, The Magic Circle Theatre, London**

**Deadline: 1st April**

**Invited speakers:**

Robert Hopkins (Philosophy, NYU)  
Bence Nanay (Philosophy, Antwerp)  
Jasmina Stevanov (Psychology, Bristol & Cambridge)

The aim of this one-day interdisciplinary workshop is to explore the role and significance of illusion in aesthetics and art. Philosophically, this may seem anachronistic. After all, the idea that the representational arts in general aim at illusion has been widely criticized by philosophers working in the analytic tradition. There seems to be no good sense in which literature, painting, photography, theater, or film typically aim at or provide illusions of what they represent. They may absorb us, transport us, or enchant us, but they only very rarely explicitly deceive us, cognitively or perceptually. Thus, the notion of illusion has been largely sidelined in contemporary analytic aesthetics and philosophy of art. This workshop is based on the conviction that it nevertheless deserves more attention than it has been getting.

We welcome contributions from all academic disciplines concerning philosophical and/or psychological issues related to illusion in aesthetics and art, whether they consider genres and artforms that are manifestly illusionistic (such as trompe l'oeil painting, magic performance, or op art), explore ways in which illusion might be important to genres and artforms that are generally non-illusionistic (such as film or music), or investigate illusion's significance in non-art contexts and aesthetics more generally. We also welcome proposals from practicing artists who would like to present and/or discuss their work in relationship to the topic of illusion.

The workshop will take place in the beautiful Magic Circle Theatre at the Magic Circle headquarters in the heart of London. Lunch will be provided for all speakers and registered participants, and the event will be followed by a free evening magic performance by a world-class performer.

Each speaker will have 20 minutes for the presentation, followed by 10 minutes of Q&A. Please consider sending your abstract (max. 500 words), accompanied by a short biographical note (max. 150 words), to [jason.ledington@bucknell.edu](mailto:jason.ledington@bucknell.edu) by **1st April**. We particularly encourage applications from scholars and artists from underrepresented groups, including applicants with disabilities, applicants from BAME backgrounds, and women. The workshop will be in English and attendance is free. Successful applicants will be notified by 10th April.

This event is funded by the British Society of Aesthetics (BSA) and co-sponsored by the Science of Magic Association and The Magic Circle Foundation.

Organizers: Jason Leddington (Philosophy, Bucknell University)  
Gustav Kuhn (Psychology, Goldsmiths, University of London)  
Anthony Barnhart (Psychology, Carthage College)  
Jay Olson (Behavioural Science Fellow, Government of Canada)  
Jeniffer Ortega (Psychology, National University of Columbia)  
Alice Pailhès (Psychology, Goldsmiths, University of London)  
Matt Tompkins (Cognitive Science, Lund University)  
Brian Rappert (Science, Technology, and Public Affairs, University of Exeter)