

Perception and Intermediality in Art and Literature in the English-speaking World from the Renaissance to Today

Université de Haute Alsace, Mulhouse

7-8 October 2026

CALL FOR PAPERS

Although its definition is highly multivalent, intermediality is generally understood as the study of interrelations and interactions between different media. Whether one's considerations are based on the still relevant distinction between 'media combination,' involving the copresence of both media within the same work, 'medial transposition,' and 'intermedial references' (Rajewsky 2005), or on the more inclusive distinction between 'synthetic,' 'formal,' 'transformational' or 'ontological' forms of intermediality (Schröter 2012), the interplay between different media always energises the perceiver's ability to see, hear or feel. The question of the perception of intermedial relationships, from Latin *perspicere*, 'to see through,' expressing the action of collecting or reaping the benefits of something, but also of apprehending with the mind or senses, therefore involves investigations into the way sensory perceptions lead to the understanding of what lies beyond them. The four modalities structuring all media highlighted by Elleström (2010), namely material, sensorial, spatio-temporal, and semiotic, thus work hand in glove.

The association of various types of sensory stimulation invites investigations into the properties and the effects of the perceptual process. Indeed, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, perception may refer to the perceiver's becoming aware of physical objects or phenomena through the senses, but it may also allude to the capacity to be affected by them or to the effect produced in the perceiver's mind. It must therefore be related to the way one interprets a work of art one is confronted with, and the insight into the creative process one may gain. While perception may be understood as individual or collective processes, differences in perceptual functioning among individuals, groups of individuals, or even, sometimes, within the same individual at different times or in different circumstances, raise the question of the way spectators, readers and auditors interpret and respond to various forms of media interactions.

This conference will focus on intermediality in all its manifold manifestations (texts and images, texts and music, visual arts and music, performing arts, cinema, etc.) in relation with the question of perception which itself interrogates the interrelations between the sensible and the spiritual. Among the possible topics we would welcome are contributions studying the following possible interactions between these concepts:

- **Intermediality as a mode of expanded perception:** each media appealing to distinct sensory channels (for example sight, hearing or touch), their combination creates a multifarious synaesthetic perception which expands the sensory complexity of the work. Intermediality embeds the spiritual in the sensorial in a way which markedly differs from the way it is expressed (or felt) through a single medium.

- **Intermediality as perturbation or revival of reception:** mixed media, hybrid and other intermedial works can unsettle the beholder's narrative markers; the combination of perceptions may also reconfigure meaning without fixing it in a definite form. Meaning circulates between the media and the spectator, it is produced by the relationship between the media and the beholder.
- **Intermediality as a mode of remediation and transposition:** a medium may incorporate another as a form of extension, commentary or criticism where meaning is no longer solely produced by the source medium but by its comparison with other semiotic forms. The reader/spectator may increase their awareness of the medium itself, of its artificiality, or of its limits, which may produce aesthetic self-reflexivity and foster a form of heightened presence of the reader/spectator.

Papers could focus on intermedial relations in literature, music, painting, photography, performing arts or cinema in the English-speaking world. Topics include, but are not limited to:

- Case studies showcasing polysemiotic or transmedial works
- Media materiality
- Translations and remediations
- Illusions of reality: liveness, mixed reality performance
- Reception theory, phenomenology of perception
- Neuropsychological approaches, cognitive narratology
- Self-referentiality, representations of sensory perception
- Methodological and theoretical considerations on the history of concepts
- Synchronic or diachronic comparative studies, evolutions brought about by the development of new technologies, and more.

Papers will be presented either in French or in English. The conference will take place exclusively in person.

Paper proposals (300 words max) and a short bibliography with biographical notes should be sent to Fabrice Schultz (fabrice.schultz@uha.fr), Maxime Leroy (maxime.leroy@uha.fr) and Jennifer K. Dick (jennifer-kay.dick@uha.fr) by 30 April 2026

Scientific Committee

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