

# Skill and Scale in Transnational Mediumship II

December 13-14, 2018



**Skill and Scale in Transnational Mediumship II**

Workshop Cologne/Siegen  
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Joana Bahia  
Ruy Blanes  
Fiona Bowie  
Diana Espirito Santo  
Alberto Groissmann  
Helmar Kurz  
Marcello Múscari  
Emily Pierini  
Bettina Schmidt  
Inger Sjørøsløv  
Viola Teisenhofer  
Ehler Voss  
Martin Zillinger

ORGANIZATION  
Marcello Múscari  
Universidade de São Paulo  
a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School for the Humanities Cologne  
Ehler Voss  
CRC 1187 Media of Cooperation  
DFG research network Okkulte Moderne  
Association for Anthropology and Medicine (AGEM)  
Martin Zillinger  
CRC 1187 Media of Cooperation  
Global South Studies Center, University of Cologne

CONTACT  
Marcello Múscari  
mmuscari@gmail.com  
Leonie van Dreuten  
ldreuten@uni-koeln.de

VENUE  
a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School  
for the Humanities Cologne  
Aachener Str. 217 | 50931 Köln  
3. OG | Raum'3. A06

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## **ORGANIZATION**

Marcello Muscari

Universidade de São Paulo

a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School for the Humanities Cologne

Ehler Voss

University of Siegen, CRC “Media of Cooperation”

DFG research network “Okkulte Moderne”

Association for Anthropology and Medicine (AGEM)

Martin Zillinger

University of Siegen, CRC Media of Cooperation

University of Cologne, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology

## **CONTACT**

Marcello Muscari [mmuscari@gmail.com](mailto:mmuscari@gmail.com)

Leonie van Dreuten [ldreuten@uni-koeln.de](mailto:ldreuten@uni-koeln.de)

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Over the last decades, scholars have discussed the “Return of the Religious” as to deeply question the narratives of modernity and its disenchantment worldwide (de Vries and Weber 2001). Scholars engaged in an intense debate about the quality and substance of religion, and its mediation in new technical media, and discussed its various forms of transnationalization and diversification in the context of globalization processes (cf. Csordas, 2009; Behrend and Zillinger 2015). “Skill and Scale in Transnational Mediumship II” sets out to discuss new communities of practice and enskilment that evolve around techniques of mediumship in an interconnected world. The increased mobility of people and organizations, things, signs and symbols that take part in or reformulate trance practices and spiritual experiences has significantly widened the scope and outreach of adepts of trance, spirit possession and spiritual body arts. The various body techniques, symbols and artifacts play a major role in the re-organization of spirituality on site and contribute to the emergence of transnational spirited publics across time and space. This workshop, and the volume we intend to produce, therefore explores how the “local” and the “global” of religious and spiritual practice is co-produced. We invite all participants to zoom in on how these practices are taught and learned, transformed and re-invented in different settings and to reflect upon „apprenticeship“ as a process of enskilment (Ingold). While enskilment continuous to takes place in context of co-participation, it is increasingly transformed through technologization, standardization and interaction at a distance: co-participation does not necessarily entail co-presence. “**Skill**” denotes the “know how” of mediumship, the ability to discern, invoke and elaborate mediumistic experiences, while “**scale**” reminds us of both, (1) the scale, in which mediumistic practices take place and invoke transcendental powers, the *Maßstab* in German – in which *signs, things, and person are drawn together in a ritual setting* and, (2) the scale, by which the practitioners reach out to new audiences, clients and cooperation partners - or refuse to do so by delimiting their practices to a certain group of practitioners and their intimate publics. Both aspects are a matter of controversies among academics and practitioners alike and we are looking forward to discuss this along the ethnographic case-studies.

## PROGRAM

### Thursday, 13th December

10:00 - 10:30

Introduction: **Martin Zillinger**

10:30 – 10:50: **Coffee Break**

10:50 - 11:10

**Bettina Schmidt: Glocalizing Mediumship and other Forms of Non-Ordinary Experiences: the Significance of the Study of Non-ordinary Experiences for Anthropology**

11:10 - 11:40 – Discussion

11:40 - 12:00

**Ruy Blanes: The Prophetic Skill. Learning to discern and de-scale in the Angolan Tokoist Church**

12:00 - 12:30 – Discussion

12:30 - 14:00: **Lunch**

14:00 - 14:20

**Diana Espirito Santo: New media and the digitalized paranormal: instrumentation and the production of traumatic history in Chile**

### Friday, 14th December

10:00 - 10:30: **Coffee & Snacks.**

10:30 - 10:50

**Inger Sjørlev: Enskilment as Embodied Spirituality. From possession to precision in two Brazilian religions**

10:50 - 11:20 – Discussion

11:20 - 11:40

**Joana Bahia: The Romanticism of the Oyá: Feelings, bodies, memories, and the multiple space-times of the medium.**

11:40 - 12:10 – Discussion

12:10 - 12:30

**Emily Pierini: The Mediumistic Body: Transnational Ways of Knowing the Spirits in the Vale do Amanhecer**

12:30 - 13:00 – Discussion

13:00 - 14:30:

**Lunch**

14:20 - 14:50 - Discussion

14:50 - 15:10

**Alberto Groisman: Ethnographic Incorporation: research, mediumship and (re)flexible(ve) ontologies**

15:10 - 15:40 – Discussion

15:40 - 16:00

**Fiona Bowie: Voices, possession and healing: Spirit release therapists and their clients**

16:00 - 16:30 – Discussion

16:30 – 16:50: **Coffee Break**

16:50 - 17:10

**Helmar Kurz: Voices of Spirits, Patients, and Healers – Skills and Scale of Mediumship as Transnational Therapeutic Practice: Kardecism in Brazil and Germany**

17:10 - 17:40 – Discussion

**Dinner**

14:30 - 14:50

**Viola Teisenhofer: tba**

14:50 - 15:20 – Discussion

15:20 - 15:40

**Marcello Múscari: “Wir lernen von den Wesen“: Experiencing Umbanda entities in Germany**

15:40 - 16:10 – Discussion

16:10 - 16:30

**Ehler Voss: The transatlantic divide: Bringing the British way of doing mediumship to the US**

16:30 - 17:00 – Discussion

17:00 - 17:30: **Coffee & Snacks**

17:30 - 18:30

**Final Discussion.**

**Book Organization**