

# Call for Panels

The 14th International Conference of the Spanish Association for American Studies (SAAS)

*The Image and the Word: Interactions between American Literature, Media, Visual Arts and Film*

**April 10-12, 2019**

**University of Salamanca, Spain**

Word and image play an important role in perception. Under the landslide of innovation in the domain of communication and representation in the last half-century, the visual turn of culture enhanced by the postmodern digital turn has fundamentally changed traditional means of understanding culture and the expression of literature, image, film, and photography. Various philosophers and theoreticians, such as James Heffernan, Wendy Steiner, Barbara Stafford, W.J.T. Mitchell, have analyzed the “pictorial turn” of our present, claiming that the long dominance of the written book is giving way to the visual image—cinema, video, photography, and other forms of pictorial and digital representation.

The mutual exchange of literature and visual arts has a longstanding history that goes back to classical debates on *sister arts* or the *paragone*. Postmodern paradigmatic changes in media culture may well rival the modernist avant-garde revolution when Virginia Woolf announced that “on or about December 1910” human nature changed radically. Modernism brought about a moment of aesthetic and media transformation based on visuality and initiated a historical moment of media transition across the spectrum of the arts. If in the nineteenth century all arts strove towards a condition of music, in Walter Pater’s words, we could safely rephrase his dictum, saying that with the modernist avant-garde all arts strove towards the condition of the visual and the plastic arts. With modernism the exchange between literature and visual arts entered an unprecedented interaction, generating a new ekphrastic paradigm of creativity, in which boundaries between arts blurred. Postmodernism has only intensified the gravitation towards inter-disciplinarity, in which aspects of knowledge take on dynamic properties, creating social networks, webs, blogs, and fields whose inner boundaries widen in the amalgamation of different genres.

Our 21st century stands under the aegis of the image, a culture dominated by pictures, visual simulations, illusions, copies, and reproductions to the point that visual paradigms vie with and even threaten, as W.T. Mitchell contends, discursive practices. New technological achievements of the digital era have led to groundbreaking changes in the modes of communication and representation, especially in cinema, which opened new connections between literature and visual arts. Furthermore, a computerized media have penetrated all fields of aesthetics and material culture raising philosophical and aesthetic concerns as to the distinction between art and nature, the status of the original and its imitation, as well as the artistic and the artifact.

SAAS conferences attempt to be wide-ranging interdisciplinary events and we are particularly keen to see this reflected in the variety of topics discussed in relation to US culture. For the 2019 meeting at the University of Salamanca, we welcome panels that address issues of inter-disciplinarity, inter-mediality and interrelationships that lie at the foundation of literary, cultural, digital and visual representations from multiple theoretical frameworks.

Topics and areas might include (but are not restricted to) the following:

- The Digital and Pictorial Turn in American Culture
- American Literature, Culture and Film Studies
- Genres and Gender

- Representations of Gender and Race in US Culture
- Narrative, Drama, Short Story and Film Studies
- Poetry and Visual Arts
- Repercussions of the visual in modernist aesthetics, film theory, and their legacy in postmodern theorizing
- The modernist legacy in the postmodern avant-garde in US Literature
- The way we see: Visual literacy, visual rhetoric.
- The image as deceptive sign of naturalness and transparency. The use of images as historical evidence.
- The “pictorial turn” vs. the “linguistic turn”
- Hybrid genres and techniques in US Culture
- Traditional and New media
- Historical inquiries into the visual.
- Modernist and postmodern aesthetics
- Sister Arts
- *Ekphrastic* tension between verbal and visual representations
- Photographic Aesthetics and Film Techniques
- Avant-garde Aesthetics and Hollywood Entertainment
- Pictorialism and Iconicity
- Anxieties about the Power of Visual Culture
- New directions in the study of visual art, film, mass media and photography
- Maps, mapping and other forms of spatial representation
- The new Media: networks, blogs and digital narratives

**Panel Proposals:** Submissions should include:

- A Panel title
- A brief description of the panel focus
- A short bio of the panel coordinator, and contact information

**We also encourage Full Panel Proposals:** Panel coordinators should submit a 200-word rationale for the panel as whole. For each contributor, please submit a 250-word abstract, a short bio, and contact information. Panels should include three papers.

**Talkshop Proposals:** as was agreed during the General Assembly, "pedagogic Talkshops" will also be welcome ("How to teach .../ How to approach..."). Rather than formal papers, this format allows for a more conversational presentation (of 3-4 people) of various teaching experiences or critical approaches to a common theme. Talkshop proposals should likewise include:

- A Talkshop title
- A brief description of the theme
- A short bio of the talkshop coordinator and of the other 2/3 discussants
- Contact information

We will also consider panels unrelated to the Conference theme.

**Please send Panel proposals** to Eulalia Piñero ([eulalia.pinero@uam.es](mailto:eulalia.pinero@uam.es)) and/or Viorica Patea ([vioricap@usal.es](mailto:vioricap@usal.es)) before April 1, 2018, using one of these forms available at [www.saasweb.org](http://www.saasweb.org): Panel Proposal-PDF or Panel Proposal – MS Word

Panel coordinators will be notified in early May 2018 as to whether panels have been accepted or not.

**Please direct all questions about the conference and the submission process to:** Eulalia Piñero ([eulalia.pinero@uam.es](mailto:eulalia.pinero@uam.es)) and/or Viorica Patea ([vioricap@usal.es](mailto:vioricap@usal.es))

For up-to-date conference details, find us at the SAAS website (<http://www.saasweb.org>)

and our Conference Website.

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Secretary

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