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Panel Proposal: Uncertain Sights: Theories of Seeing Across Visual Media

The panel comprises three papers, each engaging questions of uncertainty and applications of critical theory in the context of a specific visual medium (painting, photography, film). Martin Jay begins his seminal work, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Sight in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, with the assertion that "Even a rapid glance at the language we commonly use will demonstrate the ubiquity of visual metaphors. If we actively focus our attention on them, vigilantly keeping an eye out for those deeply embedded as well as those on the surface, we can gain an illuminating insight into the complex mirroring of perception and language". The panelists apply varied but interconnected and reciprocally referential critical approaches (Derrida, Glissant, Deleuze) to parse the unstable implications of visual metaphor and visual praxis hold for the transformation of the image, the gaze, and the represented body in three different visual mediums.

The phototext and fascinated hantologie in Suzanne Doppelt's *Le pré est vénéneux*

Suzanne Doppelt's *Le pré est vénéneux* (*The Field is Lethal*), 2007, operates as a complex phototext, comprising three textual registers: sections of prose blocks interact with photographs and their seemingly unrelated caption lines. *Le pré est vénéneux* opens, then, onto a richly layered field where the reader finds herself between the word and the photographic image. This terrain is marked by a specific relationship to the historical referent of late-nineteenth-century occult photography as well as a special relationship to Derrida's concept of hantologie. In this paper, I examine the ways in which Doppelt's articulation of an artistic hantologie corresponds to a critical deployment of fascination in this phototext. At stake will be the negotiation between seeing, speaking, and writing. The structure of Doppelt's phototext blocks claims to scientific authority or ontological certainty, resonating instead with the ghosts of literary and philosophical tradition in the psychologized space of fascination and the anachronistic space of hantologie. If, as Derrida notes in *Specters of Marx*, Horatio in his role as scholar is the least capable of speaking to the apparition of Hamlet's ghost, in what position vis-à-vis authority does this leave the poet-photographer in confronting her own specters (Apollinaire prominent amongst them) in the text of *Le pré est vénéneux*? The field of Doppelt's title becomes a testing ground for a destabilized artistic authority, navigating between echoes of the specter's voice, photographic fragments, and the interior vision of a lethal field.