

# Staging American Memory/ies

Toulouse University/Champollion University

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## CALL FOR PAPERS

For this fourth International Symposium on *Staging America*, we invite scholars on a trip down memory lane. Individual or collective relationships to memory are omnipresent, even obsessive issues. Whether the initiatives are individual or collective, personal or official, historical or artistic, investigations of memory reveal as much about the past as it is explored, revisited or reconstituted as about the contemporary issues that frame or trigger them. A journey backwards in American time, “Staging American Memory” is the occasion for an exploration of Americans’ relation with a past that is rediscovered, repressed, or reappropriated by different individuals or groups, in diverse places, and in different periods. It will offer an occasion for understanding the issues and problems of heterogeneous societies that depend on a saga of independence struggles and on the accumulation of imported or affronted memories (immigration).

Memory finds expression through dispersion, using multiple channels, aided by individuals or groups which see themselves as reinventors or simply as transmitters, as explorers or as guardians of America’s past. Memory surfaces in museums, memorial scenographies or historical works, in artistic or literary productions, in auditory, visual, or gustatory contexts. Whether through faithful reconstitution, resurgence, or folkloric simulation, the past is introduced into everyday American experience, whether consciously claimed or emerging subliminally or unconsciously. Since memory is so important in terms of identity construction, it is a problematic object of inquiry. When evoked dispassionately, memory can offer a firm base on which to build individual and collective identities. When infused with passion, memory can be a source of conflict, of clashes that often upset certitudes about identity and induce new and painful reassessments. Conversely, the evolution of contemporary events can contribute to calming burning memories, or, on the contrary, to awakening the repressed, forgotten or buried past.

“Staging” is not restricted to the performing arts. Papers on theatre and drama are, of course, welcome but we also wish to consider how the subject of “American memory/-ies” is dramatized in various artistic media and how it is staged in the sense of evoked, arranged or even controlled by different social or political actors or agents. Hence, we seek to bring together specialists from different disciplines—historians, geographers, sociologists, philosophers, specialists of psychology, literature, visual arts, performing arts, music, or linguistics, etc...—to **debate topics including but not limited to:**

- The representation of memory
- (Collective) memory/-ies and history; memory and historiography
- Memory and memorialization (elegy, ceremonies of remembrance, commemoration...)
- Memory institutions (archives, databases, museums, libraries...)
- Memory/-ies and the writing of the self (memoirs, autobiography...)
- Memory and politics (the duty to remember, testimony...)
- Memory/-ies and myth making (rewriting the past; fantasizing about past events; creating heroes...)
- Memory and trauma (being haunted by the past; surviving the past; forgetting the past, the return of the repressed, recovering lost memory ...)
- Memory/-ies and places (the geography of memory, ...)
- Memory/-ies and bodies (Henri Bergson's automatic memory; body memory, performing memory/-ies; memorial tattoos...)
- The voices of memory/-ies (memory and sounds, memory and music...)
- Memory and childhood (nostalgia; infantile amnesia...)
- Memory and language (expressing the past, naming the past...)
- Memory and technology (computer vs. human memory; saving memory/-ies...)

**The deadline for the submission of paper proposals is November 15th, 2013.**

300-words abstracts should be written in English in the form of a Microsoft Word Document saved as "Your name + American Memory."

**Your submission should include:** the paper title, a short biographical note (150 words), your academic affiliation and contact information.

**Send to:** [stagingamerica@gmail.com](mailto:stagingamerica@gmail.com)

Following the symposium, we will invite participants to **submit essays for possible publication.**

Scientific and organizing committee: Soizic Croguennec (FRAMESPA, Toulouse II) Nathalie Dessens (CAS, Axe 5 GENA, Toulouse II), Wendy Harding (CAS, Axe 5 GENA, Toulouse II), Emeline Jouve (TFC Champollion/CAS, Axe 3 ART, Toulouse II), Nathalie Rivère de Carles (CAS, Axe 3 ART, Toulouse II), Anne Stefani (CAS, Axe 5 GENA, Toulouse II).