
Letter from the Editors

By Ana Maria Sapountzi & Peize Li

Dear Reader,

Welcome to Issue 16 of *Frames Cinema Journal*, “Magical Women, Witches & Healers”!

Having taken inspiration from the current resurgence of witches in popular culture, the *Frames* editorial team wanted the journal’s 16th issue to acknowledge and celebrate the magical woman’s rich global onscreen history by investigating her manifestations in the 21st century and revisiting those of the past century. Our mission with this issue was to unearth previously undiscussed cinematic witches and tease out the histories and representations of a variety of magical women.

We are pleased to announce that this issue is stocked with a diversity of articles that examine the magical woman from a myriad of perspectives and contexts, offering original and insightful writing on the topic.

Our **Features** section includes articles which examine the magical woman from a diversity of national and historical contexts. They each investigate how the magical woman is imbued with meaning by the culture and lore in which she exists, and how this affects her visual and narrative representation in film. More broadly, these articles are connected by their discussion of female sexuality, femininity, cultural function, power, and defiance of patriarchy. **Lilla Tóke** dissects the image of the fox-fairy in Károly Ujj Mészáros’s *Liza, a rókatündér/Liza, The Fox-Fairy* (2015) to argue how the figure of the witch or magical woman is a product of internalised patriarchy. By addressing the misogynistic doctrine of the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), **Chloe Carroll** offers a feminist analysis of *The Witch* (2016), which argues how film is returning to the roots of historical female persecution to reconstruct and restore this imagery and functions as a source of empowerment of women today. **Zahra Khosroshahi** examines how the diasporic Iranian horror films *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (2014) and *Under the Shadow* (2016) use magical and monstrous elements to explore non-Western femininity – both as domestically understood and as stereotyped by the world’s media. **Amelia Crowther** focuses on the cinematic appropriation of the hag witch in the late-1960s, discussing its multitudes of meaning, from the monstrous incarnation of the female body to female resistance and liberation in films concerning patriarchal horror. **Sandra Huber** explores the treatment of vengeance, grief, and

joy in *Midsommar* (2019), highlighting the excess of fluids in the film and their transformative potentials. **Christine Hui** refers to the concept of Shōjo to explore the politics of magical agency and girlhood present in the figures of contemporary animated fairy tale films, specifically *Tangled* (2010) and *Kaguya-hime no Monogatari/The Tale of Princess Kaguya* (2013). **Edmund Cueva** traces the historical descriptions of Medea in literature and the arts, and examines their influence of the filmic representation of Medea as a fearsome magical woman in Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Medea* (1969), Jules Dassin's *A Dream of Passion* (1978), Arturo Ripstein's *Así es la vida/Such Is Life* (2000), and Lars von Trier's *Medea* (1988). **Kwasu D. Tembo** reads *The Witch* (2015) and *Hagazussa: A Heathen's Curse* (2017) in terms of Nietzsche's discussion of the Apollonian and the Dionysian, approaching their folk-horror witches as figures of both excess and excrescence.

Our **POV** section includes articles which foreground the performativity of the witch, taking specific consideration of her appearance, materiality, and personification. **Teresa Castro** questions what it means to gaze at an onscreen witch, by exploring the representational politics of the feminine figure. She considers her modality in classic narrative filmographies and in the work of experimental female filmmakers, to argue how she is saddled between the law of feminised nature and western patriarchy. **Judith Noble** investigates Maya Deren's 'artist-magician' persona, developed over the films *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1942), *At Land* (1944), and *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (1946), as a reflection of the artist's own personal life-long commitment to magic and witchcraft, as well as to argue its influence on feminist artist-filmmakers working in the 1970s and 1980s. Drawing on the figure of Elaine from *The Love Witch* (2016) for inspiration, **Cathy Lomax** illuminates the connection between makeup and witchcraft, and recalls its subversive and scandalous onscreen history. **Ted Fisher** explores the concept of the choreographer as witch - born from the image of Mary Wigman's "Witch Dance" - offering analyses of Pina Bausch in *Un jour Pina a demandé.../On Tour with Pina Bausch* (1983), Mathilde Monnier in *Toward Mathilde* (2005), Bobbie Jene Smith in *Bobbi Jene* (2017), and Wigman's reimagined Witch Dance in the recent remake of *Suspiria* (2018). **Lisa Duffy** develops a genealogy of Disney witches, focusing on how the camp characteristics that long signified the evilness of these characters have been reclaimed to more positive ends in recent titles, such as *Frozen* (2013).

In a new section for the journal, our **Film Featurettes** provide historical and cultural discussions of their closely examined films. **Martin F. Norden** discusses the political forces that encumbered and eventually terminated Tod Browning's film project *The Witch of Timbuctoo*, highlighting Hollywood's white washing of, and colonial anxieties around, its voodoo subject. Drawing on Pier Paolo Pasolini's notion of the oneiric

ability of film, **Anna Marta Marini** explores the visualisation of magic in *Bless Me, Ultima* (2013) as imagined in the Chicano 1972 novel of the same name by Rudolfo Anaya.

Our **Book Review** section features reviews of Heather Greene's *Bell, Book and Camera: A Critical History of Witches in American Film and Television* (2018), Thomas J. Connelly's *Cinema of Confinement* (2019), Steven Rawle's *Transnational Cinema: An Introduction* (2018), and **Auteur Publishing's Devil's Advocates** series.

With this issue, we hope to have provided a deserving spotlight in academic scholarship for the filmic and cinematic witch.

Happy reading!

Ana Maria Sapountzi & Peize Li

Co-Editors-in-Chief

Banner artwork by Cathy Lomax.