



# (SUPER)NATURAL

17TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE | COMMUNICATION GRADUATE CAUCUS

Keynote Speakers:  
Dr. Susana Vargas Cervantes  
Professor Emily Pelstring

Special Roundtable Facilitator:  
Dr. Armond R. Towns

Virtual + Synchronous  
Carleton University

February 28 - March 1, 2022

# (Super)Natural

17th Annual Communication Graduate Caucus Conference

February 28 - March 1, 2022 | Virtual and Synchronous via Zoom - Carleton University

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/supernatural-conference-tickets-256099128387>

The 2022 conference theme imagines us as mediums, communicating with entities beyond our perception and expanding our senses into unknown spaces. Let us explore the Othered voices that haunt and disrupt the words of Western theoretical canons and the bellowing ghosts of fraught histories. Consider the enchantments of the internet and how we can illuminate the demons from the darkest corners of the digital network. And what makes something science fiction versus supernatural? Where is the divide between the paranormal and science, and how do we decide what is considered a “natural” part of the scientific world? How does the (super)natural world itself work towards influencing our perceptions? Beyond the spooky, we invite intersectional discussion around communication within the natural world, and how it is supported and extended by technology and media. We strive to understand the infrastructures and their impacts on the environment and non-human beings, but also human nature itself. We understand the terms “nature” and “natural” broadly, but how does communication extend/contend with the natural? We stand in a moment where the past and the present are colliding. Stretching and making flexible historically fixed objects might prove productive in order to generate new articulations of the future.

We look forward to you joining us at this event,  
Alex Milton, Justine Routhier, Maria-Antonia Urso & Shanice Bernicky  
The 2022 CGC Conference Committee

## Including Panels on:

- Identity Building and Control
- Sound and Immortalization
- Media and Representation
- Ritual and Collectivization
- Hauntology and Temporality
- Symbiosis
- Fact and Fiction
- Religion and the Cosmos
- Economy and Technology
- As well as an undergraduate panel!

## with Keynote Speakers:



**Susana Vargas Cervantes** writes, researches and teaches.

Her research mines the connections between gender, sexuality, class and skin tonalities to reconceptualize pigmentocracy. She is the author of the book *The Little Old Lady Killer: The Sensationalized Crimes of Mexico's First Female Serial Killer* (NYU Press, 2019) and *Mujercitos* (Editorial RM, 2015). After a Fulbright Visiting Fellowship at Columbia University, she joined Carleton University as an Assistant Professor in Communication and Media Studies.



**Emily Pelstring** is an artist and filmmaker, and is faculty in the Department of Film and Media at Queen's University in Katarokwi/Kingston, Ontario, Canada. Emily's artistic research comes out of a desire to challenge normative ways of thinking about technological development by bringing antique media into contact with contemporary images. Her work takes interest in the material contingency of the cinematic spectacle, the evolution and cultural perception of various media forms, and the intersections of science and magic. These inquiries have been supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Canada Council for the Arts, and the Ontario Arts Council, and the results have been exhibited in museums, galleries, and DIY spaces. As an independent filmmaker working with animation techniques for 16mm film and vintage analog video, she has directed many music videos and short films which have screened in festivals around the world. In addition to her solo work, Emily is engaged in ongoing artistic collaborations with Jessica Mensch and Katherine Kline, her "sister-crones" in the trio The Powers. Their most recent collaboration, *Sistership TV*, was a web-based variety show that gathered numerous collaborators and guests to explore themes like human-animal communication, telepresence, hysteria, and witchcraft. Emily was also a core organizer of an international symposium called *The Witch Institute* at Queen's University, which brought together scholars, artists, and practitioners to explore the meaning and impact of current media representations of the witch.

and a special roundtable on "The Ghosts of Communication's Past" facilitated by:



**Armond R. Towns's** work brings together Black studies, cultural studies, and media philosophy. His book, *On Black Media Philosophy*, has recently been published with the University of California Press. In it, he examines a variety of topics, from the work of Charles Darwin to the narratives of enslaved people on the Underground Railroad to the speeches and writings of the Black Panther Party to digital animations of police violence. Currently, Dr. Towns is developing a project on the relationship between the history of communication studies and the history of Black studies, focusing specifically on the development of both fields in U.S. and Canada.

Full schedule to be shared two weeks prior to the event. For any questions please reach out to the conference organizers at [cgconference2022@gmail.com](mailto:cgconference2022@gmail.com)