

Organized by  
Sladja Blazan and the ICI Berlin  
Institute for Cultural Inquiry

Doomed to a constant oscillation between the realms of the Unknown and the illusion of meaning, we advance regressing. Echoing various other scholars, the American philosopher William James marked "the recesses of feeling the darker, blinder strata of character" as the only places in the world in which "we catch real fact in the making." Yet, instead of curiously exploring what cannot be known, we push it further away, enveloped with fear and anxiousness. The "darker strata" regularly produce

angst, aversion, or awe. In this one day symposium, acclaimed scholars and artists will shed "light" on what has been relegated to the sphere of unreason: magic, the irrational, spectrality, the daemonic. Who is afraid of the irrational? What is "magic philosophy" and who needs it? How much reason is reasonable? The symposium ends with a keynote by the distinguished anthropologist Michael Taussig who will share with the audience his own private fear of the ir-rational.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
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Symposium

# How dangerous is the Ir-rational?

Friday  
30 October  
2009  
14 – 21pm

## Programme:

Photography inspired by  
the concept of the irrational by  
Cara Judea Alhadef

**14.00**  
**Welcome**  
Christoph Holzhey  
(Director ICI Berlin)

**14.10**  
**Reasonable Ghosts:**  
The Dream of Reason and Magic  
Philosophy in the 1790s  
Sladja Blazan  
(Humboldt Universität zu Berlin)

**14.50**  
**Non timebis a daemónio meridiano:**  
Greek Irrational and  
the Construction of Modernity  
Fabio Camilletti (ICI Berlin)

**15.30**  
**Coffee Break**

**16.00**  
**Artist Presentation**  
Visual Languages and Observable Planets  
Jesse Bransford (New York University)

**16.40**  
**Beyond Cognition?**  
Emily Dickinson, Poetry, and the Brain  
Sabine Sielke (Universität Bonn)

**17.20**  
**Facing up to Magic:**  
Fascination and Illusion in Bergman's  
ANSIKTET (The Magician/The Face, 1958)  
Brigitte Weingart (Universität Bonn)

**18.00**  
**Coffee Break**

**18.30**  
**Keynote**  
My Fear of the Rational  
Michael Taussig  
(Columbia University)

**19.30**  
**Reception**

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