

***Impersonation from the triple margin: a critical and creative exploration of the fiction of surrealist outsiders and dissidents – Carrington, Colquhoun, Cahun; Desnos and Crevel.***

“Among other things, we will build a cinema at the bottom of Lake Pavin... an ancient crater in which water now assumes the place of fire. Our cinema will float 30 m or below the Lake surface.”

*(Bernard Roger, From L'age du Cinema (Paris) 4-5 (August-November 1951) 48-49)*

Setting out from this fragment of text, my practice-led PhD deploys creative writing as a methodology for investigating performances of impersonation, fraud and their place in the history of European surrealism particularly for dissident practitioners, specifically women fiction writers Leonora Carrington, Ithell Colquhoun, Claude Cahun; alongside Robert Desnos and René Crevel.

Using surrealist writing techniques, I am developing a contemporary surrealist novel, temporally framed during the original sleeper experiments conducted by the European surrealists in late 1922, while projecting into a speculative future. The creative text is informed by and responds to critical concerns about the role of women in the European surrealist movement, and seeks to establish the untested benefit of doubling, impersonation and other chicanery as a surrealist means of investigating the nature of selfhood, particularly for its marginal participants. Inspired by Peter Dubé's novel *Subtle Bodies*, and by Breton's own manifest doubts about the veracity of the first witnesses in his essay, *The Mediums Enter*, this paper comprises a critical discussion alongside a selection of contextualised sequences from the novel itself.

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