Les publics de l’humour – International conference on humour reception
Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris, 24-25 November 2022

The French-speaking humour research network RIRH (Réseau interdisciplinaire de recherches sur l’humour, https://rirh.hypotheses.org/) is organising its first international conference on the topic of Les publics de l’humour, aiming to take stock of recent research into the audiences and more broadly the reception of comedy and humour.

Originally scheduled for 2020, the conference follows on from workshops organised by RIRH on the staging of humour (Bordeaux, 2018) and the language(s) of humour (Dijon, 2019), and will be held at Sorbonne Nouvelle Université in Paris on 24-25 November 2022. The conference will be mainly held in French but submissions in English related to the theme are welcome in a spirit of international exchange.

The conference aims to bring together perspectives and methodologies from disciplines including but not limited to literature, history, sociology, translation studies, theatre studies, communication studies and political science, the better to understand how humour and comedy audiences can be defined, identified, classified and studied, and how the process of reception relates to other debates around humour and comedy. Different scholars and scholarly traditions have tended to explore humour – whether in the broadest sense of the word in English, in its narrower etymological sense, or as the performance of a comedian or humorist – as something inclusive or offensive, pleasurable, ambivalent, conformist or subversive. The development of humour and comedy studies as academic fields has given rise to useful frameworks for approaching these complex social phenomena, although research has arguably tended to focus more on humour production, through the analysis of text, body and performance, than on audience reception, or the question of who “laughs at”, “laughs with” or simply “laughs”.

The organisers of Les publics de l’humour aim to redress this balance, and invite contributions that address questions including:

- Can we reconstruct a history of humour/comedy audiences?
- How can we study contemporary humour/comedy audiences?
- How are humour/comedy audiences perceived and represented?
- How do humour/comedy audiences reflect the politics of humour?
- Can creative action-research educate audiences about humour and comedy?

Abstracts (in French or English) of 3000 characters or less should be sent by email by the extended deadline of 20 July 2022, to the address association.rirh@gmail.com

This document is an abridgement of the full call for papers, available (in French) at https://rirh.hypotheses.org/.

Fees for the conference will be minimal. Any queries regarding the conference or the RIRH network should be sent to the above email address.