

Constraints of Creativity

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School of Arts,
Languages and Cultures

CIDRAL

The Centre for
Interdisciplinary
Research in the
Arts and Languages



Matt Houlbrook

Professor of Cultural History, University of Birmingham

The Prince of Tricksters

Roundtable with Professor Laura Doan (English and American Studies) and Professor Frank Mort (History)

4 December, 5-7 P.M.

Room A7, Samuel Alexander Building

Wine and nibbles in the North Foyer from 4 P.M. beforehand!

This is an invitation to reconsider the ways in which we write about the past — particularly the relationship between history as an academic discipline and other forms of narrative non-fiction and creative writing. As Houlbrook argues, 'In moving between the familiar tropes of academic history and different forms of storytelling, my aim is to trouble the “apparent coherence and ultimate 'given-ness” of much historical writing, to think critically about how the discipline of history works, and how it might be made differently. I want this book to make you feel uncomfortable.'

The Prince of Tricksters (Chicago, 2016) is the latest book by award-winning historian Professor Matt Houlbrook. Charting the multiple lives and 'selves' of notorious interwar con artist Netley Lucas, the monograph is based on over a decade of painstakingly detailed archival research, uncovering traces of Lucas's many exploits and aliases across four continents. As a result, the Prince of Tricksters is an ambitious and daring new experiment at writing history through exploring the possibilities and problems of using an individual life-story (not necessarily biography per se) as a way of making sense of society, culture, and politics in the widest possible sense. In conversation with Professors Laura Doan and Frank Mort, the author will discuss his ambitions for the project and the impact he hopes it will have on the field of modern British history.

ALL WELCOME

There will be a dinner afterwards for our speaker, which is free for postgraduate students to attend. If you would like to come along please email Eloise Moss (Eloise.Moss@manchester.ac.uk) by Monday 27th November.

Event Co-Sponsored by CIDRAL and the Modern British History Network, SALC.