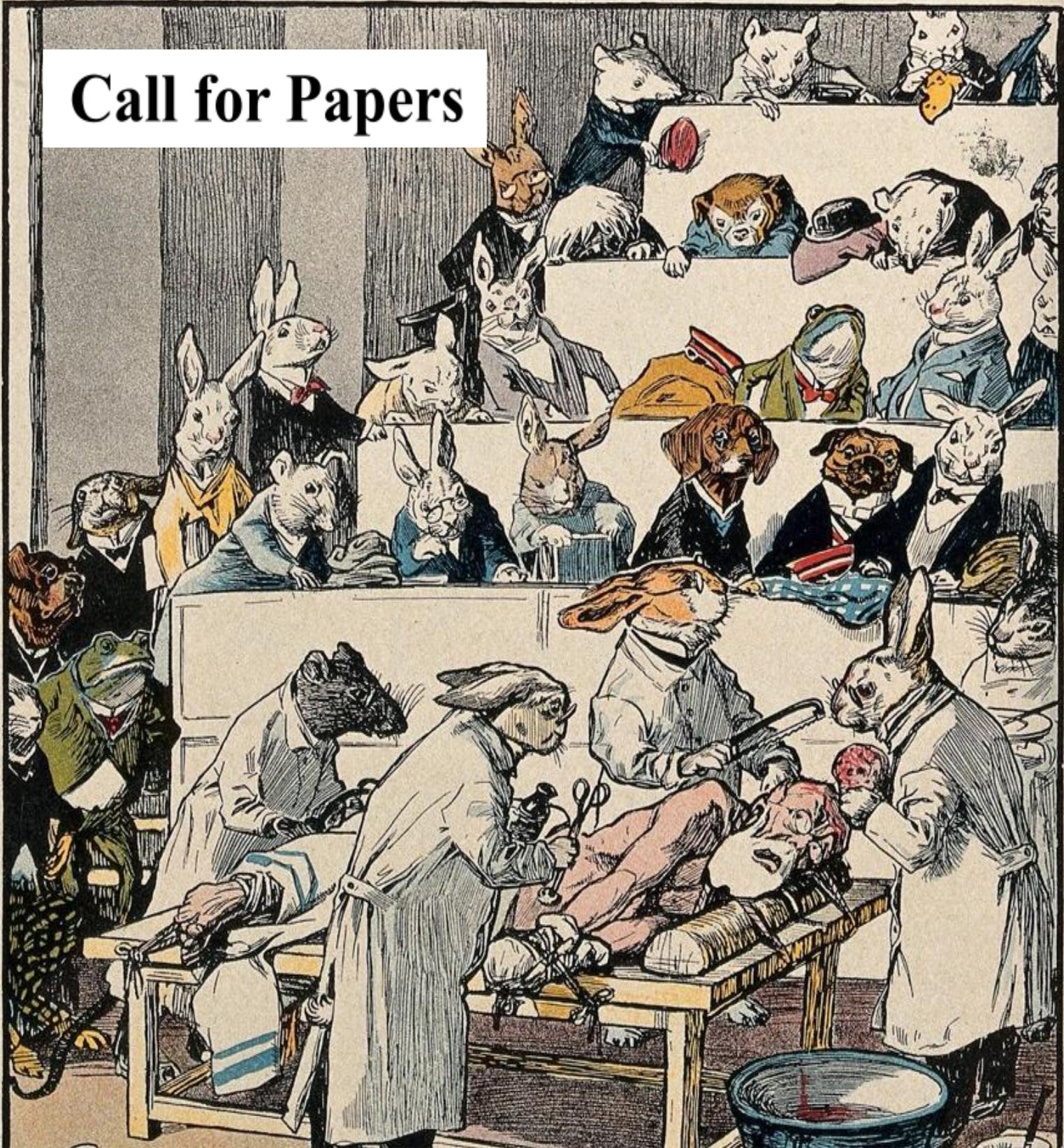


Call for Papers



Laughter is the Best Medicine? Visual Histories of Humour and Health

Volume edited by
Christine Slobogin, Katie Snow, and Laura Cowley

Co-editors Dr Christine Slobogin, Dr Katie Snow, and Laura Cowley are pleased to announce a call for chapter proposals for an edited volume exploring vibrant intersections of humour, visual culture, and the health humanities. This volume examines what role visual humour has had and continues to play in healing and healthcare, as well as in experiences of illness, injury, and death. The use of humour in providing healthcare is its own rich and controversial topic, but as visual culture scholars, we are interested in examining how medically adjacent art communicates a particularly embodied and abiding form of humour. Acknowledging the capacity of humour to reflect and shape the power dynamics of medical systems, this collection of essays is interested in how, historically, visual humour has vacillated between degradation and empowerment.

This edited volume aims to enrich interdisciplinary approaches to the medical humanities, humour studies, and visual culture and art history. Research at this intersection has the ability to challenge misconceptions about the everyday role of humour in affecting experiences of illness, disability, injury, healthcare, and death.

Proposals on topics from any period are invited; we hope that this encourages wide engagement with the tropes and themes that lie at the intersection of humour, art, and medicine. We also encourage creative and comedic submissions (visual or otherwise) which challenge critical perspectives on visual histories of humour and health.

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- Humorous and satirical depictions of medical professionals, medicalised individuals and bodies, systems, relationships, and settings.
- The interplay between humour and emotions in healthcare settings.
- The relationship between humour and fear (of death, of injury, and of illness).
- The use of visual humour and comics in public health campaigns, including in Covid-19 discourses.
- “Graphic medicine” in health education and the pedagogical potential of visual humour.
- The historiography of dark humour in medicine, addressing questions of agency, power, and visibility.
- Dark humour in representations of HIV/AIDS in queer communities, literature, film, and art.
- “Trench humour” in visualisations of wartime injury and healthcare.
- Humour and disability or illness in comics, comic books, and superhero narratives.
- The role of shame in visual histories of (ill-)health, injury, and death.
- Gendered differences in uses and interpretations of visual humour in medical contexts.
- Humour in representations, narratives, symptoms, and treatments of depression, anxiety, and other mental health diagnoses.
- The role of social media and meme culture in disseminating visual discourses of humour and health.
- Narratives of illness, injury, and death in stand-up comedy and sitcoms.
- Irreverence and marginalia in medieval medical texts.
- The potential of humour to facilitate feelings of shared experience and community.
- Visual humour as light relief amongst medical professionals, service users, and carers.
- Theories of humour (e.g. incongruity, superiority, relief) in visual ephemera of health and healthcare.
- Visual humour as a critical tool for healthcare or the health humanities.

Please submit abstracts of up to 300 words and an author biography of up to 150 words to Dr Christine Slobogin (cslobog1@jh.edu), Dr Katie Snow (ks596@exeter.ac.uk), and Laura Cowley (lauracowleyworks@gmail.com) by 10 December 2022. Please feel free to contact the editors with any questions.