

Finding a magic world: the Andalusian collection of magic.

This presentation is about a collection that is the result of an agreement signed between the association of magicians of Seville, “Círculo Mágico de Sevilla” and the Centro de Documentación de las Artes Escénicas de Andalucía.

It is based on the document written by my colleague and librarian, Luz Marina Risoto.

While I am talking you will see some pictures of this collection, famous magicians, activities organised about and around magic, etc.

Some historic facts:

Although there are some examples of magic literature dated on the old Egypt and some magic books published in the Renaissance, it has not been very common to find books about magic in public libraries till recently, almost in Spain. Most of the time, these libraries of magic were part of private collections that belonged to some enthusiasts or specialists of this matter or to some associations of magicians all together under the umbrella of the Spanish Magic Society.

Even if the National Library owns many Collections of magic, the biggest one belongs to the magic library of the Fundación Juan March: <http://www.march.es/bibliotecas/ilusionismo/?l=1> . It was created thanks to the donation of the collector José Puchol de Montís. This library has a digital repository "Sim Sala Bim" that gives free access to more than a hundred books of magic published between 1733 and early 1940. <http://www.march.es/bibliotecas/ilusionismo/biblioteca-digital-de-ilusionismo.aspx?l=2>

As regards the Documentation Centre of Performing Arts in Andalusia, it counts on a specialised library opened to researchers, students, professionals and anyone interested on the subject.

The origins of the collection:

As I said before, our Andalusian collection of magic was created in the framework of an agreement signed between the Association of Magicians of Seville, Círculo Mágico, and our Centre. It was in 2012.

The Círculo Mágico de Sevilla is an association of magicians created in early 1940. It belongs to the Spanish Magic Society and since its creation it has put at the disposal of

its members a documental collection for training and information purposes. It was a way to be aware of any changes and news in the profession.

In this sense, there are 2 important moments in the creation of the collection:

- the first one is the national congress of magic that took place in Seville in 1959. This event backed the Círculo Mágico de Sevilla and it increased the collection with the incorporation of many foreign magazines.
- the sixties were also important for the growing of the collection thanks to the numerous contacts established during the congress. Unfortunately the big inundations of 1961 in Seville destroyed part of the documentation.

The association has always encouraged members to donate and to share their private collections and thanks to that the library has always been enriched with lots of interesting and valuable books.

At the beginning of our decade, the need to find an suitable and safety place for the books and the audiovisuals and magazines collection, Javier Benitez, the President, of Círculo Mágico contacted us and in 2012 the agreement mentioned before was signed.

Which is the content of the collection:

First of all, we have to insist on the fact that it is a specialised collection on magic, conjuring, card magic and themes around hypnotic suggestion (mentalism) and hypnotism.

At the beginning the collection was a total of :

- 137 books of magic
- 10 conferences notes: a collection of typed and bound notes that documents several conferences on magic.
- 31 VHS video tapes: some edited video recordings and some original ones. These ones were magic galas organized by the association Círculo Mágico de Sevilla.
- 20 DVD: original recording and edited ones.
- 14 magazines titles with 243 issues. Most of them are from the fifties and are not alive anymore and 3 magazines that are still alive.

- 1 audio tape with the interview of Vicente Fonseca, a famous Spanish magician.

The agreement signed with the Association describes the technical process of preservation and in which conditions they must be put at the disposal of the public. It includes also the commitment for each partner to increase the collection with the contributions of the members. The collection has increased and today it includes 242 books, 37 conferences notes, 25 magazines titles and 200 videotapes.

The different steps of the treatment of these documents at the library is:

- The Inventory of the collection by type of material taking into account some special details for a good preservation.
- The Careful registration of the documents with the mention of their origin.
- The Cataloguing of the collection: the books are catalogued online. Thanks to the collaboration of the Andalusian Library we could include new classification items in the catalog more adequate to the materials we were dealing with.
- The Labelling and arrangement in the stacks of the collection. The books and notes of conferences have a pending label with a call number and they are put on the shelves in a controlled place. The periodicals are places in the stacks.
- The Creation of a specialised dynamic bibliography with online Access. <https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/culturaydeporte/idea/opacidea/abnetcl.cgi?SUBC=3103>
- The Digitalization of the audiovisual material: we digitalized the VHS to DVD format in order to assure their preservation.
- The Bookbinding: some of the books were damaged and we restored them.

What makes this collection important :

This library has got books from 1880 to the present. We have many books of the fifties and the sixties of the last century. It was the beginning of a period of divulgation of the secrets of magic initiated by magicians like father Wenceslao Ciuró. Our collection has many books written and dedicated by him. He was the President of honour of the Association Círculo Mágico of Seville.

Most of the books are Spanish, but the oldest and most significant one is a complete course of magic and old sorcery written in 1880 by the French magician Jean Nicolas

Ponsin. It was translated into Spanish and the Spanish edition has some beautiful illustrations. We have an interesting book from 1897 written by Carlos Willmann, *The modern indoor magic*.

The collection includes 2 books from Pablo Minguet e Yrol, who is considered the first autor of magic books (XVIII century). We have the 2 volumes of the *Practical book of hypnotism and magnetism* written by Jean Filiartre and edited in 1910, a book of Fortune-telling and telepathy written by Marshall Wanamaker in 1922, *Adivinación y transmisión del pensamiento (telepatía)*.

We have also some foreign books, some written in English dated on the early XX century. They are about magic, hypnotism, hypnotic suggestion and chiromancy. Some titles like: *The best in magic* written by Bruce Elliot, published in New York in 1956 and *The magician annual 1909-10*.

We have some books from Martins Oliveira published in Brasil in the fifties. Our magicians and library users appreciate the reeditions of some classic books and some compilations of magic, as for example the *Tarbell Magic Course* or Dai Vernon's one.

The collection counts on 2 kinds of magazines: the ones that are not published anymore but that give us the magic landscape of the middle of the XX century. And the others, some titles like *Ilusionismo*, *El manuscrito*, *Genii* that still appear regularly and whose issues are received at the Centro de Documentación. And a great collection of magazines from Rafael Sánchez Gámez, a famous magician.

We have also many notes of conferences. This is a way of exchanging experiences and know-how amongst the magicians.

Finally, we have to mention the audiovisual collection. With its 200 titles we can say that it is the biggest audiovisual collection of public access in Spain.

We have edited videos but also noncommercial recordings. Most of them were donated by Luis Arza, another famous Spanish magician. And of course, the collection is enlarged with the videorecordings of the activities we organize in our Centre around the world of magic.

As regards the documents and archives, We have some beautiful posters and programmes.

How can you have access to the collection:

The Andalusian magic collection is accessible only on place by our users (they have to present their users cards). This is one of the conditions of the agreement. The books cannot be taken out of our Center but it is possible to ask for a loan between libraries.

Which is the added value of this collection for our Centre:

First of all, this collection has mainly enriched our library. But it has also brought new kinds of users interested in the magic universe.

The agreement between Círculo Mágico de Sevilla and the Centro de Documentación de las Artes Escénicas de Andalucía has been the occasion to organize a lot of cultural activities (performances, conferences, discussions, books presentations) in the framework of our cultural programme “El Centro A escena”. One of the posters of the collection was selected to be “The document of the month”, a permanent exhibition organized by our archive and documentation department.

And of course we are also on the social networks:

<https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/culturaydeporte/idea/opacidea/abnetcl.cgi?SUBC=310>

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<http://www.march.es/bibliotecas/ilusionismo/?l=1>

<http://www.march.es/bibliotecas/ilusionismo/biblioteca-digital-de-ilusionismo.aspx?l=2>

www.facebook.com/fondoandaluzdeilusionismo