

**Creating Shared Experience – Sensory Ethnography and Collaborative Filmmaking**  
**Bauhaus-Universität Weimar**

**Mediating Tarantism – How to create shared experiences of an Apulian ritual**

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The crossmedia project ›Tarantism Revisited‹ builds on current research on the remnants and revival of popular religious practices and explores contemporary cultural and religious dynamics. Focusing on the ethnographic example of tarantism – an affliction supposedly caused by the bite of the tarantula spider, which is cured through music and exorcist trance-dancing during the feast of Saints Peter and Paul – the project traces the multiple facets of a phenomenon that has been endemic to Southern Italy for at least five hundred years yet currently experiences an unprecedented revival. In the past decade, tarantism and pizzicata music have become a crucial element of local popular culture in Apulia which not only attracts ten thousands of tourists, but has also become part of the transnational world music scene, thus contributing to the construction of a new, neo-traditional local identity.

In our project – in collaboration with local performers, musicians, and activists – we primarily focus on the performance aspects of tarantism, thus highlighting its role as politicised multimedia event along with its importance as cultural and economic resource in the region. Using innovative and collaborative media formats the project investigates the complex history and present mobilisation of tarantism as a tourist spectacle and politicised site of folklore, cultural heritage and female empowerment. The project encompasses three interlinked activities: the realisation of a 60-minute documentary film and complementary 360° videos, both of which formats will culminate in and contribute to an interactive multimedia website (comprising historic and contemporary photographs, explanatory texts, short video clips, sound pieces, interview excerpts and samples of tarantella music).