That's Entertainment!
Spectacle, Amusement, Audience
and the Culture of Recreation in the Audiovisual Contexts of English-Speaking Countries

Spectacle, recreation, amusement, free time, in a word entertainment: not something accessory, but rather a key element in understanding not only an aesthetic expression, but also certain socio-economic transformations, and in reality also political, of 20th century modernity. And yet the role played by the entertainment dimension in the codification, in particular, of the cultural specificity of the twentieth century, over and above the canons imposed by so-called high culture, is still today undervalued and only occasionally investigated in a careful and in-depth manner. What relations have been established, in the era of new means of mass communication, between popular entertainment and official culture? What effects have been produced by specific performative and recreational practices, coming from the various fields of expression (theatre, music, radio, serious and popular literature, comic strips) not only in the linguistic but also systemic evolution of cinema and television? What is the role played by technology in the development of recreational forms, including audiovisual, in the 20th century? How is the body viewed, engaged, or conceived, and what notion of personality and actoriality is imposed after the diffusion of a certain idea of entertainment? And again: to what extent, in the era of new media and the internet, can the main ways of entertainment - and their exploitation - that dominated the last century, still be operative? The twenty-third SERCIA conference will endeavor to answer these and other questions, trying to offer new historical perspectives on the cultural forms of entertainment in the audiovisual production of English-speaking countries, that is to say in those territories in which greater space has been given to the conception of amusement that over the years has ended by imposing itself at a global level, transforming the customs, habits and the very culture of many nations, not only in the west.