

**Media/Aesthetics**  
**A Collaborative Lecture Series**  
**@Tufts University**

presents

***The Spiritual Nervous System***  
***Religion and Media in the 19th Century***

by

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**Tuesday, March 13, 2012**

**6:00pm**

**The Department of Art  
and Art History**

**11 Talbot Ave.**

**Seminar room**



The 19th C set the stage for the consolidation of a vast network of discourse – ‘the nervous system’ – that structured diverse forms of knowledge, action, and imagination, and helped to place electricity at the heart of the modern Western episteme. Through the figural language of batteries, signals, lines of force, circuits, and dendritic trees, physiologists, engineers, and others advanced new understandings of the ways organic bodies and technological systems could connect distant senders and receivers. This nervous system also played a role in the rise of Spiritualism: a movement that was committed to a vision of the cosmos as a vast electrical circuit linking souls, minds, and bodies with the social order, the natural world, and even the afterlife. This talk will trace the contours of the Spiritual Nervous System, as depicted by the Spiritualist luminary, Andrew Jackson Davis, and in so doing will suggest some of the ways religion and technology were (and perhaps continue to be) mutually constituted."

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