***A Dream of Thiralatha*: promiscuous book gatherings, and the wanderings of Blake’s separate plates.
Dr Luisa Calè (Birkbeck, University of London)**

This talk explores the dynamics of illustration in William Blake’s illuminated printing through an example that questions and disorders the boundaries between books. *A Dream of Thiralatha* is a ‘separate plate’ with a complex bibliographic history, found at the end of a copy of *Europe* (1793), in the middle of the Asia section of *The Song of Los* (1795), then thought to be a cancelled plate of *America* (1793) and catalogued as part of Blake’s *Large Book of Designs*. Following the bookish trajectories and archival afterlives of *A Dream of Thiralatha*, I will ask questions about the dissemination of separate plates, how they worked when inserted in specific books, when and why they were later disbound or arranged into alternative archival orders, and what this tells us about the metamorphoses of illustration under different divisions of knowledge.

**Reading Victorian Illustration: word, image, digital**

**Prof. Julia Thomas, Cardiff University**

Illustration studies has, to date, given little attention to the role of the reader/viewer in generating the meanings of illustrated texts. This paper attempts to rectify this, arguing that the reading of an illustrated text is a fundamentally different process to reading the same text in an unillustrated form. Tracing the elements of this readerly engagement, from the Victorian period to digital culture, the paper identifies where these differences lie. For the Victorians, reading the illustrated text was an activity that undermined conventional temporal limitations: the image was often seen before the words and lingered long after the letterpress was laid aside.  In digital media, the reader (now a ‘user’) can read ‘across’ historic illustrations, seeing the connections between images in diverse and multiple texts. This paper argues that ignoring the illustrative dimension of Victorian texts is not so much a misreading as a missed reading: a lost opportunity to engage with the dynamics of word and image and to recognize the complexities of their interpretation.

**Illustration on London's 'Artists Street' 1800-1820**

**Dr. Mary Shannon, University of Roehampton**

In the early-nineteenth century and into the 1840s, London’s Newman Street (off Oxford Street) was popularly known as ‘Artists’ Street’ because of its intense concentration of artistic residents. Many significant names of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century art world had addresses there: Thomas Stothard, Benjamin West, James Heath, and other members and associate members of the Royal Academy. Alongside them were the homes and studios of less well-known artists who worked in many different media. Of the artists of Newman Street, a significant proportion worked on book illustration or literary subjects, or had close connections to famous nineteenth-century literary figures. They collaborated with, socialised with, and employed one another. They were surrounded by businesses dealing in both visual and print culture, including the printers McQueen and Co., and the Hering family bookbinders.  This paper will argue that Newman Street provided a geographical place for illustration when its cultural ‘place’ was very much in flux, and when the very term ‘illustration’ had not yet settled into its modern meaning. I will suggest that early-nineteenth century Illustration studies is increasingly interested in illustration before 'illustration', when art and illustration were not conceived of as separate categories.