FORMS OF (MORE THAN) HUMAN RELATION-ALITY

JUNE 28–30, 2023

UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

A S C A   Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis

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FORMS OF (MORE THAN) HUMAN RELATIONALITY
ASCA Workshop 2023

June 28–30, 2023

Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis
International Workshop
June 28–30, 2023
University of Amsterdam

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Contents

Forms of (More Than) Human Relationality

The rejection of traditional forms of dualistic thinking has led to a turn to relationality in the humanities, giving rise to new ontologies that move beyond the subject-object distinction (e.g.: Haraway; Tsing; Barad; Latour; Braidotti; Morton). Critical scholars and artists have emphasized relationality as an alternative way to reconceptualize and visualize various forms of connectedness to the world and to (more than) human forms of life. However, "relationality", as Judith Butler has recently reminded us in The Force of Non-violence, "is not by itself a good thing, a sign of connectedness, an ethical norm to be posited over and against destruction: rather, relationality is a vexed and ambivalent field in which the question of ethical obligation has to be worked out in light of a persistent and constitutive destructive potential." An investment in different forms of relationality, be they artistic, social, or ecological in nature, is not an end in itself – it can, as some have argued, even reinforce the hegemonic and exclusionary concept of the human (Rangan). Many valuable perspectives emerged as responses to the call for ethico-political examination of relationality, and they have explored non-violence, willfulness, care, wholeness, opacity, and ambiguity in light of relationality, to name a few (Butler; Puig de la Bellacasa; Moiloa; Glissant; Fuery). Keeping in mind these perspectives, we might ask: How can we evaluate the potential of ethico-political accounts grounded in relational ontologies or frameworks? This ASCA workshop encourages participants to explore the broader theme of "relationality" as an aesthetic, ethical or political response to the present moment defined by multiple forms of precarity. Accordingly, we invite participants to attend to both the destructive and sustainable relationalities lived and imagined among (more than) human forms of life. Our aim is to encourage relational thinking that expands critical, artistic, and political horizons and provides a more complex account of the constitutive inter- and intra-relationality that binds things, humans, and non-humans to the world and to each other. We invite broad inquiries that question the ethico-political signification of relationality from artistic, social, and ecological perspectives – on a conceptual level as well as a form of methodology and practice.

Wednesday June 28

University Library (Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam)

Opening & Keynote Kathrin Thiele
09:15 - 10:45 Doelenzaal

Welcome – Esther Peeren (ASCA Director)
Opening – Nadica Denić, Jasmijn Leeuwenkamp, and Eszter Szakács

RELATION(AL) MATTERS: ON QUESTIONS OF SUBJECTIVITY, AGENCY AND THE DEMAND TO REWRITE KNOWLEDGE - *Keynote lecture by Kathrin Tiele (Utrecht University)*
Respondent: Monique Roelofs (University of Amsterdam)

What characterizes today's planetary condition if not relationality? My talk wants to open thinking about forms of (more than) human relationality via this speculative question. Yet, my goal is not to philosophically prove – against dualistic traditions – that it is the relation(al) which makes and unmakes worlds. Rather, what if we always/already situate ourselves with/ in a relational perspective and begin to trace how and in what senses the relation(al) matters? Three dimensions are explored more closely in my long-term engagement with relationality as onto-epistemological praxis: subject(ive), ecological, and systemic relations. While all three have to be seen as inherently connected with each other, in my talk I want to disentangle them for the purpose of explicating more pedagogically what consequences I see to follow from a relational approach regarding conceptualizations of subjectivity, more- than-human agencies and the systemic state of what Sylvia Wynter has called 'the coloniality of Being' (Wynter 2003). Concretely, I think alongside Bracha L. Ettinger's matrixial theorizing or subjectivity, the onto-epistemology of intra-activity and/as entanglement of Karen Barad and Vicki Kirby, and the autopoietic systemicity of the coloniality of Being, or the world 'as we know it,' with Denise Ferreira da Silva and Wynter. What I hope to achieve with my talk is to open the relational both as a way out of dualism, individualism, and progressive-linear models, and as a methodological lens (or theory-practice) for the continually required critical analyses of human-and-more-than-human relational matters.

Kathrin Thiele is currently Associate Professor of Gender Studies and Critical Theory in the Graduate Gender Programme in the Department of Media and Culture Studies at Utrecht University, NL. Trained transdisciplinarily in Gender Studies, Sociology, Comparative Literature and Cultural Theory, her published work engages with questions of critical inquiry, ethics and politics from queer feminist, decolonial and posthuman(ist) philosophical perspectives. Her critical attention lies most of all with the promising and troubling consequences of a relational view on the world, that is thinking with the relational in order to attend to the inherent frictions, the processes of in/exclusion and the always asymmetrical relations we inhabit. With Birgit M. Kaiser she is also co-founder and coordinator of Terra Critica: Interdisciplinary Network for the Critical Humanities since 2012, and together with Ida Hillerup-Hansen, Kathrin Thiele has initiated the Relational Matters Archive in 2021, a series of online conversations that collects plurivocal insights on how relationality as a matter of concern can help us attune to the specificity of today's planetary condition.

Monique Roelofs is Professor of Philosophy of Art and Culture at the University of Amsterdam. Her main research areas are aesthetics, feminist philosophy, and critical race and decolonial theory. She has special interests in the aesthetics-politics relation, the notion of the aesthetic, and Black and Latinx/Latin American aesthetics. In her book *The Cultural Promise of the Aesthetic* (2014), she proposes the notion of aesthetic relationality to analyze the cultural values, dynamism, and ambivalences philosophy has historically inscribed into the field of the aesthetic and to theorize the entanglements between aesthetic experiences and formations of race, gender and coloniality. Her book *Arts of Address: Being Alive to Language and the World* (Columbia UP, 2020) explores the ways in which modes of address, along with other facets of address, shape relationships among people, things, places, and nonhuman animals, and undergird transformations in systems of aesthetic relationality. Recent work includes articles on the roles of aesthetic publics, identity, and normativity in decolonial aesthetics. She is also coediting the collection *Black Art and Aesthetics: Relationalities, Interiorities, Reckonings*, which will appear in November 2023.

Panel 1: MORE-THAN-HUMAN ENTANGLEMENTS
11:00 - 12:30 Doelenzaal
Moderator: Giulia Bellinetti (University of Amsterdam)

BREACHED BOUNDARIES: Enter *THE INTRUDER IN SISSEL MARIE TONN'S "PLASTIC HYPERSEA"* - *Manuela Zammit (independent researcher)*

In 2019, around 350 containers spilled overboard from the vessel MSC ZOE above the Dutch island of Schiermonnikoog, releasing millions of kilograms of plastic and possibly other toxic materials into the water. Departing from this event, artist Sissel Marie Tonn developed *Plastic Hypersea* (2020-1),

a two-part project consisting of a multi-channel "sci-fi documentary" (*The Spill*), and a geolocated sound walk (*The Facility*) situated at the NDSM Wharf in Amsterdam. Due to plastic's ubiquitous presence in planetary wind and waterways, Tonn considers this material as a modern-day material entanglement connecting all earthly organisms. In her work, she explores the notion of "shared contamination" by presenting a speculative future scenario where the presence of microplastics in the human bloodstream triggers unexpected physiological changes. I think with Nancy Tuana's notion of "viscous porosity" and Stacy Alaimo's "trans-corporeality" — two contemporary feminist perspectives on how the biological is always mediated by the social and vice versa — to elaborate on how *Plastic Hypersea* questions Western humanist notions of 'the human', and how reaching an alternative understanding of what constitutes 'the human' enables us to enter into a more ethical relationship with the material world. Aware of how exclusionary war metaphors underlying the field of immunology portray our immune system as a defence mechanism against a foreign invader, Tonn refrains from framing contamination as an external attack on an unassailable interiority. Rather, she approaches it as a specific mode of encounter between the body and its environment that *could* threaten one's health, but could equally present transformative possibilities. Here, I engage philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy's conceptual metaphor of the intruder, through which he ponders the question of an immunological (self)identity. Nancy articulates the complex and multi-directional encounters (including within itself) that the body enters in and depends on for both (self)identification and survival. The intruder's ambiguity as simultaneously familiar (self) and strange (non-self), further confounds the self/other binary.

Manuela Zammit is a contemporary art historian, critic, and editor based between the Netherlands and Malta. She has recently graduated with a Research Master in Critical Studies in Art & Culture from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Her thesis, titled "Posthuman Corporealities: Encounters Within and Without the Self" focuses on contemporary artistic engagements with posthumanist feminist (re)theorisations of the body. While her research interests are broad and ever-changing, her ongoing inquiry is centred around expanded notions of embodiment and relationality in contemporary art practices, particularly within the contexts of ecology and new media. She previously completed a MFA in Contemporary Curating at Manchester Metropolitan University and is currently an editor for the visual art and culture journal *Kunstlicht*, as well as a regular contributor to the Dutch contemporary art magazine *Metropolis M*.

RELATIONS WITH RATS, RAT CITY
Merel Ligtelijn (University of Amsterdam) and Christine van Royen (University of Amsterdam)

Starting with an introduction of the rat itself as a social, intelligent and funny animal, we will proceed with presenting the Centrum of Dier-Mens Studies and ourselves as an interdisciplinary

research team affiliated with the Centrum. We share an interest in the relational, ethical, and aesthetic approach of the life and death of the rat in the city of Amsterdam. We focus on human-animal relations and on the troublesome relation between human animals and rats in Amsterdam. There is a strong relation and shared history between rats and human animals and we want to draw attention to the fact that rats still have no rights or whatever place or space for themselves in the city of Amsterdam, although rats belong to the city as much as human animals do. Killing or exterminating rats that occupy human animal space is seen by many as a solution. We don't think that killing animals is a solution and so far, it has not ended the presence of rats in cities. Therefore, we propose a different approach. Thinking of philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, who said that 'The agony of the rat or the slaughter of a calf remains present in thought not through pity but as the zone of exchange between man and animal in which something of one passes into the other' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994) we also think that killing rats has effects on the thoughts and feelings of human animals, also through introducing the concept of extermination. We will present a new form of relation that could be created between the human animals and rats, a relation in which the rat is treated as an animal that has rights to live and has its own space in the city and is cared for in a response-able way, following thoughts of Vinciane Despret (2016) and Donna Haraway (2016).

How to create a conceptual Rat City? We propose an idea that is built on an aesthetic of the seventies, by Cobra artist Constant. New Babylon was a concept for a fictional city that he created in the sixties. In New Babylon, Constant played with ideas about space, welfare and fantastic forms of life. In our concept of a Rat City, we will take that concept towards a playful and imaginative space for creating response -ability between human animals and rats. Also, not unlike the Karni Mata Rat Temple in India, where rats are fed and cared for. This Rat City might become a fictional space or reality in Underground Amsterdam but in either case it can create a relational space where rats have rights and where human animals do not share only death with rats, but playfulness and care and response -ability. We would like to hear your reactions and suggestions on the subject.

Dier-Mensstudies or Human-Animal Relations formed a new study-and research group connected to the UvA. We, **Merel Ligtelijn en Christine van Royen**, are a multidisciplinary team within this research group, acting and thinking from a social-geographic and artistic- research background. Merel Ligtelijn is an independent publicist, editor and entrepreneur based in Amsterdam. Her themes of focus are history, culture, city life, geography, animal welfare, Alaska, hidden dimensions. She wrote for numerous newspapers and (online) magazines like Trouw and de Correspondent and is (co-)author of several Amsterdam book productions. Merel has a master in Human Geography and on top studied Urban Sociology, both at UvA. She is co-founder and

board member of the Amsterdam Underground Foundation (www.ondergronds.nl). Christine van Royen has an artistic research practice with a focus on aesthetics of death of plants and animals, photography, cyanotypie, drawing and painting. Her research includes artists from the seventies and concepts as the micro-emotive and Spurensicherung, also thinkers on human-animal relations as Vinciane Despret, Kelly Oliver and Donna Haraway. She attended the Rietveld and the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam and completed a BA in History of Art, followed by a Research Master Artistic Research, also in Amsterdam UvA. Her work was presented internationally.

SPECULATIVE INTERVENTIONS AND MATERIALIST PERFORMATIVITY: UNDERSTANDING POSTHUMAN BODY AND GENETIC ASSEMBLAGES THROUGH A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SELECT WORKS
Reshma Sanil (Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee)

Posthuman feminism entails not only a resistance to feminist modes of thinking within phallogocentric posthuman thought but also to understand developing imaginaries in body plasticity where body interiority and exteriority are linked with more-than-human life processes. The paper studies the posthuman understanding of embodiment and bodily materiality by contesting the dichotomies of nature/culture and organic/technical through emerging concepts of epigenetics and biogenetic engineering. These speculative engagements and 'naturecultural' becomings are studied through a comparative analysis of the two novels Ammonite (by Nicola Griffith) and Seveneves (by Neal Stephenson). The paper aims to show the rhizomatic shift from the anthropocentric discourse around the Human Genome Project to 'multispecies-becomingwith' materialized in the symbiotic interaction of genome with its material, discursive, cultural and social environment as well as how bodies can be differently configured through biotechnological control. The changing roles and relations of the genetic social imaginary and body are conceptualized in the paper by placing it in the theoretical intersections of New Materialism, Feminist Science Studies and Critical Posthumanism. The paper conceptualizes performativity as 'posthumanistic' by challenging the existing dichotomies and embodying material shaping of organisms through relational context-dependent interactivity with technology, genome and the surrounding environments. Apparatuses of bodily production reconfigures meaning and knowledge production by intra-acting with various phenomena. Hence, it becomes important to understand how intersectionality becomes materialized and embodied. Theorists like Donna Haraway, Karen Barad and Rosi Braidotti interpret the posthuman body mediated by technologies in all its materiality as a highly contested space traversed by power relations. The two novels are analyzed by comparing and contrasting its politics of difference and intra-action of bodies (especially in racialized reproductive politics) in terms of human evolution, biotechnological agency and species cosmopolitanism. Both the novels echo the posthuman feminist attempt to develop

a phenomenology of more-than-human becomings and sexuality as a more transversal life force. By emphasizing embodiment in terms of relationality and enfolding, the study delineates queer resistance by deconstructing the normative figurations of the human and the heteronormative.

Reshma Sanil is a research scholar working in the department of Humanities and Social Sciences (English) from the institution of Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee. My area of research focusses on the interdisciplinary realm of Postgenomics and its Material Embodiment. My current research areas cuts through the theoretical aspects of Posthumanism, Material Feminism and Feminist Techno-science. I also traverse Medical Humanities and Cultural Studies intersecting the field of Genomics. The submitted work is a part and extension of my ongoing research.

Panel 2: LITERARY RELATIONALITIES
11:00 - 12:30 Belle van Zuylenzaal
Moderator: Michael Miller (University of Amsterdam)

JAMES JOYCE AND NON-TRIUMPHALIST RELATIONS: ART WRITING, INDIRECT EFFICACY AND ADJACENCY
Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes (University of Amsterdam)

A new anthology on James Joyce and the Arts aims to give a glimpse of the writer as enabler of "a synesthetic, interrelated, networked world, where art has liberating import.'" Who then owns Joyce in the context of art (Lerm Hayes, Elkins)? In Joyce studies (as elsewhere), there are efforts underway to return to political interpretations (Thompson), which would mean to consider the kind of relationality that Joyce-reading spawns – among artists, but also (previously unstudied) among writers working in art's ecosystem or force-field (Rockhill), which knows indirect efficacy. The reading groups that *Ulysses and Finnegans* Wake appear to demand, may be straight-forward community-forging. But Joyce is not spawning happy-clappy community artists. What of the struggles that such bringing together inevitably also brings, "rub-up", Sarat Maharaj calls it, a function of the "untranslatability of the other", which he developed as "no-how" in relation to Joyce, something that demands art research. My cases are (some) Joyce readers, such as Maharaj, who have turned to art writing / curating / art research. They seem to eschew triumphalist notions of relationality and understanding – both art and one another. A comparative, empathic sense of other peoples' pain, non-human actors (a potato, rocks, the sea), our aphasia-prone world views and chancy loves emerges (Stoler, Nussbaum), a kind of solidarity that cannot be spoken of for fear of being ideologized (Eagleton) and commodified. This notion shares something with the kind of human-to-human understanding that Judith Butler addresses when she writes about the need to see those who appear "ungrievable" to many. Ultimately, in my argument, Joyce's work emerges as

a case in point for, or a showcase of, the rich interior lives of ordinary people, irreducible and shy: a relationality that resonates with Quashie's concept of Black interiority. This paper lastly proposes a reading of Leopold Bloom (through the eyes of privileged readers, whose privilege is implicated domestic regularity: a space for reading (Ghosh)) in line with Tina Campt's beautiful and most fitting expression for non-triumphalist relationality, of being with one another: adjacency.

Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes is Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History, University of Amsterdam. She recently directed the Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture. Until 2014 she was Professor of Iconology in Belfast, where she led a Research Graduate School. Originating from Jena, she studied in Heidelberg, London and Cologne, where she gained her PhD (researched as James Joyce Foundation Scholar, Zurich). She held an Irish Research Council Post-Doctoral Fellowship at UCD and has lived in Ireland for 20 years. Her research focuses on social art practices, word and image studies, visual legacies of (Irish) writers, performance, the historiography of art and curation. Rooted in Joseph Beuys studies, she is interested in performance, post-War art histories and art research. Her books include: *W.G. Sebald's Artistic Legacies: Memory, Word and Image* (co-ed., Amsterdam University Press 2023); *Brian O'Doherty/Patrick Ireland: Word, Image and Institutional Critique* (ed., Valiz 2017); *Post-War Germany and 'Objective Chance': W.G. Sebald, Joseph Beuys and Tacita Dean* (Steidl 2011); *James Joyce als Inspirationsquelle für Joseph Beuys (Olms 2001); and Joyce in Art* (Lilliput 2004). She has curated internationally.

"IF YOU WANT TO GO QUICKLY, GO ALONE. IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER" (AFRICAN PROVERB).TOWARD A DEFINITION OF RELATIONALITY IN CONTEMPORARY WEST AFRICAN FICTION.
Abioseh Porter (Drexel University)

Prompted by studies such as "Relationality" (Wijngaarden, 2022), " Accounts of Self: Exploring Relationality Through Literature" (Spiegel and Spenser, 2016) and *The Sum of Us : What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* (McGhee, 2021) and "The Infrastructure of Racism: The Institutional Dimensions" (Tourse, 2018), I plan to explore how West African writers such as Forna, Hollist, Palmer, Diome, Adichie, Ndibe, and Unigwe are exploiting experimental and often liberating language, symbolism, and other convincing patterns of thought not only to address fundamental issues related to a redefinition of relationality but especially with some of the major infrastructures that make relationality such a difficult phenomenon to handle.

Evaluating the impulse by these authors to acknowledge and address the ubiquitous absence of genuine relationality and to expose, interrogate, and demystify the various infrastructures that

create and sustain such negativity is my goal. As changed views of form and as the relation of various beings perceived have continued to evolve, these authors seem determined to dismantle at least some of the infrastructures that help to keep various objects of division so stubbornly in place. Manipulating alterity with devastating effect, the authors attempt to dismantle bigotry and its infrastructures--academic and religious miseducation of young people, the instigation and maintenance of non-relational props such as institutional racism, bigotry, human trafficking, colorism, academic and professional exploitation--the authors have explored the relationships among people other beings, and the environment to probe the nature, consequences of, and possible solutions to relationality. Using linguistic styles that evoke the world of painting and spatial geography, the artistry of these new voices is often so powerful that their works may be seen as visual and poetic canvasses that show relationality and its supporting structures as both destructive and transformative presences.

Abioseh Michael Porter was born and raised in Freetown, Sierra Leone. A comparatist by training, he is a former department head of English & Philosophy at Drexel University where he is currently professor of English and the director of Africana Studies.

AUDITORY DYNAMICS FOR THE RELATIONALITY OF LITERARY SOUNDSCAPES
Ru Wang (Zhejiang University/University of Amsterdam)

Literary soundscape is the network of related sounds embedded in narratives, reconfiguring literary construction with its own sonic form and interconnecting with other sound worlds and media, as well as other forms and modes of hearing and sounding.1 As a sonic form, literary soundscape not only affords materiality of acoustic features, spatiality and temporality, but also ontological relationality, which, more importantly, is mediated and motivated by hearing and sounding subjects' auditory perception. Literary soundscapes vary in types, such as private, public, ecological or urban ones; auditory experience about it can also be diverse, like auditory attention, memory, imagination and affects. Very potentially, the "queer conglomeration" of literary soundscape implies new ways of connecting bodies and minds in modern society.

This article focuses on a particular type of literary soundscape, that is, the literary "cocktail party" scene, referring to the complex auditory scene in everyday life like busy offices, crowded restaurants, noisy classrooms, and congested city streets. By analyzing the literary effects generated in three processes of the listener/reader's "auditory scene analysis" in this soundscape, this article reveals the dialectical work of passive attention and active attention in this literary soundscape. It is the dialectics of auditory attention that creates the dynamics for the acoustic relationality of the literary soundscape.

Ru Wang is a PhD candidate from School of International Studies, Zhejiang University, PR China; currently studying as a visiting PhD at Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA) in University of Amsterdam, from October 2022 to October 2023. My PhD project focus on the representation and perception of soundscapes in modern literature and analyses how they generate embodied aesthetic experience and literary meaning. I'm also interested in cognitive literary studies, new formalism, philosophy in literature.

Panel 3: AESTHETICS, AFFECT, INTIMACY
13:45 – 15:15 Doelenzaal
Moderator: Pinar Türer (University of Amsterdam)

ILLNESS, COHERENCE, DISRUPTION: ANNE BOYER'S THE UNDYING ENACTING 'RELATION WITHOUT RELATION'
Kim Schoof (Open University)

In *Giving an Account of Oneself*, Judith Butler enlists several ways in which human subjects, in the very process of their emergence as subjects, are dispossessed; dispossessions that indicate their constitutive relationality (2005, 39). Self-accounts that make an explicit effort to attest to this constitutive relationality should therefore include allusions to these dispossessions. Butler is quite clear that (many of) the dispossessions occurring in a subject's emergence are "non-narrativizable" and that therefore, "if narrative reconstruction is to approximate the life it means to convey, it must also be subject to interruption" (idem, 52).

Following Butler, the extent to which the Western tradition of autobiographical literature promotes coherence could be said to coincide with the extent to which it denies or conceals authors' relational constitution. Therefore, a relevant question to ask is: "Under what conditions does self-poiesis become a relational category" (Athanasiou and Butler 2015, 67)? This presentation will suggest that illness narratives form a particularly interesting answer to this question: as the experience of illness is known to have a self-shattering effect and confront patients with their far-reaching dependency on the care of others (e.g. Nancy 1991; Carel 2016), coherent self-accounts function as a Derridean pharmakon. They are both necessary cure for a patient's shattered sense of self, and a necessary evil as they deny the patient's newly encountered relationality.

A contemporary illness narrative that navigates this issue in both a heartbreakingly personal and politically pressing way is Anne Boyer's breast cancer memoir *The Undying* (2019). Referring to the writings of Maurice Blanchot on interruption in narrative as a way of attesting to a subject's fundamental lack of a unified self (1969), this presentation will trace some of the ways in which

interruptions in *The Undying* enact, in Blanchot's terminology, a "relational without relation" between Boyer and all those women either working or under treatment in the precarious circumstances of the contemporary American health care system.

Kim Schoof is a PhD candidate at Open University, The Netherlands working on a project about contemporary autobiographical literature. Bringing the critical thinking about self-accounts of Judith Butler and Lauren Berlant into a dialogue with Maurice Blanchot's writings on "the literary demand", her project rethinks relationality in autobiographical literature as a matter of literary form. It considers how formally innovative yet widely read authors of contemporary autobiographical literature such as Maggie Nelson and Édouard Louis, by formally accounting for their relational constitution, renegotiate oppressing norms for autobiographical writing.

ON POSTCOLONIAL DISINTEREST: 'PROMISCUOUS ALLIANCES,' CONTINGENCY, AND DEFERRAL
Heeyeon Kim (University of Oxford)

This project explores how the idea of disinterest or an "art for art's sake" emerges in postcolonial discourse with the notions of "promiscuous relationality" and "deferral." I consider two coinages—Leela Gandhi's "interested aestheticism" and Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong's "interested disinterestedness"—in postcolonial criticism, which show that pure disinterest or an "art for art's sake" is not quite affordable, or even desirable, in minority discourse. I first explain Gandhi's "interested aestheticism," unfurled as "art for the sake of others," in her book Affective Communities that envision ways in which interracial friendships emerge against such hostile colonial settings. For such unlikely relations to rupture the political scene, Gandhi's exploration of "relationality" oftentimes entails self-sacrifice, or self-exile. Using such terms as "easily transferable sympathies and promiscuous alliances," I focus on the effortlessness with which one can invest the same intensity of feelings to strangers and foreigners, the feelings that one has invested in one's family, lover, or fellow citizen. I argue that Gandhi trades the duration or sustainability of these kinships for its spontaneity and intensity. To cross over the boundary that defines "us" from "them," the strength of those relations nurtures from openness and contingency; yet, how long these alliances will maintain themselves is less certain. I claim that an encounter with difference—aesthetic experiences involving friction, anxiety, and antagonism—is not the same thing as dwelling, or living with, difference. Then I explore the notion of "deferral" in Wong's, which emphasize the suspension of interest, waiting for a disinterested motive to take the shape of eventual gain reaped in futurity. Wong's "interested disinterestedness" allows enough time for extravagant, purposeless, and playful work of art to turn into necessity, fortuitously contributing something to the immigrant community in the larger economy. I discuss what appears to be a

consistent pattern in attempts to imagine a minoritarian form of disinterest, which is a strategical emphasis on waiting, deferral, and suspension.

Heeyeon Kim is currently a DPhil Student in English at the University of Oxford. She received a master's degree in Experimental Humanities at New York University and graduated in Comparative Literature at Yonsei University, Seoul, South Korea. Her interests include 20th century and contemporary Anglophone novel, global modernism, and aestheticism.

ARTIFACT, AFFECT, AFFECTION
Kendall Grady (UC Santa Cruz)

The Museum of Broken Relationships (Zagreb, Croatia) collects personal ephemera of loving relationships—erotic or platonic, active or atrophied—donated globally by the general public. How does the cultural institution mutate and reinscribe self-selection in collective overtures of curated exhibitions to express singular and synergic, micro and macro proliferations of love? In September 2022, I dilated coupling in Nicklas Luhmann's social systems theory and Peter Sloterdijk's microsphereology to infiltrate institutional vectors of meaning-making in excess of representation; I read the room not for evidence of couples, but for the animacy of dyadic relationalities.

Sloterdijk writes that love stories are stories of form. By mapping, photographing, and writing poems to connections including artifact-wall text; artifact-artifact; artifact-visitor; visitor-visitor; and my own heart as monitored by an electrocardiogram app-all of the above, love emerges as a mode of reading the museum's circulations as a porous orientation logic of para-romantic love— an ethico-political transverse rather than a transcendence. I propose a critical/creative close reading of the museum's visual metonymy of love and a record of my reckoning with intimacies in order to think love untethered from the absolute truth value assigned it as a societal ideal and literary trope.

The unexpected bedfellows of media ecology and critical love studies reorient love from a teleological finality to affective intimacies that (re)produce ipseity in relation to otherness. Together, these fields posit affect and affection as mutually constituted and spread through connection; this connection can be read as a network of bodies, or a social body. If love is a technology of communication, and if the spatial partitioning of a museum is another hermeneutics through which it speaks, I engage the museum as a generative site of structural ir/ reconciliation among, in Chela Sandoval's words, the "cultural and human forms that do not easily slip into either side of a dominant binary opposition."

Kendall Grady is a poem maker, educator, and PhD candidate at UC Santa Cruz, where they write toward a media poetics of love and the couplet form. They hold an MFA in Writing from UC San Diego and an MA in Media & Culture from the University of Amsterdam. Their chapbook, 321 Couplets, is forthcoming from COAST|noCOAST, and their creative/critical research has been supported by the Baltic Writing Residency, the LARB Publishing Workshop, and The Humanities Institute at UC Santa Cruz. They live between the mountains and the sea with six housemates and one dog.

GRIEF WILL BE OUR COMPANION
Nele Buyst (University of Antwerp)

'Grief will be our companion' is the title of a chapter in L. Head's Hope and grief in the Anthropocene (2016). In this chapter, she argues how grief – however traditionally absent in academic literature, political practice and media discourse - are ontologically entwined with the discourse around climate change.

I want to use the emotion of grief as a framework to think about our sense of relatedness. Agreeing with feminist philosophers and more-than-human ethnographers that the act of mourning is a political act - whom/ what do we grieve for? When do we grieve for the species, and when for the unit? - I also want to look into the generative potential of grief: how can a more sophisticated understanding of the processes of loss and mourning, help to release energy for programs of change? The framework of grieving is helpful in that it directs our attention alternately toward the future and toward the past.

I want to elaborate on how the arts can serve as a guide to channel shared emotions of grief and transform them into a public narrative. Drawing on the work of Belgian visual artists Karel Verhoeven and Karen Vermeren, I will explore how their work opens up mourning practices to the more-than-human world, and thus constitutes a larger sense of relatedness. Looking into the artistic practice of Dries Segers, I want to explore how developing new aesthetic practices can help us to re-assemble, and envision new partnerships with the more-than-human world.

Nele Buyst (1983, Ghent) works as a poet (Regels, Poëziecentrum, 2020 and CORPS, poreus to be published 2023 at het balanseer) and as a PhD-student at the University of Antwerp in the Department of Philosophy. Her research focuses on ecology, vulnerability, relationality, and repair, through the practice and the metaphor of kintsugi, a Japanese technique to restore broken ceramics. Poetry and essays she has written on the survival strategies of non-human organisms, care, ecology, and pedagogy have appeared in a.o. rekto:verso and nY.

Panel 4: URBAN INFRASTRUCTURES
13:45 – 15:15 Belle van Zuylenzaal
Moderator: Linda Kopitz (University of Amsterdam)

RELATIONS AS BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF REFUGEE SUPPORT AND RECEPTION IN ROTTERDAM
Lieke van der Veer (Erasmus University)

This contribution shows how relations and connections (or the lack thereof) are constitutive of specific situated arrangements in refugee support. It studies systems-in-the-making, in which the relations are a first step towards the consolidation of such systems that are, themselves, ultimately an effect of these relations. Based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork, I adopt an infrastructural lens to study forms of refugee support. This approach allows me to zoom in on the conditions of possibility that structure the manoeuvres of grassroots organisers, and to study the generativity of unstable relationships, emergent aspirations, and unsettled modes of provisioning. Infrastructure is a fundamentally relational property within a given that often remains 'under'. Scholarship on infrastructure highlights processes of relationship-building in the context of the distributional politics of service provision, but also on infrastructures of resistance. Zooming in on the constitutive role of relations, this contribution follows the insight that relations are prior to and encompass entities, and demonstrates how relations are generative of refugee assistance and advocacy. Combining the observations that infrastructure is made from relationality and that it is conventionally concerned with what remains under, I bring forward the opportunities my interlocutors considered in order to make some relations legible to power—and others not. What follows is that by having relations surface, these relations are able to set in motion other connections, mushroom into new engagements, and catalyse ongoing infrastructuring. Concretely, I zoom in on the interlinkages between the city administration and contracted NGOs; among NGOs; between NGOs and grassroots initiatives; among grassroots initiatives; between grassroots initiatives and their advisors; and among advisors. All actors are invested in mapping, maintaining, assessing, and creating relations.

Lieke van der Veer works as a postdoctoral researcher at the Erasmus University Rotterdam in an interdisciplinary project entitled Dilemmas of Doing Diversity. Earlier this year, she successfully defended the manuscript of her doctoral dissertation: Care in a Frictional Field of Forces: Assistance and Advocacy by and for Recent Refugees in Rotterdam. In addition to the monograph that emerged from this PhD research, peer reviewed articles were published in journals such as Ethnic and Racial Studies, Voluntas, and Journal of Borderland Studies.

WATER AS A MORE-THAN-HUMAN FORCE: HYDROGRAPHIC IMAGINARIES IN THE CHINESE WATERTOWN CITY PROJECT

Yu Sang (University of Amsterdam)

In the current study of smart green cities, water is typically framed as a critical natural resource that needs to be controlled, managed, and utilized. Such a framing of water undervalues the role of a "hydrographic imaginary" rooted in the materiality, representation, and everyday practice of water in cities when confronting climate change and energy shortages. However, as many scholars in media studies and urban research attempt to show, water is not only an element that people live with, but the environment that people live in and think through (Feyen, Shannon, and Neville 2009; Anand 2017; Garde-Hansen 2021). Focusing on the "Watertown Living Room" project in the Yangtze River Delta in southern China, this paper considers the hydrographic as a crucial part of urban imaginaries that actively inform urban strategies, planning, and branding to downplay increasing environmental risks. The "Watertown Living Room" project was launched in 2021 to mark the second anniversary of the Yangtze River Delta Integration Plan and green development. As a showcase for national policy in the Yangtze River Delta, the "Watertown Living Room" project underscores the multivalence of water within Chinese desires to produce an urban space balancing economic and ecological development, integrating vernacular culture and international standards, and coordinating local, national, and global forces. In this paper, through conducting discourse and visual analysis of Chinese poetry, painting, mythology, and historical governance in Yangtze areas, as well as current planning documents and news reports for the "Watertown Living Room" project, I interrogate how such hydrographic imaginaries in Jiangnan Watertown culture are mobilized in city projects and repurposed in line with Chinese "eco-desires" (Sze 2015). Water, as I aim to show in this paper, is a significant more-than-human element that serves as a productive and political force shaping the everyday lived environments of urban dwellers and participating in future-making processes.

Yu Sang is currently a first-year research master in Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam, with a specialization in Television and Cross-Media Culture. Her research interests are in the intersection of environmental media, infrastructure studies, and urban studies. Prior to pursuing her Master's degree, Yu completed a Bachelor of Science in Interactive Media Art at New York University, where she was involved in several research projects related to urban design and public art.

NEON RED TO SOFT PINK: AESTHETIC REGIMES FOR SELLING SEX

Vincent Baptist (Erasmus University)

This contribution focuses on the aesthetic and relational intertwinement of 'selling sex', within contemporary city contexts. It starts from the observation that recently coined, interrelated

concepts like 'sexscapes', 'pleasurescapes', 'playscapes' and 'nightscapes' all contain assumptions about the urban as a hedonistic sphere, ingrained in the public imagination through media representations dominated by neon lighting. This classic visual trope has traditionally accompanied depictions and discourses of modern metropolises, and is inherent to the notion of 'red-light districts' as well. However, as the future of cities, especially in European policy contexts, is being articulated in terms of progressively connoted adjectives like 'inclusive', 'safe', 'sustainable' and 'beautiful', the question rises what kind of new visual character, if at all, can and should be inscribed in cities' spaces and infrastructures of sex work, with an eye on potentially elevating their often long-standing position as both moral and aesthetic 'sacrifice zones' within the urban fabric at large. Recent examples of architectural plans to concentrate prostitution practices in so-called 'eros centers', often in peripheral areas of Western European cities, curiously stick to decors dominated by red and black colors and neon glow. While this seems to sustain a certain aesthetic homogenization within the realm of sex consumerism, I question whether the neon aesthetic of sex work in cities remains because of its perceived outdated and mechanical visual qualities. These considerations are ultimately contrasted by analyzing the aesthetic strategies of the rapidly evolving 'sexual wellness' industry, which shifts the focus to the individualistic rather than transactional relationality of sex consumerism. As 'sexual wellness' increasingly permeates urban landscapes by means of tongue-in-cheek advertising and quirky colors, one is left wondering whether its visual language could be transposed to the realm of sex work, or whether this would constitute another kind of homogenization, namely that of aesthetic gentrification.

Vincent Baptist is a postdoctoral researcher at the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication. He holds a PhD in history (Erasmus University Rotterdam), and has a background in media studies and digital humanities (University of Amsterdam). His current research focuses on urban intimacies and iconicity, particularly within postindustrial contexts.

MEDIA'S EXTRAMORAL POLITICS: INFRASTRUCTURES OF FILMING IN CAIRO'S STREETS
Mariz Kelada (Brown University)

The relationship between media, especially cinema, and cities is subject to anthropological and media studies inquiries alike. This paper analyzes the labor relations of on-location filming in Cairo-Egypt, which moves across different city geographies, from the slum to the elite gated community. These labor relations defy the formal/informal and exploitation/resistance binaries because they retain their communal dependencies and negotiated exploitation while forming a vital infrastructure for the media industry and its political economy. In so doing, these relations enact an Extramoral" politics—neither moral nor immoral. This is a necessary conception for understanding the ambivalences and contradictions of life within neoliberal capitalism. The paper

argues that a critical and imaginative understanding that considers materiality and the affect of the labor of media can challenge post-humanist frameworks and expands the stakes of new materialism.

Mariz Kelada is a doctoral candidate in the department of Anthropology, an MA student in the department of Modern Culture and Media, and a Fellow in Collaborative Humanities at the Cogut Institute at Brown University. Her dissertation is based on two years of multimodal ethnographic research in Cairo between 2019 and 2021.

Panel 5: TECHNOLOGICAL IMMERSIONS
15:30 – 17:00 Doelenzaal
Moderator: Anna Schjøtt Hansen (University of Amsterdam)

DERMAL LAYERS IN BETWEEN: A FEMINIST NEW MATERIALIST EXTENSION TOWARDS ETHICAL HUMAN-ROBOT-RELATIONALITY
Dominika Lisy (Linköping University)

The emergence of research around social robots and human-robot-interaction is a chance to explore a different kind of human/non-human relation and to challenge normative and modern/colonial (see Quijano 2002; Lugones 2007) ideas about "the human" that are inherent in many engineering and design practices (Cheon & Su, 2016). The human/non-human divide in social robotics and its alignment with emotion/reason, self/other has a deep-rooted cartesian layer of oppositional ontological divides. The question arises what kind of relations "we" want to build with these robotic non-human others and how they will influence the relations "we" as humans have with one another, but also with surroundings and more-than-human others – and more importantly: how to do it differently.

My interest lies in exploring material boundaries to understand conceptual relations of dualisms and how they intra-actively co-constitute each other on an onto-epistemological level (see Barad 1998, 2003, 2007, 2014). One of these material-conceptual boundaries is at the core of my thesis project: the skin. In my work with skin as a material-conceptual feminist figuration, I am exploring different dermal characteristics such as processes of keratinisation, layeredness, and permeability, which allow me to reconfigure dualistic relations as non-oppositional. Being and knowing through the skin makes apparent how boundaries harden/keratinise or dissolve to determine the potentiality of affective mingling with other bodies (see Serres 1985/2008) - especially, other "bodies of knowledge". Their material-discursive touching might provide an ethical space for reconfiguring human-robot-relationalities. I argue that the process of asymmetrical agential cutting

(see Suchman 2006) is an embodied ethical practice and that the figuration of the skin makes apparent how different knowledges are layered. Consequently, these dermally layered/embodied knowledges bring the self either closer or further away and, hence, allow for different affective relations with the other.

For the presentation, I will present my work on the extension of Baradian agential realism towards an ethics of the body as a way to relate onto-epistemological levels of knowledges with levels of humans and robot materiality and their relation to one another.

Dominika Lisy is a third year PhD student at Linköping University in Sweden at the Department of Thematic Studies in the Division of Gender Studies (Tema Genus). My educational background is in psychology, cognitive neuroscience and gender studies, with a particular focus on feminist new materialisms. My current PhD project is an investigation of binary relations, zooming into boundaries, and through the figuration of the skin, I explore or reconfigure the imaginaries and potentialities around empathy and affective experiences with social robots. This work is an ethico-onto-epistemological contribution to the kind of relations with robotic machines which avoid cartesian and godtrick oppositional divisions of self/other, body/mind, reason/emotion, and ultimately human/non-human. I want to invite a thinking-worlding (Thiele 2015) of feeling/being/doing differently.

WHERE IS CREATIVITY? TOWARDS A MATERIALIST AND RELATIONAL ANALYSIS OF CREATIVE AI
Claudio Celis Bueno and Pei-Sze Chow (University of Amsterdam)

With the rising popularity of "creative AI" tools such as Midjourney, Dall-E, ChatGPT, etc., old questions regarding the possibility of machine creativity have once again become an object of interest. Faced with the surprising capabilities of these image and text generators, some scholars argue for the need to safeguard the singularity of human creativity. Others, more enthusiastically, offer prognoses of a future of true machine creativity. In both cases, however, creativity is understood as a (mental) faculty that an individual entity (a human, a living organism, a computer) possesses or may possess. To put it differently, most of these approaches to creative AI assume the standpoint of the question "what is creativity?" and use this perspective to evaluate if an individual entity (a human, a living organism, a computer) is or has the potential to be creative. In light of this, this presentation argues that the question "can computers be creative?" is probably the wrong question to ask. Instead, we suggest a materialist and relational analysis of creativity: from asking "what is creativity" to "where is creativity". To develop this shift, we employ Leah A. Lievrouw's diagram of "mediation" (2014), which calls for an approach to digital media aimed at overcoming classic reductionisms in the study of technology (i.e. instrumentalism, technological

determinism, and social constructivism). To achieve this, the diagram of mediation focuses on the intersections between technologies, power relations, and practices, emphasising the relational character between these three domains. The aim of this presentation is to apply this diagram to the question of AI-driven automated creativity, particularly in the burgeoning context of AI-based film production, and to examine under which conditions and through which relations creativity is taking place today.

Claudio Celis Bueno is Assistant Professor in *New Media and Digital Culture at the UvA* and co-director of the *AI and Cultural Production research group* at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis. He is the author of the book *The Attention Economy: Labour, Time and Power in Cognitive Capitalism*. Since 2018 his research has focused on the politics of machine vision in order to propose novel ways of understanding the relation between images and power. During 2023 he's also a Research Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS).

Pei-Sze Chow is Assistant Professor in Media and Culture at UvA and co-director of the *AI and Cultural Production* research group at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis. She is a Fellow of the UvA Institute for Advanced Study (IAS). Her work as a film scholar centres on issues of creative agency, representation, and diversity in the media industries of small nations, with a focus on the influence of technology and policy. She is the author of *Transnational Screen Culture in Scandinavia* (2021).

RELATIONALITY IN VR: A CRITIQUE OF BIG TECH TRANSHUMANISM
Niels Niessen (Tilburg University)

This paper analyzes discourses by Big Tech companies around relationality in virtual spaces. I critique Meta and Microsoft for their transhumanist ideology, juxtaposing it with a posthumanist philosophy of more-than-human relationality.

My paper starts with a discussion of Big Tech discourse on virtual reality. I show that Microsoft and Meta share a discourse of "presence" as an experience where your mind relates to other avatars, while your body remains here in the real world. This disembodiment of relationality reveals a transhumanist ideology, which defines human life by an inherent lack in interhuman relationality. Transhumanism believes that humans, by entering into a more-than-human relation with technology, become more human, overcoming the barriers that isolate them.

Transhumanism sounds futuristic, but it is not. My paper's second part argues that transhumanism harks back to an age-old liberal humanist tradition. As Katherine Hayles argues, the liberal subject

is a disembodied Cartesian subject. And like in René Descartes's Meditations, that subject's disembodied sense of presence is supported by the religious belief in the possibility of pure presence and relationality.

The paper's third part juxtaposes this transhumanist position to a posthumanist philosophy of relationality. As Sara Ahmed writes in Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Postcoloniality, identity does not simply happen in the subject's relation to itself (i.e., the transhumanist position), it happens in everyday relations to others. These encounters change the subject in unforeseeable ways.

Now, I'm not saying that such encounters constitutive of identity cannot take place in VR. Encounters in VR are real, inasmuch as people have real relations on Whatsapp. The problem with these platforms is that they are corporately controlled. I argue that these platforms, and the transhumanist ideology on which they are founded, contribute to the further acceleration and precarization of life.

Niels Niessen (Ph.D., 2013, University of Minnesota) is an Assistant Professor of Cultural Studies at Tilburg University. He leads the research team Platform Discourses: A Critical Humanities Perspective on Big Tech, which is funded by the European Research Council. His book Miraculous Realism: The French-Walloon Cinéma du Nord appeared with SUNY Press (2020). He now works on the book The End of Everyday Life: An Essay for Collective Empowerment against Big Tech.

DARK TO THEMSELVES. ALGORITHMS AND THE VOICE: AN OPAQUE RELATIONALITY
Mattia Capelletti (University of Palermo)

My intervention attempts to think through the question: what happens when the opacity of algorithms encounters the opacity of the human voice? From the outside looking in, algorithms' workings appear as "black boxes", thus eliciting the metaphor of opacity to describe the obstacles (i.e. state or corporate secrecy, differentials of expertise, etc.) met in the efforts to scrutinize their code ("auditing") to fight algorithmic violence. Whereas most appeals to institutions for accountability tend to focus on transparency, I will argue (following Louise Amoore) for a transformative call for change instead grounded on opacity as constitutive of algorithms' own mode of existence and relation with humans.

Algorithms are increasingly charged with the task to process the human voice — however, they must grapple with its own opacity. Voice biometrics deduce information on human identity from vocal markers, founding their premise on the positivist (colonial, racist, extractive) assumption of the translatability of the corporeal into data. Edouard Glissant's notion of opacity can challenge

the epistemic grounds upon which these technologies operate, interfering in the techno-bodily mediation to claim the right to resist representation. This line of thought can be extended to voice's very capacity to represent identity unambiguously (i.e. "transparently"), as biometrics allege. Finally, with the tools provided to me by cultural analysis — "quantum listening" (Oliveros) as an aural counterpart to close reading — and the participatory perspective of my practice as a curator, I will engage with the work of sound artist/researcher Pedro Oliveira on the algorithmic border violence enacted by the voice biometric apparatus in use to process asylum applications in Germany. DESMONTE (2021) will emerge as a multidimensional (academic as well as artistic) operationalization of opacity, a "digital aural jamming" (Eidsheim) sound performance able to "talk back" (hooks; Browne) to the opacity of the algorithm with the opacity of the voice.

Mattia Capelletti lives and works between Torino and Palermo, Italy. After completing the Cultural Analysis rMA at the University of Amsterdam, I am now a doctoral student in Sciences of Culture at the University of Palermo, where I am developing a project on the role of automated voice recognition technologies in border violence, and emerging artistic practices of resistance. The interdisciplinary project intersects my practice as an independent curator specializing in time-based art (sound, film, performance) to engage with artists and artworks in a participatory manner. Thanks to a fund by the Italian Ministry of Culture for the 2022-2024 triennium, I am occupying the role of appointed curator of a network of Italian non-profit associations called The Listeners, and am now at work at the organization of an ongoing programme of live music and sound performances around the themes of my PhD project in particular, and the voice more broadly.

Panel 6: MORE-THAN-HUMAN WITNESSING
15:30 – 17:00 Belle van Zuylenzaal
Moderator: Oscar Talbot (University of Amsterdam)

ANARCHITECTURAL TESTIMONIES: STRAY CATS AND GRIFFON VULTURES
Simoni Stergioula (Independent Researcher)

This paper is concerned with Justice – disarticulated and liberated from a conservative juridical structure and its binding to the articulation of law – defined intersubjectively and attuned to the complex relational entanglements of human and more-than-human entities. Grounded in the geography of Cyprus, this paper acts as a testimony of two cases, one regards the disappearances of a population of stray Cats from an urban neighborhood in central Nicosia and the other documents the extinction of the Griffon Vulture in the wilderness of the island. Both cases negotiate a series of (legally framed) distinctions – domestic/stray, protected/unprotected, non-endangered/endangered, rural/urban – which compose the lifeworlds, afterlives, material-

discursive narratives, and evidence the (more-than-human) entities in question within the political, juridical, and affective landscape of Cyprus.

I arrive to (Transformative) Justice through abolitionist theory and practice, in particular the work of Sophie Chao et.al (*The Question of Multispecies Justice* 2022), Allegra M. McLeod (*Envisioning Abolition Democracy* 2019), Ruth Wilson Gilmore (*Abolition Geography*), and Mia Mingus (*Transformative Justice*). The notion of Justice articulated here responds to violence through "accountability, healing, trust, connection, safety" without proliferating harm and asks "who are the subjects of justice in our shared worlds?" (*The fictions and futures of TJ, Sophie Chao et.al 2*). Taking my cue from Joseph Pugliese (*Biopolitics of the More-than-human 2020*) I attend to more-than-human entities, stray Cats and the Griffon Vulture, implicated in invisibilized operations of violence.

Drawing from a number of anecdotes and by practicing *multispecies arts of noticing* I track the contours of Justice as practiced by solitary individuals, and groups of volunteers that seek to work towards the preservation of these entities whose presence differs in legal valence. I ask what mode of Justice is formed when *staying with* the structural intimacies in the ecology of Cyprus and in alignment with the entities that inhabit them?

Simoni Stergioula (they/them) graduated from the rMA in Cultural Analysis at the UvA (2022) and from the MA in Critical Studies at Sandberg Instituut (2022). Their work focuses on anarchitectural tactics, testimonials, and DIY practices of navigating through minor restrictive infrastructures drawing from transgender studies, transformative justice, abolition theory and practice.

WIT(H)NESSING AND WORLDING
Callum Bradley (Goldsmiths, University of London)

I would like to discuss a framework developed for my PhD, which takes up a critical understanding of two central terms in tandem: 'worlding' and 'wit(h)nessing'. The latter stems from Bracha Ettinger's theories, as a kind of witnessing-with that works without phallocentric structures of split and castration. I turn to senses of worlding shared between Donna Haraway and Marisol de la Cadena, emphasising plural and partial connections constitutive of many worlds that resist anthropocentrism. I question how power-differentiated hierarchies can be refuted by reworking the relationship between witnesses and worlds. Distinctions of the figure/ground, in/visibility, and im/materiality, as these scaffold a separation of selves, sexes, and species, might be broken down. Wit(h)nessing and worlding stand for an ethics of entanglement without opposition, and for a relationality beyond phallo- and anthropo-centric regimes. Concepts like Ettinger's wit(h)nessing-without-events and de la Cadena's anthropo-not-seen direct a different way of working with the

felt presence of an absence that is shared. I adopt wit(h)nessing and worlding as a methodology, fielded through further forms of 'SF' – for Haraway, string-figuring, and for Ettinger, also, self-fragilizing. I map this conceptual crossroads onto an analysis of abstract spiritual-scientific art and writing by women in modernity, as these figures might offer something to contemporary ecological concern. In this presentation, the weaving together of wit(h)nessing and worlding will be extended by turning to examples in visual and written works, which transgress traditional dualisms and test the limits of absence-presence by way of speculative and spiritual practices, mediating unknown witnesses and hidden worlds. I look to figures including Margaret Cavendish, Hilma af Klint, Jacquetta Hawkes, and Barbara Hepworth.

Callum Bradley is a Phd researcher in the Visual Cultures Department at Goldsmiths, University of London. My work threads together psychoanalytic and aesthetic theories in response to environmental crises, with an emphasis on the speculative and abstract work of women artists and writers through history. My work has been published with 'Antennae: The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture' (forthcoming July 2023), the 'Journal of Queer Studies in Media and Popular Culture' (April 2023), 'The International Journal of Human-Computer Studies' (2021), and presented at the 'Earth(ly) Matters Conference' (Sheffield University, 2020).

WITNESSING AFTER THE HUMAN: POST-HOLOCAUST LANDSCAPES OF RUINATION AND REGENERATION
Angelica Fenner (University of Toronto)

Across contemporary Germany there remain multiple locations where the operations of industrial war machinery, conscripted labour, and of mass death associated with the Holocaust have been memorialized, herein constructing museal exhibits from the original built structures erected during World War II. Such sites stand as evidence of past atrocities and an admonition to visitors to not permit such devolutions occur again. Yet these legacies, far from simply being contained by architectural structures, were and still remain enfolded in broader, often socially isolated natural settings today comprising fields and forests.

This paper revisits the recent education documentary, Herr Bachmann und seine Klasse (dir. Maria Speth, 2021), which traces classroom dynamics at the Georg-Büchner Grundschule located in Stadtallendorf, a small city in Hessen that until the close of WWII was associated with a secret munitions factory run with the help of conscripted labour. Shot in the observational mode, the documentary's extensive classroom footage is interleaved with long takes resulting from the camera's prolonged gaze upon ruins from the former munitions site and surrounding landscape. In a technique reminiscent of Claude Lanzmann's epic Shoah (1985), completed nearly 40 years

earlier, cinematographer Reinhold Vorschneider implements the camera as a means to palpate the contemporaneity of past and present within these natural settings in the absence of the human agents that otherwise populate both films. In both films, natural spaces shimmer with arborescent vitality even while haunted by the viewers' knowledge of the egregious suffering that once transpired nearby and to which historical eyewitnesses and historians also testify in alternating segments of footage.

I draw upon theorists of new materialism to think through the notion of witnessing after the human---a concept that questions the anthropocentric valorization of the human witness over the material traces that also remain following human modes of ecological ruin, resource extraction, and genocide. Witnessing after the human also refers to the camera's capacity to enable modes of perception that bring these landscapes into focus in excess of what the naked human eye regards as negative space and inanimate matter. Further at stake is a mode of witnessing understood as relational, taking place not only between filmmaker and human subjects but also between camera and natural environments in a broader actor network.

A materialist frame pushes us to comes to terms with the Holocaust as extension of the 'anthropological machine' (Agamben), one demarcating not only the distinction between bare life and sovereign, between the human and the less-than-human, but indeed, also between the nonhuman amid the human. Vorschneider, like Lanzmann before him, implements nonhuman witnessing as a mirror complement to human witnessing so as to confront the viewer with the realization that crimes against humanity are also a sacrilege to the nature that we are.

Angelica Fenner is cross-appointed Associate Professor in the Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures and in the Cinema Studies Institute. Her research interests encompass women's film authorship in German and European cinema, diaspora and migration, feminist and queer theory, affect and material culture, environmental humanities, and documentary media. In support of her researches, she has secured past and present grants from the Connaught Fund, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the DAAD, the Camargo Foundation, and the Waterloo Centre for German Studies. She is author of Race under Reconstruction in German Cinema (University of Toronto Press, 2011), co-editor of the volumes Fascism and Neo-fascism: Critical Writings on the Radical Right (2004) and The Autobiographical Turn in Germanophone Documentary and Experimental Film (2014), and guest co-editor for special issues of the journals Transit (2014), Camera Obscura (2018) and Feminist German Studies (2022). She is currently working collaboratively on the SSHRC-funded research project, Rethinking Feminist Film History: The Ulm School, 1962-68.

FILM SCREENING Land Rifts – Extraction and Sedimentation

18:00 – 20:00
Framer Framed (Oranje-Vrijstaatkade 71, 1093 KS Amsterdam)
(Registration required through Framer Framed's website)

Film screenings and discussion about ecosystems and coloniality, in collaboration with Framer Framed. Filmmakers Marwa Arsanios and Ana Bravo Pérez will be in conversation with Eszter Szakács after the screening.

Land Rifts: Extraction and Sedimentation presents two researched-based film works by artists and filmmakers Ana Bravo Pérez and Marwa Arsanios. The event invites a conversation about the relationship between ecosystems and coloniality, in particular regarding the practices of land ownership, extraction, as well as strategies for a more communal relationality with land. In *Mother Earth's Inner Organs* (2022), Ana Bravo Pérez follows the trail of resource extraction to the Netherlands from the Wayú territory in the North of Colombia, from the Earth's surfaces to its depths, to offer a reflection on the destructive relationality of extractivist practices. Marwa Arsanios, leaping forward from a similarly destructive trail in *Who is Afraid of Ideology?* Part 4: *Reverse Shot* (2022), stages a discussion and an experiment carried out by herself and her collaborators about land usership over land ownership in the North of Lebanon, to sediment the idea and the communal practice of a sustaining relationality with the land as a common, which is able to exist even within contemporary realities.

MOTHER EARTH'S INNER ORGANS
Ana Bravo Pérez

22 mins | 16mm, 4k | 2022 Spanish | Wayuunaiki | English | Dutch

This film is a journey from Amsterdam to Wayú territory in the North of Colombia following the smoke, the rotten smell of burning Mma–meaning Mother Earth in Wayuunaiki. Bravo Pérez weaves a narrative that goes from the surface of Mma to its depths. From the experience of the Wayú people and the filmmaker's reflection on extractivist practices to plastic experimentations that create a lucid dream, an eye opener to how extractivism of coal affects life.

Born in the city of Pasto in Abya Yala, **Ana Bravo Pérez**'s work draws on migration, memory, and violence. She uses her own migratory and diasporic experiences as a starting point for her artistic projects investigating suppressed narratives and collective histories. Her experiences have been crucial for building an artistic practice in which personal, decolonial and geopolitical questions merge. An important theme in her work is how to deal with violence visually without representing it, so it can heal colonial wounds instead. Bravo Pérez works with materials such as coal, celluloid, and gold to investigate colonial legacies and continued exploitation in the present-day. Ana Bravo Pérez's studies, publications, and work in film and the visual arts, have taken her from the University of Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, to Caracas, Venezuela; and from the International Film School in San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba, to the National University of the Arts in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She holds a Masters degree in Film from The Netherlands Film Academy.

WHO IS AFRAID OF IDEOLOGY? PART 4: REVERSE SHOT
Marwa Arsanios

35 mins | digital video | 2022 Arabic | English

The film Who is Afraid of Ideology? Part 4: Reverse Shot departs from a collaborative project that is attempting to shift the status of a private land in the North of Lebanon to a common or a social waqf. The aim would be to advance the right of usership over ownership. The land would only be used by people who do not own a land for agricultural purposes. The film follows this process and adds to it a reflection on the way land as a living object inherently resists property. Matter and land become a witness to a certain history of non-ownership. The interconnectedness of the geological, the historical, the legal and the agricultural brings forward a kind of ecology of thought which purpose is communalization and rehabilitation.

Marwa Arsanios (1978) is an artist, filmmaker and researcher whose work can take the form of installation, performance and moving image. She reconsiders the political development of the second half of the twentieth century from a contemporary perspective, focusing on gender relations, collectivism, urbanism and industrialization. Her research work includes many disciplines and is deployed in numerous collaborative projects. Several solo exhibitions have been dedicated to her work and her work, most recently at Heidelberger Kunstverein (2023); Mosaïc Rooms, London (2022); Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati (2021). She has also been featured in numerous group exhibitions including documenta fifteen (2022), Kassel, 5th Mardin Bienali (2022); Kunsthalle Münster (2021). Her films have been screened recently at Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival (2019, 2023); FID Marseille (2019, 2022); Cinéma du Réel, Paris (2021); Rotterdam Film Festival (2021). She is a co-founder of the 98weeks Research Project. She currently lives and works in Berlin.

Thursday June 29

UNIVERSITY THEATER (Nieuwe Doelenstraat 16, 1012 CP Amsterdam)

**Panel 7: CINEMATIC ECO-CRITICISM
09:15 – 10:45 UT 3.01
Moderator: Bogna Bochi ska (University of Amsterdam)**

REMEDIATION OF LANDSCAPE THROUGH THE HAPTIC FILM MEDIUM
Wang-Yun Yen (University of Amsterdam)

The analogue film commission and research project Underground Mines has given birth to Malena Szlam's Altiplano (2018) and Daïchi Saïto's earthearthearth (2020), two experimental shorts that heavily process the material shot in the Andean mountains. Imprinted on photochemical film, the mountainous areas unfold as rapid sequences that allow to break down the ecosystem in visible parts or to sense the movement of light particles almost frame by frame. Built upon the properties of the medium, artisanal filmmaking defies conventional modes of representation within the contemporary visual culture brimming with pictures that represent the environments. The intersection of landscape and film merits further examination especially in a time when the perception of nature remains inseparable from the economy of image circulation. Against this background, I ask how experimental films can be studied through the relationship between human vision and non-human agencies. To this end, this study examines the medium specificity of film in Altiplano and earthearthearth along with discussions on landscape theory. My hypothesis is that the two works in question treat film as touchable technical image to remediate the experience of landscape. With haptic visuality and its remediating function, I situate Altiplano and earthearthearth amid the ongoing fascination of landscape in experimental cinema. In addition, I shall consider to what extent images created by analogue filmmaking help elaborate the perceptual process of film in line with ecological thinking.

Wang-Yun Yen is a PhD candidate in Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam. Before he studied film history and aesthetics at the Université Lumière Lyon 2. His current research focuses on the

relationship between archival studies and the reuse of moving images in experimental filmmaking and transmedial artistic practices.

WHY DO WE NEED INTER/CROSS-SPECIES BECOMINGS IN ART AND SCIENCE? A CASE STUDY ON THREE MOVIES
İbrahim Okan Akkın (Utrecht University)

This study discusses the need for and impacts of a disciplinary paradigm shift and investigates the possibility of such a change in science and cinema by meditation on three movies: *Being Caribou* (Allison & Heuer, 2005), *Au Hazard Balthazar* (Bresson, 1966), and *EO* (Skolimowski, 2022). All practices of the old paradigm, including industry, politics, science, religion, art, and humanities, are strategic-minded, transcendentalist, binary, anti-pluralist, and dogmatic in perspective. With the acceleration of impacts of some of these anthropocentric practices following the industrial revolution, the world had to confront a significant threat of extinction. Ecologically speaking, human-centred relations to the world have resulted in the transition to the Anthropocene, in which several planetary boundaries have been passed over. Simultaneously, the revolutionary turn regarding many disciplines has proven that the world is a complex system, i.e., a body without transcendent organisation. In complex bodies, internal organs' claim to priority (or internal organisations with specific goals) cannot be legitimised, as these systems are not closed on themselves. For instance, the alleged human kingdom and the rest of the universe are interdependent; the same is true for the animal kingdom, plant kingdom, peat kingdom, etc. In other words, there is no independent species kingdom on Earth. This novel 'relational' conceptualisation of the universe as an immanent and complex body of forces aligns with the Deleuzoguattarian series of becomings, including becoming-animal and becoming molecular as explained in their *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980). Accordingly, in this study, I investigate three movies and evaluate to what extent they embody those types of becomings. Respectively, the documentary *Being Caribou* is read as an attempt to 'becoming-animal of science,' and Balthazar as that of the cinema. Finally, it is argued that *EO* arrives with more possibilities, such as becoming water, becoming-wind turbine, and becoming-robot of the cine-eye.

İ. Okan Akkın is a Guest Researcher at the Gender Studies of the Institute for Cultural Inquiry (ICON) at Utrecht University (UU). Their research is externally funded by TUBITAK 2219 International Postdoctoral Fellowship Program and supervised by Associated Prof. Kathrin Thiele. Akkın's project at UU focuses on the Deleuzean reception of Spinozistic immanence and its impact on post-secular metaphysics. Their Doctoral Dissertation (Middle East Technical University, 2017) concentrates on becoming-animal of contemporary performance art.

CINEMA DELL'ANIMA: A POETHIC NOOTECHNIQUE AGAINST FUTURALGIA
Sara Gelao (University of Amsterdam)

In an era of hyper-semiotisation (Berardi 2023) and environmental erosion, reconstructing both epistemic and aesthetic modalities of interhuman and more-than-human interconnectedness must be taken up as an urgent object of research, and perhaps most importantly, of belief. Gilles Deleuze (1989, 171-172), in one of his seminal books on cinema, states that "the link between man and the world is broken. Henceforth, this link must become an object of belief: [...] the cinema must film, not the world, but belief in this world, our only link". In considering the art of film as a possible antidote to the rupture of *our link* and to what I here propose to call *futuralgia* – that is, the undoing of our capacity to imagine the future due to socio-technical mutations – an emergent wave identified as *cinema dell'anima* [cinema of the soul] thus appears as a viable practice of restoration. In this light, cinema dell'anima constitutes a new form of filmmaking able to re-instill within the viewer "a belief in the world" by way of a "substantial spiritual dimension" (Gimémez Cavallo 2021).

This paper aims to conceptualise cinema dell'anima as a new sensible filmic enframing, but above all an enacting, of our imaginary relations with humans and more-than-human forms of life in times of a crisis of imagination and relationality. Particularly, the Italian cinematic movement extends the viewer's thinking of the human as the coupling of human, animal, landscape and technological elements on a more horizontal plane. To interpret this multilayered film-philosophical phenomenon, and its socio-cultural underlying inquiries, three films will be investigated: *Futura* (2021), *Four Roads* (2020) and *Alberi* (2013). To conclude, this presentation intends to unveil how the film art practice here at stake can be considered as an "ethico-aesthetic" mode of cognition (Guattari 2014); as a *poethic nootechnique* to (re)visualise humanity's relationship with its surrounding environment by striving towards "new dispositions of sensibility" expressed in "the image experience" (Lovink 2022).

Sara Gelao is a Research Master's Student in Media and Film Studies at the University of Amsterdam. While she has a background in Literature, Music and Performing Arts at the University of Rome "La Sapienza" and UCL, her current research interests include new waves at the intersection of eco-cinema, slow cinema and the essay film; the critique of the techno-social implications of neoliberal capitalism in relation to affect and emotions; imagination and futurity. She is also a film reviewer and a first ranked winner of the 'Alberto Farassino National Prize for Film Criticism' in Italy (2019).

OF SAND AND STONE: THICK TIME AND TRANSCORPOREALITY IN NOMADLAND

Gert Jan Harkema (University of Amsterdam)

This paper seeks to unpack the temporal multilayeredness in Nomadland (Chloé Zhao, 2020) from an ecocinematic perspective by focusing on the "thickening" of time that characterizes the film's Anthropocene poetics (Farrier 2019). Chloé Zhao's meditative road movie was a critical success with audiences while it was accolated with honors including Academy Awards for best picture, best director, and best actress (Frances McDormand for her role as Fern). Film critics were early to recognize the film's critique of late capitalism while scholarly debates have focused more on the representation of precarity and gender (Dymussaga Miraviori 2022), American landscapes and nationalism (Lindemann 2022), and neoliberal dystopias (Grønstadt 2022). The current study complements that discussion by looking at the multiple temporal dimensions that cinematic landscapes enable (Lefebvre 2011). This is marked, as Timothy Ingold states, by a perceptual engagement with the (cinematic) environment that is not merely in the here and now, but one that allows for an experience of the landscape that is "present with the past" (2000, 189).

As I argue in this paper, Nomadland's narrative and landscape iconography is marked by a layeredness of different temporalities. I interpret these references to deep time and cyclical time in terms of what David Farrier calls an Anthropocene poetics of "thick time" (2009). The deep time of the geological landscape joins with the cyclical dimensions of the seasons and of consumerism. This endless cyclicality wears out, albeit in different dimensions, both humans, objects, and the environment. In these aesthetics of relationality the human is situated in an intimate openness with nature. This corresponds to Stacy Alaimo's concept of trans-corporeality as the constitutive openness that "all creatures, as embodied beings, are intermeshed with the dynamic, material world, chich crosses through them, [and] transforms them" (2018, 435). Drawing on this conception of relational aesthetics as trans-corporeality, I conclude that the film as an ecocinematic text challenges conventional film language that often presents the human body as separable from and in dialectical relation to nature (Jazairy 2009).

Gert Jan Harkema is lecturer in film studies at the Department of Media Studies at University of Amsterdam. His research focuses on relational aesthetics of precarity in Dutch documentary film, and on the intersection of aesthetics, philosophy, and film history. His research appeared in Synoptique, Journal for Media History, Early Popular Visual Culture, and elsewhere. After a PhD on aesthetic experiences in early film, his current research focuses on aesthetics of precarity and nature.

Panel 8: RETHINKING RELATIONALITY
09:15 – 10:45 UT Theater
Moderator: Alvaro Lopez (Utrecht University)

BEYOND RELATIONALITY: RESONANCE, SOCIAL CONDITIONS, AND MODES OF RELATION
Mateo Sanchez Petrement (University of Amsterdam)

This presentation starts from the premise that, especially in our late modern context of networked global capitalism, the stand-alone concept of "relationality" is insufficiently critical and thus must be deepened by reference to specific modes of relationality. Concretely, it explores the critical potential of Harmut Rosa's (2019) concept of "resonance" in relation to the history and current "renaissance" of popular interest and research about psychedelic drugs. Nowhere is the uncritical appropriation of discourses of "connection" and relationality more apparent than in this history, which has witnessed how these famously boundary-blurring substances have gone from supporting the transgressive collective politics of the American counterculture of the 1960s to becoming reduced to the individualist "cyberdelic" dreams of silicon valley surveillance capitalism (Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Turner, 2006; Tvorun-Dunn, 2022; Zuboff, 2019). As prime benefactors and agents of the "neoliberal" period, this history testifies to the compatibility between hopeful – even utopian - discourses of "interconnectedness" and the reterritorialization of individualist, gendered, and racial segmentations.

In this context, "resonance" offers a more nuanced analysis of relationality that relates particular lived experiences of connection to their social and material conditions of possibility, thus enabling a "political activation of relationality" (Escobar, 2018) in response to our late modern and "Anthropocene" times. Taken from the phenomenological tradition, resonance refers to a particular mode of experience in which self and world are in mutually constitutive contact such that each "speaks with its own voice" and "adaptively transforms" the other (thus respecting both otherness and non-essentialism). Transported into the realm of sociology, resonance is both a descriptive and a normative category which, crucially, refers to a form of experience that defines "the good life" and takes place within particular social, institutional and cultural formations which determine the prominence, frequency, stability, depth or even absence of particular experiences and regular axes (spheres such as family, work, religion...) of resonance. From this point of view, resonance stands as a category of social critique that underscores the incompatibility between the specific dynamics of capitalist modernity - social acceleration based on an instrumental (or "mute") relationship to the world – and experiences of resonance. In other words, resonance offers a concept of relationality critical of modernity that cannot as easily be appropriated by the latter's contemporary "tech" culture. This will be illustrated by the contrast between psychedelic

experiences of "connection" and the "muted" relationship to the world of depression (Petrement, 2023) – a characteristic pathology of our time that psychedelics are being used to treat.

Mateo Sanchez Petrement is a Phd Candidate at the University of Amsterdam, where his research focuses on the history of psychedelic drugs and their social, psychological, and ecological potentials from the perspective of posthumanism (including its feminist and environmental forms), critical phenomenology, and critiques of neoliberalism and (late) modernity. He is interested in the category of "experience" as it relates to its socio-historical and material conditions and as a source of affirmative inspiration for personal reflection and social transformation.

TRANS*, HRT AND HALTED REPRODUCTIVE TIME: PROSPECTIVE LOSS AND THE FIGURE OF 'NO CHILD'
Ier Vermeulen (Utrecht University)

Anti-trans media and political discourses are gaining more visibility, in the U.S., and elsewhere. In the Netherlands, increasing moral-panics emerge among enraged parents as a response to the so-called 'gender-ideology' which purportedly is indoctrinating their kids. Questions about access to and effects of Hormone Replace Therapy for trans* peopl seem more relevant than ever, especially when considering how HRT might disturb the image, or rather, lineage of 'the Human' by affecting the trans* bodies' reproductive systems. Queer Theory has described how queers pose a 'threat' to Western society's discourses on (heterosexual) reproduction and the 'future' of the nation-state. What remains underexamined is how trans* bodies and their materializations through HRT (as not-so-human entity) affect narratives on imagining futurity.

In turning to HRT beyond that which might cause desired visible physical changes (a material-discursive *gain*), but also as that which alters one's reproduction system, losing the ability to be fertile (a material-discursive *loss*), this paper raises ethico-political questions that arise when theorizing on 'reproductive futurity', specifically through Lee Edelman's figure of 'the Child'.

This auto-ethnographic and theoretical project extends notions of '(prospective) loss', 'anticipatory grief', 'futurity', and 'guilt' onto different kinship and temporal structures. It argues that if the figure of 'the Child' connotes reproductive futurity, what appears, through the use of HRT, is a disruption – an unbecoming or foreclosure of the possibility of a futurity/reproduction as figured through the image of the 'No Child'. Furthermore, this project examines how such a disruption affects more than just the relationship between the trans* subject and the 'No Child'. Instead, it displaces the logic of 'loss' onto a dual relationality: the figure of the 'No Child' comes to function as a symbol of both a loss of and a loss for, not just a loss of/for 'the Child', but also of/for the parent/caretaker.

Ier Vermeulen is a Trans* Studies scholar working in the Graduate Gender Program at Utrecht University. Their research interests are informed by critical theory, new-materialism, trans and queer studies, and Radical Black Feminist scholarship. They occupy themselves with onto-epistemic interventions into trans*embodiment and non-binary subjectivities.

WHEN VULNERABILITY TURNS INTO POWERLESSNESS: JUDITH BUTLER ON RELATIONALITY RECONSIDERED
Ruben Hordijk (Linköping University)

What notion of relationality undergirds Judith Butler's work on vulnerability and non-violence? Butler displaces the sovereign individual as the locus of politics and argues for an ethico-political horizon that emphasizes human vulnerability and interdependence (Butler 2006, 2019). Butler nevertheless highlights the moral ambivalence of this interdependency, building on the psychoanalytic work of Sigmund Freud and Melanie Klein. However, by using Freud and Klein as the basis of a human and social ontology, Butler repeats rather than deconstructs what Sylvia Wynter calls the "bio-centric genre of Man" (Wynter 2003): Butler's commitment to psychoanalysis relies on a developmental maturation-model of bio-centric Man, where hostile infantile animality (Klein's insistence on aggression and hatred in the state of the infant's powerlessness) has to be transcended to arrive at ethical sociality. From a sociogenic perspective, this developmental model of the individual is a racialized figure implying a "racialized time" where humanity and civility emerges out of anti/pre-social Animal-Savagery (Al-Saji 2021; McClintock 1995; Lugones 2010; Jackson 2020). This psychoanalytic conception of relationality based on civilizational developmentalism offers little for an alternative ethico-political horizon. To broach such a horizon requires a reworked notion of relationality and vulnerability that breaks with bio-centric Man (Wynter 2015). Psychoanalytic theory posits the infant's 'helplessness/powerlessness' as primary condition that an anxiety-ridden development into adulthood must seek to come to terms with. This "powerlessness" may well have to do more with "sociogenic" factors (Fanon 1952; Wynter 1999) of hierarchical and disciplinary child-rearing that produce a state of powerlessness, rather than denoting a universal human condition. Whereas Butler does not separate vulnerability from powerlessness, a reworking of *vulnerability* as a (more-than-human) existential condition, would offer a (non-anthropocentric) ethico-political horizon of relationality based on a 'response-enabling' potentia instead of 'response-debilitating' *potestas* (Braidotti 2011) and a feminist ethics of responsivity/response-ability (Oliver 2000, Al-Saji 2014, Haraway 2016).

Ruben Hordijk is a PhD researcher in Gender Studies at Linköping University working on the intersections of various (decolonial, posthuman and continental) strands of feminist philosophy. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts from Utrecht University, a Master's degree in

Continental Philosophy from University of Warwick, and a Teacher's Degree from Catholic University Leuven. Combining Frantz Fanon's and Sylvia Wynter's "sociogenic" approach with Friedrich Nietzsche's and Judith Butler's "genealogical" approach, his research focuses on theories of childhood, subjectivation, transgenerational haunting, and a feminist ethics of unlearning and response-ability.

Keynote Patricia MacCormack
11:00 – 12:30 UT Theater

DEATH ACTIVISM AND ANIMAL ABOLITIONIST DIRECT ACTION - *Keynote lecture by Patricia MacCormack (ARU Cambridge)*
Respondent: Patricia Pisters (University of Amsterdam)

The anthropocentric war against aging, disease and death has left billions of unnecessary 'sacrificial' nonhuman victims in its wake, just as the profit of animal exploitation and consumption has become a new god of 'wellness', 'health' or nutrition. Activism as love does not know its fate. We ride the turbulent clinamen of need, we adapt science used for exploitation into that of ecological nurturing, we place ourselves as or in front of the victim to ward off the spectre of the gods rising again. Critically *we disprove through activism as love the perceived fated inevitability and 'necessity' of nonhuman animal exploitation and death*. The dialectic structure which underpins anthropocentric animal exploitation insinuates 'this is their fate as animals'. *Foedera Naturae* transforms the dialectic to chaos, their to our, and fate to love. Death is the only inevitable, Thanatos the god of nonviolent death, a minor deity, a quiet ending not to be defeated as death is a simple part of nature. Lament remains an integral part of activism. It is often the initial catalyst for the conversion from war to love in relations with nonhuman animals. How can the creative act of lament as activism jam capitalism, how can love jam capital desiring machines and end the end of the world?

Patricia MacCormack is Professor of Continental Philosophy at Anglia Ruskin University Cambridge. She has published extensively on philosophy, feminism, queer and monster theory, animal abolitionist activism, ethics, art, occultism, and horror cinema. She is the author of Cinesexuality (Routledge 2008) and Posthuman Ethics (Routledge 2012) and the editor of The Animal Catalyst (Bloomsbury 2014), Deleuze and the Animal (EUP 2017), Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Cinema (Continuum 2008) and Ecosophical Aesthetics (Bloomsbury 2018). Her newest book is The Ahuman Manifesto: Activisms for the End of the Anthropocene. She is currently a Leverhulme Fellow researching and developing Death Activism.

Patricia Pisters is professor of film at the Department of Media Studies of the University of Amsterdam. She is one of the founding editors of the Open Access journal Necsus: *European Journal of Media Studies*. Publications include *The Matrix of Visual Culture: Working with Deleuze in Film Theory* (Stanford University Press, 2003); and *The Neuro-Image: A Deleuzian Film-Philosophy of Digital Screen Culture* (Stanford University Press, 2012). Her book *New Blood in Contemporary Cinema: Women Directors and the Poetics of Horror* has appeared with Edinburgh University Press in 2020. As film-philosopher, she writes about the role of film and media in respect to (collective) consciousness, psychedelics and elemental approaches to media. See for articles, her blog, audio-visual material and other information also www.patriciapisters.com .

Panel 9: THINKING WITH PLANTS
13:45 – 15:15 UT 3.01
Moderator: Jeff Diamanti (University of Amsterdam)

ENCOUNTERING WHITE SAGE: MORE-THAN-HUMAN PERSPECTIVES ON TRANSLOCAL RELATIONALITY AND CULTURAL APPROPRIATION
Emily Schneider (University of Amsterdam)

The evergreen perennial shrub white sage (*Salvia apiana*) is an interesting and complex object to explore inter-species and trans-local relationality through the entanglements of ecology, economy, and culture. The plant only grows in the Chaparral region located in southern California and northern Mexico, where it is of high significance to the Native American Chumash people, who use it for medicinal and ritual purposes (Paldam 476-7). In recent decades, it has gained increasing popularity outside these communities, especially among practitioners of different streams of New Age and Neo-Pagan spirituality. This has led to the unsustainable harvesting and commodification of the plant, as well as to criticism and allegations of cultural appropriation. Hence, an analysis of the plant's relationship to the Chaparral region and to the Chumash people on the one hand, and to a global market economy where exploitation and consumption are taken into consideration on the other hand, will illustrate the ambivalence of contemporary perspectives around the use of the plant by people from different backgrounds.

In this presentation, I suggest that looking at the type of local and global relations derived from the encounters of people and plants, specifically with white sage, can enrich our understanding of the meaning of 'trans-local' entanglements (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 374 ff.) and 'cultural appropriation' (Räikkä and Puumala 81; Siems 408). In my analysis, I take bioregional knowledge (Wiebe 139 ff.), the agency of non-animal life forms (Latour; Ryan; Tsing), and the concept of reciprocity (Wall Kimmerer) into account. Hence, the encounters with the plant reveal an intricate

net of different aspects of ambivalent relationality between regions, cultures, and economies, and can give us valuable insights into how to foster sustainable relationality on different levels.

Emily Schneider is a second-year Research Master's student of Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam. She has a Master's degree in European Studies, where she focused on the representation of migration in political art and media, and a Bachelor's degree in Arts and Culture Studies. Her current research interests include relationality in a trans-local world, material culture, representation, agency, and reciprocity.

CAN THE FOREST SPEAK? CRAFTING HUMAN-FOREST RELATIONS AND PERSONHOOD POLITICS
Shivant Jhagroe (Leiden University)

Despite ongoing pollution and deforestation, human-centric and economy-focussed environmental policies often reproduce ecological degradation and injustices (Skillington, 2020). The global rights of nature movement proposes a paradigm shift in which ecosystems like forests and mountains should gain legal recognition (as 'persons', cf. Youatt, 2017). However, little is known about how more-than-human 'personhood' is actually imagined, pre-configured and crafted, outside the legal domain (Putzer et al., 2022). Furthermore, rights of nature studies tend to focus on Global South territories, as it often relates to Indigenous ontologies (e.g. 'sacred rivers') and struggles in e.g. Ecuador and New Zealand.

This contribution explores how forest personhood is imagined and configured in the case of the Dutch 'Self-Owning Forest' (SOF) initiative. The paper first conceptualises personhood politics as a set of practices that radically imagine, enact and negotiate more-than-human agencies and relations. As such, it expresses a radical re-distribution of the aesthetic and the sensible (Durham & Gaonkar, 2019) and counter hegemonic personhood assemblages (e.g. 'humans', 'companies', cf. Fox & Alldred, 2020). The paper then examines the SOF's first experimental self-owning forest site: Zonheuvel in the national park the Utrechtse Heuvelrug (since 2022). This forest area is about 5 hectares and the idea is to "give the forest back to itself" within 10 years through legal personhood. Drawing on interviews and online sources to explore the personhood politics of the Zonheuvel forest area in terms of how it has been/is: (1) onto-politically imagined as an ecosystem that deserves 'self-ownership' despite (or in spite of) complex human-forest relations; (2) socio-materially enacted through institutional and state category making, as well as situated environmental stewardship practices; and (3) negotiated vis-à-vis hegemonic personhood via discursive framing and stakeholder interactions. The paper finally reflects on forest personhood-making and ontological eco-politics through liberal-modernist rights discourse in the Global North.

Shivant Jhagroe is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Public Administration (Leiden University, the Netherlands). His current research focusses on human/non-human relations in politics and policy, mainly in the fields of ecology and (digital) technology. He is particularly interested in shifting socio-material regimes and practices, and related questions of governing, knowledge, power and inequality. With his research, he seeks to develop policy-relevant perspectives towards more sustainable, democratic and just futures.

OLIVE TREES AS ROOTED RESISTANCE COMPANIONS IN PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE: A POSTHUMAN PERSPECTIVE ON MAHMOUD DARWISH'S ABSENT PRESENCE
Julide Sezer (Utrecht University)

Olive trees remain in Palestine but are in motion. They have been a significant part of Palestinian agriculture, cultural, and political identity, but their existence in Palestinian resistance has often been metaphorized. This paper revisits Palestine's national poet Mahmoud Darwish's (2010) *Absent Presence* from a posthuman perspective to demonstrate the agency of olive trees as a metonym of life and resistance in the Palestinian struggle for freedom. The paper first explores the materiality of olive trees in Palestine and points out the ongoing settler-colonial praxis that has resulted in a colonial wound (Anzaldua 1987; Mignolo 2012; Ferdinand 2019) in Palestinian collective memory. Second, the paper highlights the relational ontology between Palestinians and olive trees, which has emerged into the resistance concept of *sumud* (Rijke and van Taeffelen 2013; Sazzad 2016), inspired by the olive trees' steadfastness. Thus, the paper expands Donna Haraway's planetary companionship (Haraway 2017) to rooted resistance companionship between olive trees and Palestinians and positions olive trees as actants rather than silent witnesses (Bardenstein 1998). Third, the article destabilizes Darwish's male-human centrality in his literary journey by accentuating the relational ontology between Darwish and his rooted resistance companions, olive trees. The paper contextualizes Darwish's writing as a journey of memory, collective subjectivity, temporal and spatial embodying decolonial praxis. By adopting a zoecentric (Braidotti 2011) posthuman perspective, the paper emphasizes the communal aspect encompassing human interlocutors and more-than-human worlds subjected to colonial violence. This paper contributes to the growing field of posthumanism by highlighting the agency of non-human entities and their subversive power (potentia) by focusing on olive trees as actants in Palestine in the face of ongoing Zionist settler colonial violence.

Julide Sezer studies Gender Studies RMA at Utrecht University. Her research interests encompass decolonization, antiracism, posthumanism, new materialism, and critical Anthropocentrism. Currently, she works at Atgender to organize the upcoming "European Feminist Research Conference: Feminist Pedagogy of/ Beyond Borders." She co-coordinates the strand "Expanding

borders beyond the Human body: critics of Anthropocentrism, ecocide, climate migration and possibilities of transnational and transspecies kinship."

SOUTH-SOUTH-SOUTH MORE-THAN-HUMAN ENCOUNTERS IN BRAZILIAN CARBON CREDIT FORESTS

Joaquim Pereira de Almeida Neto (University of São Paulo) & aniara rodado (Independent Reseacher)

In this paper, we present some more-than-human practices of co-creation and collaboration in which we are involved and investigate how different forms of relationality are produced around these practices. For this, we give (1) a brief historical review of some more-than-human collaborations in contemporary artistic experiments and (2) an ethnographic example from our research/creation. We have been engaged since 2021 in a transdisciplinary and transspecies collaboration proposed together with eucalyptus, a kind of south-south-south more-than-human collaboration. The encounter that we enact is born amidst the contradictions of climate justice and involves subjects historically subordinated and subjected to different levels of violence, expropriation and denial. The geographical origin of this encounter is the Brazilian carbon credit forests, but its tentacles can extend over the paper we use to write, over the wood that shapes the chairs we sit on or even over the wood that is burned in the global north. It is an encounter that is neither innocent nor romanticized; after all, many of the more-than-human encounters that take place in the global south are filled with both violence and affection/care. Eucalyptus, for example, puts us in front of so many stories of land expropriation, deforestation of native ecosystems, "green deserts", as well as of therapeutic encounters, traditional medicine and affinities between local communities and trees. As we are interested in transspecies and transdisciplinary exchanges, as well as in ecological urgent problems, the questions that will guide our reflection are: What are the specificities of the forms or relationality that emerge from a south-south-south more-than-human encounter? What are the ethical-political issues that permeate it? What does it mean to experience, create and think, in a northern country, about what happens in the carbon credit plantations in the south? How to recreate the continuity of life beyond these fragmentations?

Joaquim Almeida Neto (Brazil) is a PhD candidate in Social Anthropology at the University of São Paulo. I am developing an ethnography, within the field of anthropology of art, on the more-than-human encounters that have emerged in Latin American contemporary art. My focus is on the renewed use that some artists have made of plants, removing them from the condition of material or medium and conceiving them as working partners and as co-creators of the artistic form. I have experience with the ethnographic method and an interest in decolonial studies and in the forms of creative description about the more-than-humans.

Aniara rodado (Colombia): Choreographer, artist and researcher, aniara explores witchcraft and interspecific relationships with the plant world from a transfeminist perspective. As a choreographer, her practice seeks to go beyond dance and beyond the human body. It questions the fetishization of all things techno-scientific in the context of the ecological crisis, including the tendency to standardize life at all scales, affecting bodies, their alliances and the very possibility of knowledge. Her performances, installations, texts, videos, dance pieces, and drawings are all created under open source with a preference for old or low-tech forms and domestique DIY bricolage. Aniara is PhD practice based in arts & sciences studies, Ecole Polytechnique in Paris.

Eucalyptus globulus (Australia →→→ Brazil and more 93 countries): I am one of the most planted vegetal species in the world. Product of colonialism, I was raised from an endemic species in Australia to the condition of a commodity cultivated in more than 95 countries. I am closely intertwined with the production of firewood for heating, pulp for paper, substances for pharmaceutical research and, more recently, carbon credit forestry ventures. My voracious appetite for water and my powerful ability to adapt to adverse soils make me occupy a complex place in climate justice discussions; even so, my planting in the countries of the south, in plantation systens, allows the countries of the north to continue burning oil and coal.

WORKSHOP: WALKSHOP
13:45 – 15:00 UT Theater

WALKING-WITH SPECULATIVE ARTEFACTS
Kamila Wolszczak

The proposal explores walking as a research practice in the urban public space of Amsterdam. I propose a collective drift between the vision and the reality of life lost as broken artefacts* in the city, from a general look at the body of the city to discovering its details and dirt from the cracks. Aiming to look through an imaginary magnifying glass held by a participant who regulates the zoom for their curiosity. For saving those moments of investigation we use clay as a transmitter of communication between found matter and humans. This walkshop is a method to help understand public space as overlapping layers of the many spatial dimensions – with a particular focus on the materiality (physical space) and the imaginary (symbolic space) – that act as social tools for new possibilities of a common future. This drift asks for the creative potentiality of an ex-centric public space and for the power to "co-create communication" with other-than-humans.

* Artefacts are broken elements of artificial items made/given shape by humans, left in public space.

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Kamila Wolszczak is a Netherlands-based Polish visual artist, educator, and researcher. She works with materials that are socially perceived as dirt. She creates installations, text-based performances, and walkshops exploring the relations between urban spaces, artefacts, and human traces. She enjoys collaborative projects and co-creation, blending fact with speculation. Kamila studied for a BA in Painting and MA in Art Education in Poland, and for an MA Performing Public Space in the Netherlands.

Panel 10: RELATIONS OF TENSION WITHIN ELEMENTAL MEDIA ONTOLOGIES
15:30 – 17:00 UT 3.01
Moderator: Carolyn Birdsall (University of Amsterdam)

Reconceptualising the media as vessels and environment which beholds possibilities for existence and meanings (Peters, 2020), the emergent field of elemental media studies foregrounds the fundamental *intrinsicality* of the material conditions-the natural and geological renderings-in the morphing process of cilvilizations and culture (Horn, 2018). In so doing, it argues for a recalibration of theoretical operationalization from the pure discursive and representative plane to the material-semiotic complex of naturecultures and medianatures (Haraway, 2003; Parikka, 2015). Such a shift of methodological concern destabilizes the traditional framings of both the "environment" and the "media" (Starosielski) and nurtures rich vocabularies and avenues for iterations over relational ontologies that overcome the subject-object dichotomy and discrepancy. The process of "envelopment" as posited by P.McCormack (2018) rejects the clear-cut distinctions between the subject/object and the atmospheric environment by examining the *extrusive* shaping of entities in the milieu and the disclosing of atmospheric palpabilities through the different bodies, materials and devices. The elemental-not as essence or foundation but-in its composing agency is in this regard decisively relational. Nevertheless, in a similar vein as the false unification and untroubled connectedness promised by a relational vocabulary, the field of elemental media studies still needs to sufficiently address and grapple with conditions of deviance (Jue, 2016) and recognize sites of political traction (Starosielski, 2019).

For this panel session, we would like to take up such calls by offering our identifications of pertinent instances of relational tension for discussion and provoke thoughts around the following topics by engaging with the theoretical, empirical and artistic possibilities of articulation.

CARBON AS ELEMENTAL MEDIA: THE ONTOLOGICAL STATUS OF UNSTABLE ENTITIES
Zhou Fang (University of Amsterdam)

Despite explicit revelations only in its configuring modes as hydrocarbon and carbon dioxide, the relevance of the chemical element Carbon extends far beyond current climate concern. Orienting media-ecological inquiries around a capricious and ubiquitous entity as such-the single most pervasive component of all life forms on Earth-holds promises for opening up intriguing vistas over forms of more-than-human relationalities, engendering productive appendages to debates in hitherto new object ontologies (new materialists, speculative materialists, speculative realists, and object-oriented ontologies) and hinges at potential pathways to reassess critical accounts on substances, identities and modalities.

Conceptual framing of the Carbon as elemental media further resonates with Starosielski's (2019) emphasis on the elemental as processual, constitutive and interactive rather than as "bounded and discrete building blocks". Furthermore, this research project also distinguishes itself from Morton's (2013) propositions of "hyper object" in light of the multifarious embodiments and expressions of materiality of the element under examination.

Zhou Fang, currently pursuing the Research Master's in Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam, has been widely involved in the development process of research and artistic projects granted by Mondriaan Fonds, Fonds Podium Kunsten NL, Amsterdam Fonds voor de kunst, Centre for Urban Studies, UvA, Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, among others. She has also received fundings for her own research initiatives in sociology and anthropology from the Ministry of Education, PRC, among others and held solo concerts at Arti et Amicitiae, under the occasion of Sino-Dutch 50th Anniversary, etc.

TRACING FLUID HISTORIES: REIMAGINING WATER'S RELATIONAL ONTOLOGY THROUGH THE LENS OF AMSTERDAM'S PUBLIC BATH HOUSES
Stefan Glowacki (University of Amsterdam)

This research presentation delves into the rich history of public bath houses in Amsterdam, unraveling their significance as sites of more-than-human relationality. Drawing on archival records, architectural analyses, and socio-cultural studies, this investigation examines how the bath houses' spatial and social dynamics provide a unique vantage point to reconsider the figurations of water and its relational ontology.

By exploring the shifting municipal policies, architectural designs of Amsterdam's bath houses

and the rhetorics behind their development, the study foregrounds water as an element of social mediation and differentiation, entangled in a complex web of cultural practices, ecological, and material relationships. In doing so, the research decenters and repositions intrasocial relations within an augmented field of more-than-human relationality without losing sight of their poignant political dimensions, unveiling the multifaceted ways in which water infrastructures mediates human and non-human entanglements and highlights social inequalities around accesses of resources.

Stefan Glowacki is a researcher in the fields of media art and media theory. He holds a BFA (2018) from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In the past, he has worked with Video Data Bank in Chicago and LIMA in Amsterdam, where he investigated preservation and distribution of media art, as well as distributed and collaborative approaches to knowledge production. He has participated in art residencies and exhibitions in Europe and the United States and lectured on computer-generated images at Poznan University of Arts. Currently, he's pursuing a Research Master's in Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam.

BETWEEN FLEEING MATERIALITIES AND SURRENDERED FORMS
Sophie Stiller (Independent Researcher)
Mathis Guerreiro

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari drew on the instance of wood-as well as insights from Husserl and Simondon-to illustrate the deficits of the *hylomorphic* model. Such a model comes at the cost of rendering redundant conceptions such as the *haecceities* carried by the energetic materiality in movement and the *variable intensive affects* due to its dichotomization between the matter and the form. On this basis, the metal was further theorized as a "body without organs," a concept which further challenges traditional understandings of materiality. This artistic research attempts to elicit new sensibilities and expand visual vocabularies around the non-western elements wood and metal along the line of such epistemological critique. Moreover, paralleling the experiential dimension, its semantics seeks to foreground the insufficiency of discourses organized around interdependence and reciprocity in the prevalent conceptions around more-than-human relationalities and ethics (Papadopoulos, 2021).

Sophie Stiller is a visual artist based in Amsterdam with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Gerrit Rietveld Academy. She has held her solo exhibition "All over the world hearts beat like a storm at night as we sleep" at the Galleria Fons Welters, "What do I know about psychoses and life?" at Art Rotterdam, "Crazy furniture" at WGKunst and is the curator of the group show "Pigeon on the border" in Nürnberg, among others.

Panel 11: EPISTEMIC DIMENSIONS
15:30 – 17:00 UT Theater
Moderator: Jan Overwijk (Utrecht University)

DECOLONIAL RATIONALITY AS CREATING RELATIONALITY
Friso Timmenga (University of Groningen)

This paper argues that decolonizing philosophy requires a new understanding of rationality that is both relational and creative. It has been argued that coloniality is in essence the negation of relationality (Serequeberhan 2015, p. 92). In terms of time, for example, the modern/colonial narrative insists on a sharp historical discontinuity with the Middle Ages (Mignolo 2007, p. 472). In epistemological sense, it demands a sharp separation from the knower and the known (Kirloskar-Steinbach and Kalmanson 2021, p. 36). It has therefore been argued that Western ontology is exclusively capable of thinking isolated entities, rather than relations, (Mignolo and Walsh 2018, p. 148).

At the same time, decolonizing knowledge does not mean de-rationalizing knowledge. As Wiredu points out, this would only play into the racist trope that rationality is something uniquely European (1980, p. 40-43). Despite the fact, then, that inspiration for relational knowing can be found abundantly in the mystic tradition (Yountae 2017), this paper calls attention to the fact that rational knowledge is capable of thinking relationally on its own. This, however, requires a different understanding of the concept of rationality (Mbembe 2015).

In order to provide a first sketch in this direction, it is necessary to identify the creative affirmation of relationality as an essential component of human reason. Rather than Hegelian speculative reason, this concept of reason builds upon Badiou's notion of fidelity as the continuous reaffirmation of a creative act (Badiou 2003). Rational thinking then becomes the faithful commitment to the existence of a relation, that is simultaneously created through that commitment. Rather than encapsulating philosophical differences in a global Western scheme, decolonial rationality should instead facilitate the intercultural exchange of thoughts by continuously repeating its commitment to creativity.

Friso Timmenga is a PhD Candidate at Campus Fryslân, University of Groningen. He obtained his MA in philosophy at Leiden University in 2021 and his LLM at the Erasmus University Rotterdam in 2022. His research concerns the exploration of philosophical ways of knowing that are capable of facilitating critical exchange of ideas between intellectual traditions and translating this to educational praxis. Methodological developments in continental philosophy (e.g. hermeneutics,

phenomenology, critical theory, deconstruction) are particularly useful, as well as African discourses on rationality.

ASSEMBLING THE BRAIN: DISSEMINATED AND CONFUSED COGNITION AT THE THRESHOLD OF ECOLOGICAL RELATIONALITY

Presenting author: Alberto Micali (John Cabot University)
Non-presenting author: Nicolo Pasqualini (Liceo Artistico Paul Klee-Barabino)

The perspective of philosophical posthumanism and the recent new materialist strands allow a rethinking of cognitive processes beyond the locationist standpoint. Locationism, indeed, acknowledges cognition as being singularly localised: now in neurons, now in the brain, now in the body of an organism that holds such a logo-centred, individuated and autonomous rationalism. Rather, the proposal of an assemblage-brain, and more broadly of an assembled-cognition, leads towards a rethinking of cognitive processes. Cognition becomes an extended and spread conjunction of processes, which can be barely located, whilst being open on an intensive and relational plane. To what extent is, however, possible to presume such an ecologisation of cognition? What is the threshold of such a process, in regards to relationality itself, and to the alterities that are not necessarily endowed with a nervous system, or – further – non-biological ones?

In this paper we advance the proposal to reconsider the embodied mind as being disseminated and confused, by overviewing some of the latest conceptualisations that offer an understanding of cognition as assembled in relations. Our proposal discusses mind processes as incessant and intensive exchanges amongst materialities. From a recursive, closed and neuro-centred event – a local property that is confined in an organ-organism, or concentrically prolonged from it – cognition extends as such beyond embodiment and the dualism that separates embodiness from a presupposed external, assembling alterities, and emerging as a necessarily-ecological and plural process that overcomes the individual,and surpasses life as biologically individuated.

Alberto Micali, Ph. D, is Lecturer in Communications and Media Studies at John Cabot University, Rome (Italy). His research transversally moves between media theory, cultural studies and political philosophy with a key interest in the 'ecosophical' work of Félix Guattari, hacker cultures, and the politics of digital dissent. He collaborates with the 'Centre for Entangled Media Research' at the University of Lincoln, UK; with the 'Posthuman Studies research group' at John Cabot University; and on the experimental research project 'For a Science of Multiplicities'. His recent publications appeared in journals such as Internet Histories. Digital Technology, Culture and Society, the Journal of Posthuman Studies, Media and Communication, and Critical Studies.

Nicolo Pasqualini, MA, teaches at Liceo Artistico Paul Klee-Barabino (Genoa), and is member of the Centro Studi Filosofia Postumanista. His research centres on palaeoanthropology, anthropogenesis and human non-human relations – in particular the relationships between psychotropy and epistemology. He obtained his Master in Cultural Anthropology at Universita Ca'Foscari (Venice). His work recently appeared in Animal studies. Rivista Italiana di Antispecismo, Scenari, and the Journal of Posthuman Studies.

RELATIONAL STUBBORNNESS: EXPLORING AN ETHIC OF EPISTEMIC SELF-DEFENSE
Monica C. Poole (Bunker Hill Community College)

The turn toward relationality in the humanities has incorporated a turn toward relationality in epistemology. Instead of idealizing a "view from nowhere"— a mythical "nowhere" that reflects a hegemonic point of view — standpoint and intersubjectivity are emphasized: "all knowledge is situated knowledge" (Moya). Thinking with metaphors of tapestries, constellations, and kaleidoscopes, contemporary work in epistemology often starts from the foundation that knowledge is - or should be - networked, interdependent, and fundamentally relational.

Recently, C. Thi Nguyen advocated for the virtue of epistemic humility. He advanced the view that self-trust must be relational: as artists, philosophers, or other creators in aesthetic, moral, and/or intellectual fields of inquiry, our basis for self-trust is our trust in others – specifically, our peers in the field. Unfortunately, this only works if our peers are trustworthy. Epistemic relations are vexed with interpersonal wrongdoing, rhizomatic harm, and destructive potential. Kristie Dotson, Donna Haraway, Veronica Ivy, Miranda Fricker, Kate Abramson, and many other philosophers have analyzed phenomena of epistemic violence such as credibility discounting, silencing, hermeneutical injustice, and gaslighting. Their own fields are not exempt: indeed, authors frequently deploy examples from their interactions in academia. Navigating hostile relational terrain requires epistemic virtues with a sharper edge – virtues consonant with an epistemology of resistance (Medina).

Could stubbornness also be an epistemic and relational virtue? When and how do you have an ethical obligation – not only permission, but obligation – to trust yourself, to affirm your perceptions, and/or to defend the validity, veracity, and confidentiality of your knowledge? How might we differentiate various epistemic-ethical roles and responsibilities included under this umbrella: when it comes to our own knowledge, are we custodians, champions, protectors, advocates, smugglers?

In this paper, I explore how an ethic of epistemic self-defense, self-trust, and relational stubbornness might assist in building more sustainable relational epistemologies. I discuss

themes including will, resistance, self-definition, and confidentiality, and I grapple with risks such as solipsism, toxic individualism, and false self-sufficiency. Along with epistemology, I draw on work from affect theory, theology, and other related fields – notably, Sara Ahmed on willfulness, Édouard Glissant on opacity, Keguro Macharia on friction, and Shreé Daniels on womanist relational hermeneutics.

Monica Poole teaches philosophy, religious studies, and cybersecurity ethics at Bunker Hill Community College in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. Their recent publications include "Credibility: Resisting Doubts, Reimagining Knowledge," in Philosophy for Girls (Oxford University Press, 2020) and "What Happens Afterward: Jesus' Crucifixion and Community Responses to Survivors of Sexual Violence" in When Did We See You Naked: The Crucifixion and Sexual Abuse (SCM Press, 2021). She has facilitated praxis sessions integrating teaching and research at the Cultural Studies Association (2019, Tulane University) and the Artful Inquiry Research Symposium (2018, McGill University). Their work integrates theory, pedagogy, and contemplative practice to queerly inquire into canonical problems of knowledge and power.

ASCA Drinks
17:30 – 19:30

BG2, Ground Floor, Meeting Room with Terrace (Turfdraagsterpad 15-17, 1012 Xt Amsterdam)

Friday June 30

UNIVERSITY THEATER (Nieuwe Doelenstraat 16, 1012 CP Amsterdam)

Panel 12: AFFIRMATIVE AESTHETICS: ENVISIONING FORMS AND PRACTICES OF RELATIONALITY
09:15 – 10:45 UT 1.01A
Moderator: Monika Halkort (University of Applied Arts, Vienna)

AFFIRMATIVE AESTHETICS: ENVISIONING FORMS AND PRACTICES OF RELATIONALITY

The proposed workshop "Affirmative Aesthetics: Envisioning Forms and Practices of Relationality" is conceived by the intra-actions of researchers inspired by aesthetic practices of connections. Through an exploration of the relationality existing between our research projects, our aim is to learn how to unlearn together (Tlostanova and Mignolo 2012), disclosing ways of exploring our pre-conditioned frame of mind alongside relationality. This means going beyond traditional aesthetics based on the suppression of the "geo-historical" conditions of the colonized places (Tlostanova 2018). We propose, therefore, a transversal approach – a Guattarian process of relational thinking which embraces an interconnectedness between the three ecologies of politics, nature, and the human (Guattari 2000 [1989]). In fact, drawing from our experiences and practices, we wish to explore how art forms might carve paths of relationality in a world wounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, wars, human right violations, extractivism, and destruction of nature.

Our respective projects share an interest in aesthetic practices that challenge representationalism. Specifically, our inquiries will entail the exploration of how certain contemporary experimental films deal with entangled social and ecological traumas (Máté); artistic approaches that inspire oceanic ways of thinking from the context of climate crisis and the extractivism in the ocean (Dave); the landscape of the desiccated sea as a relational assemblage of multiple temporalities (Bespalova); and, finally, paths of caring as modes of reanimating and reinvigorating life through animistic ethico-aesthetic

practices (Biolchini). To do so, we will suggest four aesthetic ways of transforming the relationship between human and non-human – eco-trauma cinema, oceanic thinking, landscape of disaster, animistic ethico-aesthetics. The purpose of these four distinct propositions is to go beyond the pathological way of living in a wounded and traumatised environment. However, they do not intend to give a resolution; but rather to create alternative and affirmative potentialities within the current conditions.

Finally, we believe that through artistic framings, bodily movements and objects or archives of memories, by peaceful dialogical cross-overs and sensorial experiences, we may be building a patchwork of sensibilities.

Monika Halkort currently lectures on questions of sustainability, migration and political ecology at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, Austria. From 2013 to 2020 she was Assistant Professor of Digital Media and Social Communication at the Lebanese American University (LAU) in Beirut Lebanon. Her research focuses on the political and moral ecology of digital infrastructures and raw materials, emphasizing in particular the entanglement of techno-scientific instrument platforms with colonial knowledge regimes. Her work appeared in peer reviewed academic journals such as the International Journal for Communication, the Canadian Journal of Communication, and Tecnoscienza as well as edited books, including Mapping Crisis: Participation, Datafication and Humanitarianism in the Age of Digital Mapping, edited by Doug Specht (University of London Press, 2020) and Oceans Rising, edited by Daniela Zyman and Markus Reyman (Sternberg Press, 2021).

'CUTTING TOGETHER APART': THINKING ECO-TRAUMA THROUGH RELATIONALITY
Bori Máté (University of Applied Arts Vienna)

Zona Abissal (Darks Miranda 2020), a Brazilian found footage film follows a hybrid entity made of fruits, flesh, and latex that arises in a forest exploited for its rubber. This peculiar being who is struggling to survive along with other non/human agents amidst the destruction of the world as we know it was called into being by the excessive extraction of raw materials in Brazil and in the Amazon in general. Focusing on the ways in which this example of "eco cinema" (Scott MacDonald) deals with the traumatic aspects of ecological issues, I would also like to think with the notion of eco-trauma. As most approaches to ecological trauma continue to build on psychoanalysis and trauma theories developed within the field of the humanities but still deeply rooted in (mostly) Freudian psychoanalysis, in this presentation, I intend to diverge from these paths. My hope is that through acts of re-learning our relations and connectedness may emerge an (or many) alternative conception(s) of eco-trauma. My attempt at re-learning entails the revision of how one from an essentially Eurocentric worldview thinks about identity, agentialism, temporality,

and representation. Exploring an all-pervasive relationality rather than focusing on separation (a fundamental element of modern Enlightenment rationalism), I build on new materialist and decolonizing perspectives and think with Karen Barad's agential realism, as well as Indigenous metaphysics. By pointing towards entanglements and an all-encompassing interconnectedness of beings, I will argue for an eco-trauma cinema that captures the traumatic connectedness of humans and nonhumans.

Bori Máté is a doctoral student in the Department of Media theory, at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. Her current research focuses on contemporary experimental/documentaries that address the questions of ecological trauma and employs new materialist, phenomenological and eco-philosophical approaches, as well as, decolonial thinking. She is currently guest editing the special issue called "(Eco)Traumatic Landscapes in Contemporary Audiovisual Culture" at the Czech Journal for Film Theory, History, and Aesthetics, Iluminace. As an experimental filmmaker, her works have been screened at festivals like the Berlin Critics' Week, the International Film Festival Rotterdam, and the Jihlava IDFF.

REANIMATING RELATIONALITY AND CARE: APICHATPONG'S ANIMISTIC ETHICO-AESTHETICS
Erica Biolchini (University of Amsterdam)

The artistic oeuvre of Apichatpong, from his feature films to video installations and photo exhibitions, revolves around the director's practice of aesthetically restoring the connectedness between the human and the more-than-human; a relationality of entangled forms of life that has been exhausted consequently to historical, political, and ecological traumatic events. In Memoria (2021), such traumatic memories of Colombia's past have been absorbed by the soil, the rocks, and the trees which release them in the forms of vibrations and stories sensed by the characters Jessica (Tilda Swinton) and the old Hernán (Elkin Díaz). The natural environment in Memoria becomes, therefore, a thinking, feeling, and living one: an animistic Earth whose soul has been profoundly traumatised and wounded. Apichatpong's filming practice composes a cinematic aesthetics which, in this presentation, I will propose as an 'animistic ethico-aesthetics' for reanimating a caring relationality among human and more-than-human forms of life. Such a cinematic ethico-aesthetics moves across and beyond the screen: it involves the spectator in a relation of mutual inclusion with the cinematic/animistic images (Massumi 2014: 65). On the level of spectatorship, therefore, the ethico-aesthetics in the animistic state urges to contemplate transversally and transecologically about the entwined relationality between the human and the natural environment (Guattari 2006 [1992] and 2000 [1989]). More specifically, the animistic ethico-aesthetics expands the spectator's consciousness while revealing a (re)connection to the symbiotic

relationality with the more-than-human. In the presentation, departing from a close textual analysis of the formal aesthetics of Apichatpong's Memoria - and how it creates an animistic ethico-aesthetics, the study considers films as actual seeds for change and transformation. It assigns the cinematic medium the potential to make us ethically (and politically) reanimate relationality and care towards the Earth and its non-human inhabitants; concepts and, more importantly, practices for relational thinking, living, and caring which need to go beyond the dualistic and anthropocentric forms of thinking, living, and caring.

Erica Biolchini is a lecturer in Media Studies (with specialisation in Film Studies) at the University of Amsterdam. She has recently graduated from the Research Master's Media Studies of The University of Amsterdam with a thesis titled 'The Exhausted Cinema: Towards an Aesthetics of Destructive Plasticity'. Her research interests range from Film-philosophy, Film aesthetics, and Neuro-philosophy, as well as New Materialism, Media Ecologies, and Eco-critical Media. Currently, she is working on a research project which focuses on the interconnectedness between psychedelic research, media aesthetics, and artistic practices of healing and caring as well as reanimating the relationality between humans and the more-than-human. Erica's works appear in Deleuze and Guattari Studies Journal and Journal of the Society of Armenian Studies.

ASSEMBLING LANDSCAPE: MORE-THAN-HUMAN STORIES OF THE DESICCATED SEA
Kseniia Bespalova (Independent Researcher)

The representations of environmental disasters, such as the emblematic image of the dried Aral Sea, point toward the colonial past and connect the exploitation of humans with the exploitation of land. Departing from the idea that "landscape is entangled with stories that shape it" (Tsing et al 2017), the presentation will focus on the figure of the environmental disaster as represented in the film Aral, Fishing in the Invisible Sea (Saodat Ismailova and Carlos Casas, 2004). The film investigates the consequences of the Aral Sea disappearing due to the failed Soviet irrigation project by following the lives of the three generations of Uzbek fishermen whose economic survival is under threat. Drawing on Éduard Glissant's (2010) idea of hybridity and relation, I will conceptualize the landscape of the desiccated sea as a relational assemblage of multiple temporalities, stories, myths, human and non-human beings. Among them are the failed myths of socialist science and modernization that before, provided the ground for the alternative (to the liberal) model of modernity based on the more radical idea of human progress and linear temporality (Tlostanova and Mignolo 2012). After the fall of the empire, they return in the form of the haunting environmental disasters – they become the ghosts of the previously future-oriented empire (Derrida 2006). Therefore, the figure of the disaster introduces a more complex temporality into the spatial arrangement of the landscape that is invaded by multiple pasts and imagined

futures. In the presentation, I will demonstrate how Ismailova and Casas' film proposes to work through the imperial and colonial past by stressing the liminality, the in-between temporal status, of its ghosts presented as disasters.

Kseniia Bespalova is an independent film researcher and a "Programmer of the Future" at Eye Filmmuseum, Amsterdam. Her interests include decolonial cinema from former-Soviet states, environmental cinema, and the notions of land, border, and cosmopolitanism. Currently, she is working on a programming and research project that ties together the cinematic representation of landscapes, resource extraction, and colonialism. Kseniia holds an rMA degree in Media Studies from the University of Amsterdam.

OCEAN IN US: RELATIONS & RIGHTS
Mekhala Dave (University of Applied Arts Vienna)

As an ocean advocate, situated within my legal practice and PhD thesis framework, I am inspired and moved by thoughts which translate into action for oceanic ways of thinking from moments of co-creations in the context of extractivism and destruction of our ocean. Global politics are entangled and are deeply rooted in colonial ties of the past but also in the present from neocolonial motivations. By examining dialogical framings by pursuing artistic language and approaches in site-specific context to investigate emerging relations, what could that mean from the local to the global to inspire hope and care? Claire Bishop and Grant Kester, scholars in art theory, iterate the prospect of 'social turn' in art history for post-studio art as an expanded field that is participatory and collaborative. In departing from their scholarship, the interconnected grid of our world is not limited to human interactions but encompasses non-human relations in the challenging times of climate crisis. I am guided by indigenous perspectives and knowledge that offer origins of our blue planet from the deep sea through water columns onto the water surface and by aligning with their voices through their powerful storytelling techniques, I will seek points of connections with other researchers and the audience to explore patterns of emerging relations in the workshop.

Mekhala Dave is a lawyer & art academic based in Vienna. She is the ocean law and policy analyst/legal researcher at the TBA21–Academy and a doctoral researcher at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. In her past and current work of legal practice and packaged in the fabric of her Ph.D. research, she feels for a social turn in artistic practices to investigate 'encounters' located across knowledge spheres and global south communities in the interfaces of activism and in shaping ocean policy. From her lived experiences across borders, she draws inspiration and spiritual guidance from water to the questions of historicity and the search for emerging 'new' relations of identity and belonging.

Panel 13: AGAINST AND BEYOND THE ANTHROPOCENE
09:15 – 10:45 UT Theater
Moderator: Jetske Brouwer (University of Amsterdam)

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN JANE BENNETT AND JOHN DEWEY: AN INQUIRY INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF A VITAL MATERIALIST UNDERSTANDING OF PUBLIC
İrem Güven (Leiden University)

In her book Vibrant Matter, Jane Bennet establishes a 'flattened' ontology to explain what a public is, refuting to attribute its origin to the human will: Instead, humans belong to a public, or rather, 'political ecologies'. Following John Dewey, who argues that focusing on the phase of human action "to which direct causative power is attributed" (The Public and Its Problems) amounts to creating a mythology, she argues that the public is shaped by a shared experience of harm, or a problem that calls for a solution. Using a flat and relational ontology, Bennett aims at defining the social from an ecological point of view, and the individuals (or "things") in their relationality to other individuals (human or non-human).

Dewey's text problematizes rational human agency extensively, pointing at what he sees as the affinity between animals' "herds, packs, and swarms" and human society. He argues the attraction of coming together might even be found in the inanimate world that is normally the domain of chemistry and physics. So it doesn't come as a surprise that Bennett, aiming at developing her political theory based on a flat ontology by stressing the situatedness of humans within their environment, refers to Dewey.

In this paper, I would like to problematize Bennett's reading of Dewey in a vital materialist framework with a flat ontology. Does the critique of liberal, rational individualism in Dewey really amount to a parallelism between the two? Is Bennett's conception of a relational and flat ontology and her ensuing conception of the public in line with Dewey's pragmatic understanding of responding public?

İrem Güven: I am a Ph.D. student at Leiden University, Continental Philosophy program, writing my dissertation on the connection between anthropocentrism and the global climate crisis, under the supervision of Prof. Susanna Lindberg and Dr. Frank Chouraqui. I am also carrying out a joint Ph.D. with Pardubice University (Czech Republic), Center for Ethics. My research interests include early modern philosophy, continental political philosophy, contemporary French philosophy, new materialism, and ecological thought.

WHO SPEAKS FOR THE PLANETARY? TOWARDS AN AESTHETICS OF PLANETARY WELL-BEING

Lijuan Klassen (Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich)

Since its first mention in the *Lancet* medical journal in 2014, "planetary health" has become a prominent concept for those seeking to integrate the concerns of the well-being of human life with other organisms and eco-systems. In contrast to other key concepts that conceptualise the present as a crisis caused by human influence, such as "climate change" or the "Anthropocene", the discourse of planetary health seems to promote a more affirmative, solution-oriented, if not hopeful, outlook focused on the theme of interconnectedness.

This interconnectivity is often visually illustrated by spherical networks of linked-up nodes; the planet as a scaled-down green and blue marble held in the caring hands of a human. What emerges here is the trope of the planet as a globe, a graspable, computable whole which can be programmed (Gabrys 2016), seeming to possess a single planetary logic with one voice. But who—following Gayatri Spivak's famous provocation—speaks for the planetary? Furthermore, the meaning of "health" is not self-evident, but must be scrutinised in light of contemporary eco- and bio- political regimes which regulate the passage between "sickness" and "health", "contaminated" and "pure" nature.

In this paper, I aim to analyse contemporary visualisations of "planetary health" in regards to how such representations render (in)visible complex and contested environmental, social and political problems operating at multiple temporal and spatial scales. I will draw from the notions of "planetarity" (Spivak 1999, 2003, 2015), "planetary consciousness" (Mbembe 2019) and "cosmopolitics" (Stengers 2010) in order to move from an understanding of the planetary as a computable whole and the "human" as its universal agent, to a differential, situated conception of planetary well-being. I seek to demonstrate how an overly affirming and hopeful planetary health messaging omits the ambiguous practices at the core of planetary health.

Lijuan Klassen holds a doctoral research position at the Rachel Carson Centre for Environment and Society, at LMU in Munich. Her dissertation focuses on the subject of Planetary Health from an environmental humanities perspective. Before working in the Dutch cultural field and until recently at Gropius Bau, Berlin, she graduated from the research master in Cultural Analysis, at the University of Amsterdam, where she explored the ecological entanglements and histories of "camouflage".

I HEAR YOU BY THE ANIMAL SOUL STATUE

Dr. I-Yi Hsieh (National Taiwan Yangming-Chiaotung University)

While many in environmental humanities have attempted to reconfigure ethics within a web of life beyond the human (Haraway 2008, van Dooren 2014 & 2019, Rose 2011, Tsing 2015, Hathaway 2022), where even the duality of the animated vs non-animated is challenged by life forms hardly categorizable as either plant or animal—such as fungi and slid molds, a conceptual void exists in this scholarship where colonial relationality lingers. The lack of discussion on coloniality is felt particularly acute in contrast to scholarship in necropolitics, which mobilizes animality in its negative racial-political valences in the dialectic of humanity (Mbembe 2019). In the scholarship on porcine life (Blanchette 2020, Specht 2019), coloniality also remains undertheorized. This paper brings to the fore coloniality in thinking through the modern's configuration of animality as "a life" (Deleuze 2001), as a sensorial event against a backdrop of colonial history.

Addressing the material form of animal soul statues attached to municipal slaughterhouses in Taiwan, first established in the Japanese colonial era (1895-1945), I discuss the sensorial engagement of hearing-heard as many attribute the establishment of such statues to stories of the cries of hogs being heard around the slaughterhouses. How does the invisibility of killing compounded with the hearing of slaughtering speak to actively recognizing the life of the animal? The materialization of animal soul suggests a respone-ability to the animal life as "a life," pointing to animal sentience as sensorial relationality involving the sensorial capacities, and their limitations, in the environment mediating parties of sensing. The ability of hearing, too often associated with passivity, presents an action of attending to the given environment and the lives and deaths around. It further responds to the contemporary conception of animal sentience in the scientific literature obsessing with investigating pain felt by animals in industrial animal farming.

I-Yi Hsieh is a Researcher at the International Center for Cultural Studies, National Taiwan Yangming-Chiaotung University. Having received her PhD in East Asian Studies from New York University (2016), she researches on East Asian arts and visual culture, multispecies anthropology, theories of Nature-Culture, Anthropocene art, and urban anthropology. She has published in Asian Anthropology, positions: asia critique, Asian Theatre Journal, International Journal for Asian Studies, and Taiwan Journal of Anthropology. Her book manuscript, tentatively entitled Flora and Fauna: Private Collecting and Domestic Nature in Reform Era Beijing, is in contract with Palgrave Macmillan. The book explores the ways in which ordinary Beijing residents engage with heritage aesthetics of domestic nature by cultivating insects, fishes, plants and birds at home. It addresses how domestic nature allows personal sentiments toward politics and histories - opinions otherwise tightly censored by the authoritarian regime - to be insinuated through.

Panel 14: (DE)COLONIAL AESTHETICS
11:00 – 12:30 UT 1.01A
Moderator: Floris Paalman (University of Amsterdam)

UNSETTLING THE AFFECTIVE AFTERLIVES OF US RURALITY: INDIGENOUS COMEDY AND SETTLER FORMS OF SPATIALIZED RELATIONALITY IN RESERVATION DOGS
Tjalling Valdés Olmos (University of Amsterdam)

In this paper I am interested in questioning the affective dimensions and functions of settler colonial genres of spatialized relationality, in particular those pertaining to US rurality. I approach the US rural as an aesthetically mediated, imagined, material, and emotional geography of spatialized belonging, that are relationally structured according to colonial onto-epistemological inheritances of sequestration, exclusion, proprietary settlement, and extraction. Considering US rurality as a settler genre (or form) of spatialized relationality, I ask how contemporary and popular Indigenous American imaginaries assert a different relational engagement with (non-urbanized) space (and those that inhabit it) in non-proprietary terms? I ponder this question specifically through the genre of the sitcom and the aesthetics of comedy. My close reading of the Indigenous-produced and informed sitcom *Reservation Dogs* stresses what can happen to both the affective economies of US rurality and the concept of rurality itself when settler sensibilities of relationality—and anxieties around losing those genres of relationality—are, comedically, disregarded in favor of sensuous understandings of space that, while taking into account the determinate ways in which the afterlives of settler colonialism persist, affirm Indigenous and more-than-human presence and anticipate Indigenous-informed coalitional futures of spatialized belonging. The scenes of Reservation Dogs in which animals, ghosts, and supernatural-like figures appear can be read as differentially and unequally, but always productively, unsettling for both the series' human characters and its audiences. In fact, the series revels in that unsettling feeling, withholding a sense of absolute comprehension, clear legibility, and settled comfort. Instead, it attunes both settler and Indigenous characters and audiences alike to an unsettled feeling of relationality: a sensuous responsibility towards the many shared, frictional, differentially accessed, and unfinished genres of being through which space is always already made sense of.

Tjalling Valdés Olmos is a lecturer in the department of Literary & Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam. They recently obtained a PhD at the Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis (ASCA), titled "Genres of Rurality: Unsettling Affect in Popular Imaginations of the Globalized US Rural." They work across transnational and interdisciplinary fields of decolonial and queer studies, and their research is generally concerned with the relations between genre and affect as well as the cultural analysis of settler colonialism, capitalism, sexuality, race,

contemporary popular culture, and non-urbanized geographies. Their latest publication appears in the edited volume *Planetary Hinterlands: Extraction, Abandonment, and Care* (Palgrave 2023).

VIDEO-ESSAY ABOUTAROUNDABOUT
Nicolle Bussien & Giorgia Piffaretti (Independent Researchers)

The starting point of our video installation *ABOUTAROUNDABOUT* is a fountain sculpture by the artists Rodenhäuser and Holstein titled *VITA* (meaning "life" in Italian), which was built in 2019 on a roundabout in Mendrisio (Ticino, Switzerland).
VITA, together with other sculptures, is part of an initiative of the city of Mendrisio that intended to embellish a series of roundabouts recently built to reduce commuter traffic (between Switzerland and Italy). The sculpture caught our attention as from our perspective it unequivocally evokes racist and patriarchal connotations. Rodenhäuser and Holstein had a different intention while conceptualising the idea of *VITA*. For them, the sculpture stands as a metaphor for life, indicating the transmission of knowledge from older to younger generations.

Since 2019, the sculpture has been briefly discussed in local newspapers. After a few citizens expressed their criticism about it, the municipality of Mendrisio took a stance saying "there are as many interpretations as the number of observers". In 2022, without any public discussion, the small black hands have been painted gold-bronze. The sculpture itself and the way its presence has been handled created the starting point for our research-project. At the moment we are getting in touch with different people (the artists, local politicians, the neighborhood) and we are collecting information about the way the sculpture is perceived. We are in this way researching the social and political background that allowed such a work to be realised in a public space.

Spacing between the involvement of the local population and contributions by social-anthropologists, artists, art historians and other specialists, we would like to create a space for dialogue and generation of new images. Through the development of an essayistic video installation, we want to intertwine different perspectives and interpretations.

Nicolle Bussien (she/her) is a visual artist based in Zurich. In 2015, she graduated from the university of arts in Bern and since then she has been working as a multidisciplinary artist. Nicolle explores society's power structures and their representation. Her work has been shown internationally, for example at ZKM (Karlsruhe), The Kitchen (New York), G10 (Darmstadt) and in various spaces in Switzerland, such as Stadtgalerie (Bern), Haus Konstruktiv (Zurich), and Kunstmuseum Solothurn. In 2020, Nicolle accepted the Frauenkunstpreis (Women's Art Prize) Bern and in 2022 a work grant from the Canton of Zurich.

Giorgia Piffaretti (she/her) is a visual artist based in Amsterdam, where she graduated with a Master of Film in the program *Artistic Research in and Through Cinema*. Her work has a particular focus on personal archival praxis, starting from the observation of everyday elements. These elements (objects, pictures, notes, moving images, etc.) unfold into multiple narratives and perspectives, questioning the way in which meaning is created. She explores these topics through video essays, multimedia installations, and lecture performances, aiming to create a direct dialogue with the audience. Moving across fine arts and film, she has participated in several international exhibitions and film festivals.

RESISTANCE, REFUSAL, AND RUPTURE: GENERATIVE OPACITY IN INTIMATE PEDAGOGY
Skye Maule-O'Brien (Willem de Kooning Academy)

My work centers intimacy in learning and questions what exploring relationality beyond the human can bring to racial justice and decolonial practices. Much of my work stretches across the Atlantic between Barbados, Montreal, and Rotterdam drawing parallels between seemingly disparate places to explore shared histories and to encourage decolonial knowledge and action. To do so I draw on Caribbean and Black feminisms, with elements of queer theory and decolonial feminist scholarship, including Indigenous feminism and eco-feminist critique. Using visual methods I attempt to make tangible intangible matters of intimacy that escape language in how we understand learning and knowledge.

As part of my doctoral dissertation, I wrote a chapter on artist, Michèle Pearson Clarke (Toronto), that scrutinized my own body as a white researcher while looking at the potential learning offered through resistance and refusals of intimacy. I'm now in the process of revisiting my writing on Clarke to further explore the sites of contradiction and opacity she creates by making work about intimacy while simultaneously refusing it. My desire to participate in the workshop, Forms of (More Than) Human Relationality, is to deepen my analysis around resistance, refusal, and rupture as essential to relationality (Glissant; Tuck & Yang). I want to think through the use of strategic aesthetic choices that position intimacy and vulnerability as tools of decoloniality. This includes Glissant's (2006) call for mutual forms of opacity and right to difference to oppose a Eurocentric desire for transparency and all knowing. I understand this as needed in work committed to anticolonial and decolonial practice and action. By accepting another's right to remain shadowed allows for refusals to be viewed as generative moments of relational learning; we must be able hold multiple truths at once.

Skye Maule-O'Brien is an educator and researcher based at Willem de Kooning Academy (Rotterdam),. Often working collaboratively, combining theory, narrative, and visual methods

she engages with forms of transformative learning that connect people, places, and ideas. Her PhD in Education from York University (Toronto) focused on the development of a theory and method called *intimate pedagogy*, and included an academic exchange University of the West Indies, Institute for Gender and Development Studies (Barbados). She holds a BFA in Art History, with a minor in Adult Education, and a Master's in Educational Studies from Concordia University (Montreal). This year she will begin a postdoctoral fellowship in Social Practice at the WdKA Research Center.

WHISTLE WHISTLE: RESONATE UNTIL TONGUE
Thais Akina Yoshitake Lopez (Independent Researcher)

"If it is said that when a language stops being spoken, the way of relating to a region of the world is impoverished, how can I relate to such a region of the world and such a language through these murmurs scattered in music, food, rituals and distances?" This question is part of a reflection on the negotiation between the presence and the intelligibility of languages and the possibility of sheltering opacities in familiar settings, contextualized within a diaspora from Okinawa (Japan) to Brazil pre-WWI.

One of the languages from the archipelago, called 'Uchinaaguchi', is ceasing to be spoken due to politico-historical erasures promoted by Japanese assimilatory politics ('nihonjinron') and domestic reasons (the need to adapt to a Brazilian context). Drawing from the dynamic relation 'echo-chaos-tout monde' proposed by the Martinique writer Édouard Glissant, especially interested in the relationality between language and landscape, the project "Whistle whistle: resonate until tongue" is a proposition of imagined cross-sections in a photograph from a family's archive. What kind of spaces could be imagined if this spectral language delineated their contours? Each cross-section focuses on coexistent orientations as a kind of inhabitation where particular experiences and an imaginary (of languages and landscapes) are traversed by opacities. More than a desire to speak, it is a desire to listen and shelter scattered murmurs imbued with collective rememorations and historical consciousness. Opacity regarding unknown languages from other regions of the world is shared by the opacity steaming from familiar and experiential contexts, complicating the familiar/foreigner or here/there orientations. The composition of the three sections in the photograph invites a cyclical movement through its surface, to and from its borders, with a video essay, soundscape, images and a poem/installation.

Thais Akina Yoshitake Lopez is a Brazilian artist who graduated from the São Paulo State University (Design, B.A, 2017) and The Royal Academy of Art in The Hague (Non-Linear Narrative, M.A, 2022). Her research lies between the dislocation involving translation, migration, and poetry in a series of situations where language and landscape are worked through their ambiguities.

Panel 15: DISABILITY, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE BODY
11:00 – 12:30 UT Theater
Moderator: Leni van Goidsenhoven (University of Amsterdam)

DEAF VIEW/IMAGE ART AND DEAF EXPERIENCE: RESISTIVE AND AFFIRMATIVE STRATEGIES IN THE WORK OF BETTY MILLER AND SUSAN DUPOR
Gina Yang (Independent Researcher)

Deaf View/Image Art, often denoted by the abbreviation "De'VIA," is the visual-art expression of the Deaf experience, typically categorized under two main types, resistive and affirmative art. Elements of both of these putatively distinct tendencies can be seen in two works, "Bell School" by Betty Miller, and "Interesting Hamster" by Susan Dupor, both featuring a class photo depicting deaf children in mainstream school settings. Initially notable for their vivid, eye-catching colors, upon closer inspection, it becomes apparent these color schemes each evoke a jarring sense of the painful experience of forced assimilation. Pre-existing scholarship on De'VIA has often adopted a unilateral view according to which De'VIA images are mainly characterized by resistant visual strategies, a somewhat restricted outlook at odds with the range of imagery present in the works themselves, which clearly incorporate both resistive and affirmative elements. This study returns attention to these two fundamental concepts defining De'VIA art, affirmative and resistive. Miller's "Bell School" and Dupor's "Interesting Hamster" are re-examined from this dual perspective, considering both the representational content and formal qualities of the two works. Following this critical analysis, this paper argues that both Miller and Dupor employed the typically bright, optimistic palettes ostensibly characteristic of affirmative art in order to cast an ironic light on more resistive messaging, namely the forced assimilation of deaf children into mainstream education, engaging De'VIA's central thematic preoccupation of Deaf experience through a blending of these conflicting elements.

Born in Busan, South Korea, **Gina Yang** is an independent scholar of Deaf View/Image Art. She is currently at work on a study of different political strategies in the work of Betty Miller and Susan Dupor.

VIBRANT MATTERS OF CARE: CRUTCHES AS CURATIVE OBJECTS AND PALLIATIVE THINGS IN TWO PERFORMANCE PIECES
Jana Melkumova-Reynolds (London School of Economics and Political Science)

This paper considers the 'vibrancy' (Bennett 2010) and 'animacy' (Watts Belser 2016) of medical assistive devices, such as crutches, in two performance pieces: *bODY_rEMIX/gOLDBERG_vARIATIONS* by Compagnie Marie Chouinard and *The Way You Look (at me) Tonight* by Claire Cunningham and

Jess Curtis. Drawing on recent iterations crip theory which are rooted in New Materialism and queer phenomenology, it enquires how, by affording different entanglements – between bodies, things/objects, space, and other bodies – crutches in these performances produce different relationalities, temporalities, subjectivities and ontologies.

I propose to think of crutches' agency along two axes: curative/palliative and objects/things. A curative imaginary is predicated on the ideal of betterment; in such an imaginary, objects are employed to aid subjects in their quest for relations of mastery (Bersani 2010, Singh 2018) with the self and the world. Conversely, a palliative imaginary eschews the ideas of progress and mastery, and, by extension, the subject-object dichotomy.

Etymologically, the term "palliate" is thought to originate from Latin *pallium* (a cloak); another tradition traces it to the proto-Indo-European *pelte*, "shield". Palliative things, I argue, do not aim to facilitate progress; they are non-teleological. They step in to shroud and shield, to care without attempting to cure.

In my reading, crutches and prosthetics in *bODY_rEMIX* act as curative objects: while standing 'over and against' (Heidegger 1971) the performers or else helping them stand against the world, these devices are implicated in projects of mastery, articulating themselves, bodies and subjectivities as neatly bounded powerhouses of capacity. Meanwhile, in *The Way You Look…*, crutches are deployed as *palliative things* that enunciate their own and performers' bodies' indeterminacy and interdependence. They enable ongoing pouring between bodies, things and the world; they enact relationalities premised on being-with without securing, on cloaking without enclosing.

Dr Jana Melkumova-Reynolds is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics and Political Science where she is a Programme Director for the MSc Culture and Society. She has lectured and supervised students' research at Chelsea College of Arts, Central Saint Martins, King's College London and Parsons Paris. Her work is underpinned by feminist and queer epistemologies and methodologies, and her interests include time and temporalities, material and visual culture, and disability studies. She is currently working on a book that focuses on subjectivity, affect and knowledge in the work of fashion intermediaries. She is also developing an ethnographic and participatory movement-based research project that will investigate cultural imaginaries and practices which conjure queer-crip utopias. Her work has appeared in *Fashion Theory* journal and in edited collections including *Curative Things* (Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming), *Dangerous Bodies* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), *Routledge Handbook of Fashion Studies* (Routledge, 2021), *Bodies in Flux* (Brill, 2019) and others.

THE SHAPING OF A STANDARD VOICE: SONIC AND SOCIOTECHNICAL IMAGINARIES IN SMART SPEAKERS AND THE ABJECTION OF DISABILITY

Presenting author: Domenico Napolitano (Scuola Superiore Meridionale)
Non-presenting author: Luigi Maria Sicca (University of Naples "Federico II")

Smart speakers have been considered as more than human-computer interfaces: they are nonhuman interactional agents or socialbots. Great scholarly attention has been put on their communicational and relational features, with emphasis on their construction of gendered identities. Nevertheless, little attention has been put on the meanings embedded in the sound of their voices. In this contribution we investigate the voice of smart speakers using the framework of sonic imaginaries as a subset of sociotechnical imaginaries. We focus on the project of creating a voice standard associated to the 1980s speech synthesis device DECTalk. Using a media-archaeological methodology drawing on heterogeneous empirical materials about technological materialities and discursive representations, the contribution investigates the imaginary formative principles governing the definition of a vocal sound ideal type such as that incorporated in speech synthesis systems of the '80s. We argue that these formative principles are still at work in current smart speakers, as they refer to the imaginary of a voice "in general", which recalls ideas of authority, fidelity and transcendence. The "standard" of artificial voice, in fact, is an ideal type built at the crossroads of cultural ideas of voice in European philosophical tradition and the techno-scientific knowledge through which voice has been measured, reified and adopted by organizations. This idea of voice "in general" rejects non-standard voices such as those of disabled people. In this way, smart speakers contribute to the construction of abjected bodies (Butler, 2011) – in this case abjected voices. On the other hand, contemporary artistic practices, both within disability arts movement and in wider contexts of digital arts and AI arts, are exploring the subverting potential of nonhuman voices as forms of otherness which overpass prescriptive ideas about what a voice is and how it should sound, in this way opening paths for forms of relationality not subjected to traditional dualisms such as human/nonhuman, able/disable.

Domenico Napolitano is a Research Fellow in Law and Organizational Studies for People with Disability at Scuola Superiore Meridionale of Naples. He holds a PhD in Media Studies and has been Visiting Fellow at the Department of Musikwissenchaft und Medienwissechaft of Humboldt Universitaet in Berlin. He is the author of the book "La voce artificiale. Un'indagine media-archeologica sul computer parlante" and of several articles dedicated to media technologies, sound and work organization. He is also a sound artist and has organized several festivals dedicated to experimental music, sound poetry and new media arts.

Luigi Maria Sicca is Full Professor of Full Professor of Business Organization at the Federico II University of Naples, where he is a member of the Board of Directors of the Services Center for

the active and participatory inclusion of students (SInAPSi) and a member of the Single Guarantee Committee (CUG). He is the scientific director of puntOorg International Research Network and member of the board of directors of the Fondazione Genre Identità Cultura.

THE RELATIONALITY AND RECIPROCITY OF FOOD: FROM DYSTOPIAN CONSUMPTION TO UTOPIAN BECOMING-WITH IN *YOU TOO CAN HAVE A BODY LIKE MINE* (2015) BY ALEXANDRA KLEEMAN

Marta Olivi (University of Bologna/Utrecht University)

Despite recent posthuman research investigating the role of various types of matter as vectors of "becoming-with" (Haraway, 2016), food has never been fully inquired as a vector of a peculiar intra-active (Barad, 2003) relationality, with the exception of Jane Bennett's brief description of the topic (2010). Food is the material product of a cultural and environmental context which concretely and literally comes to constitute part of the human body through consumption; moreover, adopting a posthuman perspective, it is possible to overcome the anthropocentric hierarchy between consumer and consumed, framing the act of eating as a reciprocal relationality that binds together the human and the more-than-human. This lack of hierarchy between subject and object, consumer and consumed, is explored by Alexandra Kleeman's novel *You Too Can Have a Body Like Mine* (2015). Variously described as an allegorical novel and a feminist dystopia, the novel depicts a world catastrophically deprived of any subjectivity. Everything and everyone in the novel is described as an object being consumed by something else, and the only possible relationality takes place through material processes of exchange through food, objects, and objectified bodies. But can this lack of hierarchy among objectified subjectivities create a Utopian space of resignification? Building on Bennett's description of food as "vibrant matter", my contribution aims to explore food's capacity to change meaning according to a feminist process of resignification. The meanings assumed by food in various scenes in the novel will be analysed following Nina Lykke's (2022) conceptualisation of the "metonymy", in order to see how the food imagery can signify various meanings and go from being a negative, hierarchical consumption which impedes communication to constitute a vector of positive, posthuman, reciprocal relationality.

Marta Olivi (1996) is a second-year PhD candidate at the University of Bologna (Italy). She is enrolled to EDGES, a European curriculum devoted to Gender Studies, under a joint supervision with Utrecht University (Netherlands). Her research interests cover feminist dystopias, food studies, (New) materialist and posthuman philosophies. She is currently researching how food relates to women's bodies in a corpus of contemporary Anglophone feminist dystopias which aim to bend and break the conventions of the genre. She is also a literary translator, and recently curated the Italian edition of *The Anthropocene Unconscious* (2020) by Mark Bould.

Panel 16: MORE-THAN-HUMAN CARE IN CINEMA
13:45 – 15:15 UT 1.01A
Moderator: Abe Geil (University of Amsterdam)

CARE, COW AND DOCUMENTARY RELATIONALITY
Lucas Rinzema (University of Groningen)

Andrea Arnold's 2021 documentary Cow takes an intimate approach to the daily life of Luma, a dairy cow, and one of her calves. Affectively, Cow is a caring film: intimate close-ups and shaky camerawork attentively entangle the bodies of film, viewer and cow. Nonetheless, it documents the life of a cow who is stuck in an abusive system. Bracketing the film's activist potential and affective involvement, we can see clearly that the film does not interfere helpfully in Luma's life: while it invites caring about this specific cow, and while it might help promote more caring human-cow relations, it intrudes her space carelessly. This talk maps these ambivalences, thinking through allegorical representation, embodied cinematic immersion and the problematics of ethical distance in documentary filmmaking. To unpack this, I stay with "the tensions between care as maintenance doings and work, affective engagement, and ethico-political involvement." (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 6). I attempt to flesh out the both caring and uncaring human-cow relations that Cow produces by means of a combination of methods, including film phenomenology (e.g., Barker 2009; Sobchack 1992; 2004), phenomenology in human-animal studies (e.g., Lestel, Bussolini and Chrulew 2014), allegorical reading of films that deal with bio-industry (Schultz-Figueroa 2022), and a linguistic appreciation of the ways in which cows act and make themselves at home within adverse circumstances (e.g., Cornips and Hengel 2021; Cornips 2022). These approaches come together to describe the assemblage of cow, film and human audience, offering a relational take on the ambivalences and ambiguities of care in mediated human-animal relations.

Lucas Rinzema is a Research MA student in Arts, Media and Literary Studies at the University of Groningen. He has BA degrees in Philosophy and in Arts, Culture and Media. Current research interests include film and philosophy, with an emphasis on multispecies landscapes and animal-human relations. Relatedly, he is a filmmaker working on short, non-narrative, ecocritically oriented films.

FROM "SAD GOD" TO "DAD GOD": (NON)VIOLENCE, ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CARE IN THOR: LOVE AND THUNDER
Christine Loss (University of Amsterdam)

Rather than offering simple moral binaries and justified violence in the name of entertainment typical for the superhero genre (McSweeney 2018; Horton 2016), Thor: Love and Thunder (2022) self-consciously points to the inadequacy of our hero's conventional ethics of care based on

violence, hegemonic masculinity as well as an individualistic understanding of power and the self, for meeting the needs, both of others and oneself.

Refraining from violence altogether in its climax allows the film to propose an ethics of care based on uncertain love (Butler 2020; Lynch 2020) from which ethical responsiveness/responsibility is generated out of an understanding of the self as interdependent. Narratively and visually, creating a "face-to-face with the other" moment (Noble and Noble 2016) between hero and villain enables both to disidentify with genre typical scripts of redemptive violence and conditional care (McSweeney 2018), resulting in an moment of "pure" hospitality (Barnett 2005; Naas 2003; Noble and Noble 2016) wherein our hero becomes a caretaker for the enemy's daughter.

The genre script of hegemonic masculinity as care-free (Tronto 2013), unchanged (Eco 1972) and sovereign (Curtis 2016) is thus troubled, since a "happy" ending comes not from reasserting control and dominance, but rather from emotionally investing oneself in the wellbeing of others and oneself.

Thor: Love and Thunder therefore represents an event in the Derridan sense in which genre scripts of violence in the name of care can temporarily be suspended for our hero to find meaning in embracing "postconventional care" based on love and non-violence (Brookman and Aboulafia 2000).

Christine Loss is a PhD student at ASCA, whose research is concerned with studying how current superhero films visualise care, ethical responsibility and an understanding of the self in relation to others. They hold a BA in Literary and Cultural Analysis from the University of Amsterdam, and a MSc in Social and Cultural Theory from the University of Bristol. Current research interests include scholarship of care, political and moral philosophy, feminist, queer and critical theory. Their pilot study explores how *Thor: Love and Thunder* breaks with genre conventional forms of masculine sovereign violence in the name of care and opens a window into alternative ways of universal care based on love, uncertainty and non-violence.

LESSONS OF MY OCTOPUS TEACHER: CARE, CONNECTION, AND BIOLINCLUSIVITY
Pete Porter (Eastern Washington University/University of Groningen)

My Octopus Teacher shows how movies can illuminate pathways toward care, connection, and a state of interspecies relationality that enables multispecies flourishing, bioinclusivity. Teacher follows wildlife filmmaker Craig Foster, who retreats to a seaside cottage after suffering burnout on his job. As part of his recovery, he swims daily in a nearby kelp forest, where he observes a peculiar sight: a mysterious amalgam of shells and rocks from which an octopus eventually

emerges and flees. This stunning event leads Foster on a journey of discovery, both of the octopus and of himself as he rebuilds his life, including his relationship with his son. *Teacher* documents a very unlikely bond between very differently embodied beings, but the sentiment of homage to a nonhuman creature could hardly be more moving or instructive.

The healing power of a human-nonhuman relationship is a familiar trope in animal studies, but seldom has the nonhuman in question been an octopus. Typically, a creaturely bond will form with a dog, a cat or another familiar domesticated animal such as a horse. Dolphins are another favorite species in these stories, as in *A Dolphin Tale*. Another atypical piece of Teacher is that the human element of the relationship is an adult rather than an adolescent or a child. There are other atypical elements: Foster articulates a deep regard for the octopus, but he does not name her. Nor does he remove her from her habitat to "adopt" or rescue her, rather he visits her underwater habitat as a form of recovery, slowly building familiarity and trust, until a climactic moment when the octopus makes physical contact. While vividly depicting the nuances of a human and non-human relationship suggests the value of filming animals in their habitats; whether this licenses doing so is a concern that permeates the film.

Dr. Pete Porter is a Professor of Film in the Department of Fine and Performing Arts, where he also serves as Chair, at Eastern Washington University. For 2022-23, Porter is a visiting research fellow at University of Groningen. His current project is *From Marching Penguins to Octopus Teachers*, a study of how movies engage aesthetic and ethical strategies to create more bioinclusive representations of nonhuman animals. Porter serves as Film Review Editor for *Society & Animals*, an international journal of Human-Animal Studies.

DISSOCIATIVE CARE: NOTES ON A METHODOLOGY
Jakob Henselmans (University of Amsterdam)

Laura and Kate Mulleavy's 2017 US film Woodshock, a hyper-subjective fabulation of a woman's battle with depression and the social infrastructures of small-town couple-form life, dedicates minutes on end to its protagonist's unusual attenuation to otherwise 'trivial' pieces of tableware, furniture, and cloth. The protagonist gives up to care for her life, for a life, and yet, in the middle of what would be the usual narrative rush of crisis and breakdown, the everyday aesthetics of a drinking glass in sunlight induces a pause. What entanglement of everyday aesthetics, dissociative life, and its contexts of care and neglect does this scene hold out? In this talk, I develop the prism of dissociative care to navigate such questions, which I introduce both as a mode of relation at large and as a methodology for critical reading.

Taking seriously the genre of entanglement that Woodshock's scenes of dissociation explicate, I start by extending Yuriko Saito's call to explore 'everyday aesthetics,' and work through the conceptual and ethical implications of such aesthetics' unusual presence here. Woodshock figures thus as an invitation to engage 'innocuous form' not merely as an object of critical inquiry but also as a subject to relations of critical precarity. 'Dissociation' is this talk's conceptual context, in reference to Lauren Berlant's recent work. The notion analytically opens up crisis as a receptivity to other forms of intimacy and relationality, and so drags everyday aesthetics into the messy and ambivalent context of 'attachment habits'. I then elaborate how the remapping of the investment in everyday aesthetics onto dissociative life discloses a care relationship that demands a different and more radical approach than Saito's ethics of care provides, which is to say that it demands a dissociative engagement from critique itself: a 'formalist' orientation at once more careful and more undetermined.

Jakob Henselmans is currently finishing his RMa degree in Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam. He holds a BA in Film and Literary Studies from Leiden University and the University of Melbourne. His work is on questions of form (and sometimes formalism) in affect theory and queer theory, and he published research on slow cinema, on spatial figurations in film, and on form's 'specter' in affective and social life. His monograph Form, Affect, Sign: Two Essays on Brinkema and Cinema will be released later this year at CENDEAC (University of Murcia), and he serves as the web journal coordinator for Soapbox: Journal for Cultural Analysis.

Panel 17: CURATING RELATIONALITY
13:45 – 15:15 UT Theater
Moderator: Christian Olesen (University of Amsterdam)

THE ARTS OF ATTUNEMENT: TOOLS FOR MULTISPECIES CURATING
Ils Huygens (Independent Researcher)

Artists today are developing new ways of connecting with non-human worlds, but as we argue, there is an urgent need for critical and curatorial frameworks to enhance the imaginary and transformative capacity of these art projects, to facilitate productive dialogue between art practice and theory, to enhance collaboration between art and science, and to enhance their societal impact, by bridging the gaps between artwork, institutional artworld and audience. Through expanding the notion of the curatorial and socially engaged art projects with the multispecies idea of interrelationship and reciprocity, we will try to define an ecological curatorial framework that is based on 'an ecology of practices' and linking to posthumanist notions of Attunement/Affect', 'Engagement/Care' and 'Entanglement/Ecology'.

The project develops the 'arts of attunement' as a new and innovative concept and methodology by connecting posthuman and multispecies theory with the field of curatorial studies. The arts of attunement, enables our understanding of artistic engagements with the more-than-human by focusing on relationality in modes of immersion, attention, listening or storytelling. Second, as a curatorial concept, it develops concrete tools and frameworks for curating interdisciplinary art-science collaboration, and navigating epistemological and institutional differences.

In the proposal we will elaborate on this (yet undeveloped) research framework and connect it with artistic and curatorial practices.

Ils Huygens is a freelance curator, writer and researcher. She was an inhouse curator at Z33 – House for Contemporary Arts, Design & Architecture where she curated numerous exhibitions (On-Trade-Off: Charging Myths, The Sustainist Gaze, Learning from Deep Time, The School of Time, Nuclear Culture, Mind the System, Find the Gap, Space Odyssey 2.0, Seasonal Neighbours) and coordinated a diversity of research projects, art in public space programs or publications. She has curated or coordinated numerous exhibitions in a.o. Milan, Rotterdam, Istanbul and was in 2017 and 18 co-curator of Artefact Festival in Leuven (The Act of Magic, This Rare Earth). Apart from visual arts she also works in film and is co-founder of the cultfilm festival Offscreen in Brussels.

TECHNOLOGICAL CARE THROUGH CO-CONSTITUTED PRACTICES
Annet Dekker (University of Amsterdam/London South Bank University)

Digital art has developed from a niche medium seen at media festivals to one entering mainstream contemporary art museums and private collections where its visibility and popularity have been burgeoning ever since. Despite its increasing importance, the future of digital art is under threat. The acceleration of decaying technical parts, dysfunctional artworks, and the public's misunderstanding of the disappearing historical contexts create ghostly artworks in museum collections that clutter server space. While several preservation methods have been developed, these practices focus on the updating of technical tools, placing an increasing burden on preservation practices, organisational infrastructures and the ecological environment. To transition to a more sustainable, socially inclusive and low emission climate-resilient preservation strategy, in this presentation I aim to put forward a collaborative socio-ethical approach to digital preservation, including human and machines, which can be scaled to fit different organisational sizes, contexts, and needs. This method is based on the principle of networks of care that is a collaborative, participatory and future-facing approach that can be modularly adapted to its users. Seeing preservation through the lens of the concept - instead of merely the practice - of care (Mol et al. 2010; Puig de la Bellacasa 2017) is a way to better understand the different networked

relations and dependencies. By analysing art projects by Igor Stromajer (*Expunction*, 2011 and -oμ4x, 2016–22), Ine Schröder (Staketsels), and Shu Lea Cheang (*Brandon*, 1997–), I aim to show how experimentation and tinkering are ways to answering the questions: Who and what cares? What for? For what reasons, or from which position, and mostly what it means to care together. In the process, I want to tease out whether, and if so how, technology and/or non-human entities are relational, co-constitute, and hence can potentially also care.

Annet Dekker is a curator and researcher. Currently she is Assistant Professor Media Studies: Archival and Information Studies, and Comparative Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam and Visiting Professor and co-director of the Centre for the Study of the Networked Image at London South Bank University. She has published numerous essays and edited several volumes, among others, Documentation as Art (co-edited with Gabriella Giannachi, Routledge 2022) and Curating Digital Art. From Presenting and Collecting Digital Art to Networked Co-Curating (Valiz 2021). Her monograph, Collecting and Conserving Net Art (Routledge 2018) is a seminal work in the field of digital art conservation.

WHAT DO COLONIAL ARCHIVES WANT? A CASE STUDY OF JOHN THOMSON'S PHOTO NEGATIVES
Jiangtao Harry Gu (Hobart and William Smith Colleges)

Ever since the first experiments with photography in the 1820s, there has been a persistent fascination with photography and its presumed ability to circumvent human intentions.

For example, the French inventor of photography Louis Daguerre claimed that his invention is not merely an instrument to depict nature, but a process that enables nature to reproduce herself. The German critic Walter Benjamin argued that photography possesses the unique ability to reveal something he calls the "optical unconscious" in a way that is analogous to psychoanalysis' relation to the unconscious. These theories of photography emphasize the camera and not the operator as the focus of the image-making process thereby laying the foundation for the more recent, post-human scholarships on photography and the study of photography as autonomous things, which challenges us to reconsider photographs' ability to signify beyond the interpretative frameworks of semiology and representation.

To put these arguments in context, this paper poses several methodological questions regarding the research of historical photographs, and especially those of contested histories such as colonialism. What do photographs want? How can we read them if they signify beyond human language? In answering these questions, I will discuss the archival work I have done with the work of 19-century

Scottish photographer John Thomson and his photographic practices in Southeast Asia and China. When human interpretations fail to give an accurate account to the meaning of the vast archives left by Thomson, how could we continue to engage his work as historical records? Similarly, what do colonial archives have to bear on the present? My thinking through these questions ultimately led me to the tactile experience of working with Thomson's glass negatives at the Wellcome Museum in London. By approaching the glass negatives as things in a network and deposit of things in a colonial archive, my paper critically examines the nature of historical research and the futile dream of turning colonial archives against themselves.

Jiangtao Harry Gu is an Assistant Professor of Media and Society at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. His research examines questions of race, sexuality, and history in Asian and Asian diasporic visual cultures, including film, photography, and performance. His current book project Humor before the Subject: An Asian American Theory of Laughter is a cultural history of post-war Asian American comedy. It is also a theoretical investigation of what remains possible for laughter today and whether it could lead us to racial justice and reconciliation. He also writes extensively about the visual culture of 19th century colonialism in Asia and critical methods in approaching archival research. He has published articles and reviews in the Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art, Trans Asia Photography, Modern Chinese Literature and Culture, and the Journal of Asian Studies. His work has received support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, the Susan B. Anthony Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies, and the Tanaka Memorial Foundation. He holds a Ph.D. in Visual and Cultural Studies from the University of Rochester.

Keynote Pooja Rangan
15:30 – 17:00 UT Theater

LISTENING LIKE AN ABOLITIONIST: DOCUMENTARY RELATIONALITY BEYOND THE PRISON - KEYNOTE LECTURE BY POOJA RANGAN (AMHERST COLLEGE)
Respondent: Toni Pape (University of Amsterdam)

Listening to testimonial claims in pursuit of oppressed truths is commonly understood as the highest ethical responsibility of justice-seeking documentary publics. My talk examines the formation of this consensus, as well as the carceral relationships that underpin the jurification of documentary audiences as adjudicators of state and corporate crimes. What happens, I ask, when documentary listening reifies the prison in our political and relational landscape—and what might it mean to approach it as a site of abolitionist struggle? I parse the tensions between these two listening modes (listening like a cop, listening like an abolitionist) in a prevailing model of documentary accountability

that involves appropriating the forms of authority associated with forensic truth-claims to present "counterforensic" evidence of state and environmental violence in a range of legal and public forums. I focus on a collaboration between research agency Forensic Architecture and Chicago-based activist media organization The Invisible Institute in response to a racially motivated killing by Chicago police. My reading of *The Killing of Harith Augustus* pays attention to how this project surfaces its own internal tensions, doubling as a tribunal on the anti-Black violence of juridical listening and an experiment in cultivating an outlaw listenership of neighborly care.

Pooja Rangan is a scholar of documentary media based in Amherst College, where she is Associate Professor of English and Chair of Film and Media Studies. Rangan is the author of [Immediations: The Humanitarian Impulse in Documentary](#) (Duke UP 2017, winner of the Harry Levin Best First Book prize from the American Comparative Literature Association), which explores how fantasies of humanity and alterity fuel participatory documentary interventions, and particularly their investments in the rhetoric of immediacy. Rangan is also co-editor of the new print and open access anthology, [Thinking with an Accent: Toward a New Object, Method, and Practice](#) (UC Press, 2023), as well as numerous journal articles and essays on topics such as disability and access aesthetics, accent as crip epistemology, forensic listening, and true crime and abolition (available on [poojarangan.com](#)). Her new book-in-progress, *The Documentary Audit*, explores the equation of listening, in documentary discourse, with accountability, asking how accented, crip, and abolitionist listening practices question documentary values such as neutrality, access, and justice.

Toni Pape is Assistant Professor at the Department of Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam. Toni's research focuses on the link between aesthetics and politics in contemporary media. The monograph *Figures of Time: Affect and the Television of Preemption* was published with Duke University Press in 2019. Toni's current research project, entitled "The Aesthetics of Stealth," investigates modes of disappearance in video games, television series, and contemporary art.

CLOSING: JAAP KOOIJMAN (ASCA VICE DIRECTOR)

Conference Dinner
18:30 - 20:30 Restaurant Pllek (T.T. Neveritaweg 59, 1033 WB Amsterdam) (Registered participants only)

Specific directions will be given at the end of the conference. The restaurant can be reached by a ferry to NDSM wharf from the central station that goes back and forth every 15 minutes until 03:00 AM. The walk to the central station is about 15-20 min or 5 min by tram.
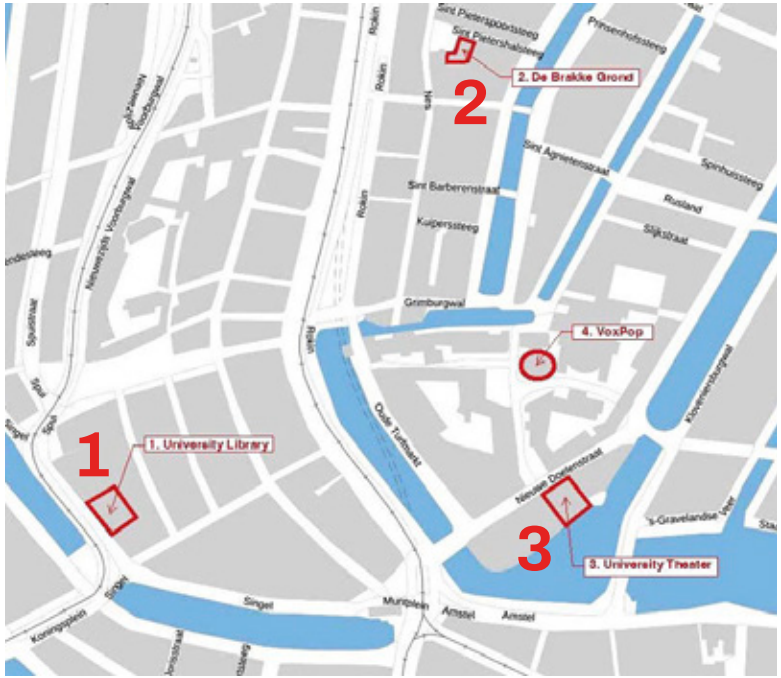
1. University Library

Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam

2. De Brakke Grond (Vlaams Cultuurhuis)

Nes 45, 1012 KD Amsterdam

3. University Theater

Nieuwe Doelenstraat 16-18, 1012 CP Amsterdam