

Nieuwsbrief 243

July 2021

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2021 ASCA AWARDS

to Flora Lysen, Marrigje Paijmans, and Emily Ng

The 2021 ASCA Awards Committee, Jakko Kemper, Misha Kavka, and Jeff Diamanti, have awarded Flora Lysen's dissertation *Brainmedia: One Hundred Years of Performing Live Brains, 1920–2020*; Marrigje Paijmans article 'An Ambivalent View of Colonialism: The Spinozist Design for a Settlement in New Netherland'; and Emily Ng's book *A Time of Lost Gods: Mediumship, Madness, and the Ghost after Mao*. There was an honorable mention for Marc Tuters's and Daniel de Zeeuw's article 'Teh Internet is Serious Business: On the Deep Vernacular Web and its Discontents'.

2021 ASCA Dissertation Award:

Flora Lysen, *Brainmedia: One Hundred Years of Performing Live Brains, 1920–2020*



Flora Lysen

For the Best Dissertation Prize, the committee was unanimously enthusiastic about the doctoral work of Flora Lysen. Her innovative, highly readable and alluringly titled *BrainMedia: One Hundred Years of*

Performing Live Brains, 1920–2020 made us gasp at the critical ease with which she associates the brain, media technologies and knowledge production into a set of what she calls "organic/technical/media/cultural assemblages". Taking the brain 'made live' through a range of technical devices as her object of analysis, Flora closely studies this "machine-organism" through the history of its mediations, offering a century-long genealogy that traces the illuminations, figurations and enactments of the brain from the laboratory to popular science to television and art and neuroscience, all the while deftly melding cultural theory with STS and aesthetics. She does this not from the perspective that media can translate the brain-organism into brain-knowledge; rather, her exciting contention is that the brain already *is* a technology, already *is* media – hence 'brainmedia' as a single word that opens up a dizzying array of critical possibilities. Truly, the wonderful scholarship of *BrainMedia* had us seeing brains and their mediation everywhere we looked.

2021 ASCA Article Award:

Paijmans, M.G., 'An Ambivalent View of Colonialism: The Spinozist Design for a Settlement in New Netherland.' *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2020.



Marrigje Paijmans

This year's ASCA awards committee was struck by the analytic humility, historical significance, scholarly rigor, and reflexive theorization in Marrigje Paijmans' "An Ambivalent View of Colonialism: The Spinozist Design for A Settlement in New Netherland" (published in *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, summer 2020). Paijmans tells the story of Franciscus van den Enden, a companion and keen reader of Spinoza in mid-17th century Amsterdam, whose design for a

democratic settlement in what would become Manhattan is both complicit with the Republic's racist, settler-colonial violence, and a vista onto some of the discord and alter-currents vying for discursive, philosophical, and political space in the shadows of the 'golden age.' With a keen and careful ethic of close reading with and against the colonial discourse Pajmans cautiously draws out the influence of Spinoza's concept of *potentia* on this *unsettled* form of sovereignty animating the New Amstel project. Pajmans' analysis, however, stays with the colonial complicity, opting to unfold the ambivalence of the case study, to stay with what proves not fully satisfying to the necessarily anti-colonial doxa of cultural analysis today. The object here does not say what we might want it to say, raising questions about how to *read* the colonial archive; how to listen for alter-currents from within its own logic; and how to position those currents in the urgent efforts to decolonize a university and state built on enslaved labour, land dispossession, and massacre.

2021 ASCA Book Award:

Ng, E. K. (2020). *A Time of Lost Gods: Mediumship, Madness, and the Ghost after Mao*. University of California Press.



Emily Ng

The ASCA Awards committee presents this year's book award to Emily Ng's *A Time of Lost Gods: Mediumship, Madness, and the Ghost After Mao*. *A Time of Lost Gods*, published by the University of California Press, is a deeply inventive and theoretically intricate work, marked by writing that is as academically rigorous as it is evocative. In *A Time of Lost Gods*, Ng guides the reader through China's county of Hexian, a rural area that was once figured as the center of Chinese civilization, but that is now associated with outmigration and obsolescence. Dwelling amongst those who have been left behind – spirit mediums, villagers, psychiatric patients – Ng finds a different story than the one we are usually told about post-Mao China. For her interlocutors, "the time when Chairman Mao reigned" was, despite its hardships, a time of divine unity, and the present comprises but a hollow residual haunted by malevolent ghosts and gods, broken promises and the spiritually debilitating influence of market reforms and material desires. Approaching Hexian through its hauntings, its disjointed temporalities and the many

spirit mediums who offer their bodies to cosmic forces, Ng asks what it means to live in the aftermath of what her interlocutors perceive as a truncated revolution. With this approach, Ng deftly transforms the concepts she works with, opening up new and unexpected ways of mobilizing notions of spectrality, madness and rurality. Her work, moreover, stages a crucial intervention into the many urban-focused accounts of contemporary China that perceive only a singular, progress-oriented temporality. Ng's work, conversely, shows that the reality of living with Mao's ghost is much more multifaceted. Through its detailed analyses of cultural expressions – constantly untangling complex webs of glorified pasts, stunted presents and revolutionary futures – and its highly inventive theoretical approach, *A Time of Lost Gods* exemplifies the best kind of ethnography and demonstrates a profound commitment to ASCA's core principles.

Honorable Mention:

Daniel de Zeeuw & Marc Tuters (2020). 'Teh Internet is Serious Business: On the Deep Vernacular Web and Its Discontents'. *Cultural Politics*, 16(2), 214-232.



Daniel de Zeeuw



Marc Tuters

The ASCA Awards committee would like to make a strong honorable mention in the best article category. Daniël de Zeeuw and Marc Tuters, in "Teh Internet is Serious Business: On the Deep Vernacular Web and its Discontents," (published in *Cultural Politics*) is a troubling and immersive reading of a structuring (though largely undertheorized) opposition between "mask" and "face culture" animating online discourse today. Taking these forums and platforms seriously as performative practices demanding novel interpretive strategies, de Zeeuw and Tuters offer a compelling and expertly written analysis that can be taken up by scholars across ASCA for years to come.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE: ERDEM ÇOLAK

Creating A New Europe Through Contemporary Art. Manifesta and Its Relation to Art, Society and Politics Agnietenkapel, 6 July, 15:00 hrs. | Supervisors: Mia Lerm-Hayes, Chiara de Cesari

Manifesta - European Biennial of Contemporary Art is a nomadic biennial that takes place every two years in a different city of Europe. In this dissertation, I focus on Manifesta's political, economic, urban and artistic relationships with its host cities and regions as well as the changes that occur in its own goals, discourse and organization over time. I argue that Manifesta is one of

the new institutions of neoliberal governance in the field of art in the post-Cold War era. During the dissertation, I evaluate each edition of the biennial within its own context, adopt theoretical approaches suitable for this context and compare editions to find common points. I identify three significant periods within the history of Manifesta. In its first period, namely from its birth as an idea in the early 90's to the Ljubljana edition held in 2000, Manifesta aimed to reach to the post-communist regions. Later, until its ninth edition held in Genk - Limburg (2012), Manifesta shifted its attention from the East-West axis to the North-South axis within Europe and concentrated more on the promotion of regions than cities. In its last and on-going period that started in 2014 in St. Petersburg, it went beyond the EU zone after the global systemic crisis and acted pragmatically in terms of its discourse. By investigating each editions' complex set of relations in detail, this dissertation contributes to a better understanding of both Manifesta and the phenomenon of contemporary art biennials.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE: ALEX THINIUS

Genders as Genres: Understanding Dynamic Categories
Agnietenkapel, 7 July 2021 13:00 hrs. | Supervisors: Beate Roessler, Robin Celikates

What does it mean to be of a particular gender? I answer this question with an account of genders as dynamic categories, exploring the analogy between what genders are (e.g., men or women) and what genres are (e.g., Novels, Ballads, or Hip-Hop). For instance, due to its relation to other and earlier pieces, we recognize, e.g., a particular song as Hip-Hop. However, the piece will also develop that genre further. Likewise, e.g., the category of men emerges, persists and transforms through a specific sort of response of individuals to earlier supposed men, which emerges in social interactions.

Drawing on critical and (trans-)feminist theory, phenomenologist, enactivist, and systems theoretical approaches, I show that gender categories themselves develop in a dynamic between three elements: (1) at any given time, there is an enactment class of individuals ambiguously belonging to the category in question; (2) these individuals are, in an embodied and intersubjective way, enacted as practical reinterpretations of earlier members of that category; (3) this unfolds in a matrix of hermeneutic and material relations, which loop with both the class and the enaction.

Thereby, that an individual is gendered, emerges between two levels of enaction, that of bodily people and that of the dynamic between them. As what an individual is gendered in enaction, however, is constituted by relations within and beyond that situation. This responsive realization gives rise to feedbacking histories of acts, people, relations, and enactment classes, thus explaining how gender can be both solid and open to change.

NEW ASCA MEMBER: PEI-SZE CHOW



Pei-Sze is joining UvA's Media Studies department as an Assistant Professor in Media and Culture, and will be teaching courses on film studies and global media culture. Her research has centred on peripheral screen cultures in Scandinavia and other small national cinemas such as Singapore, with an emphasis on spatial, media-geographic approaches to film and media research. At UvA she will embark on a new project on the impact of artificial intelligence technologies in film production. She was previously based at Aarhus University in Denmark, where she was awarded the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship for a project on the Danish regional screen ecosystem. She holds a PhD in film studies from University College London (UCL) and has taught courses in film and interdisciplinarity at UCL and the University of Greenwich.

NEW ASCA PHD CANDIDATES

In the previous newsletter we welcomed Pinar Türer as new ASCA PhD candidate. Over the past few weeks, ASCA hired three other new PhD candidates in externally funded projects. For the PhD position *Transforming Access to Audiovisual Archives* in a Swiss National Science Foundation funded collaborative project between Eye, Lausanne and Zürich, **Kate Saccone** was selected. Kate has her MA in Film and Media Studies from Columbia University, NY, and is currently finishing the Preservation & Presentation of the Moving Image MA in Amsterdam.

For the ERC project led by Boris Noordenbos on *Post-Socialist Cultures of Suspicion*, **Marysia Plichta** will be focusing on the Smolensk case, and **Anna Greszta** on the Donbas. Anna has a Msc in Anthropology from the University of Copenhagen. Marysia completed the Research Master of Arts in Media Studies at the UvA. Since February 2021, 11 self-funded PhD candidates have joined or are about to join ASCA. We introduce them below.

To all: A very warm welcome!

Karin Benjamin, *A full hearing of Spoken Word Poetry in Cape Vernacular Afrikaans*

Supervisors: Margriet van der Waal, Gaston Franssen

Over the past few decades, Spoken Word Poetry (SWP) has become very popular in South Africa. It is no longer marginal but is becoming mainstream, yet there has not been much in-depth study into SWP, certainly not in Afrikaans. SWP is a hybrid and complex phenomenon and to study SWP requires an expansion of our critical methodologies. It demands a new approach from literary studies: a critical tool is needed with which oral poetry can be seriously reviewed or criticised. I take up this challenge and will specifically focus on Spoken Word Poetry, in Cape vernacular Afrikaans (Afrikaans), which is gaining ground in both spoken and written poetry.

My research will consist of mapping the scene, defining the scene and interpreting the performances. I will start by mapping what is happening in the field, in Cape Town and surrounds.

Secondly I will investigate the function of SWP for both poets and audience: I will define the socio-political and cultural role of SWP, in the light of linguistic citizenship, identity politics, post-colonialism and resistance literature. Lastly I will try to develop a critical framework for analysing a SWP performance. I will participate in and record Performances of SWP and will do a 'full hearing', a detailed analysis of all the elements that form part of this 'combinatory literature', as to answer the question how to 'read' an oral poem and derive a framework for interpreting SWP.

Laurin Berresheim, *Balancing Privacy - Resolving Conflicts Between Interests*

Supervisors: Beate Roessler, Thomas Nys

The academic literature on privacy largely focusses on the question what privacy is and why we need to protect it. A question which however received less attention and remains disputed is how to resolve conflicts between privacy and other interests. This thesis looks at the suggestion that in such situations privacy needs to be "balanced" against other interests. While strongly disputed in a legal context, the thesis argues that balancing can provide an answer when it is seen as embedded in a wider process of deliberation. It will lay out how this concept of balancing can be applied to concrete cases such as the debate on the EU regulation concerning the respect for private life and the protection of personal data in electronic communications which was proposed in 2017.

Laila Bouziane, *Utopia, Technology and Posthuman Bodies in Jeanette Winterson Fiction*

Supervisors: Esther Peeren, Niall Martin

In their ambition to imagine societies and ways of being in the world beyond its existing configuration, traditions of utopian thought have always been invested in thinking beyond an idea of the human as it currently exists. With the emergence of posthuman

thought and knowledge, imagining a better society requires a redefinition of the idea of the human and a revision of utopian ideals in an increasingly technologized world. This project examines the intersection of utopian tendencies and posthumanist discourse in twenty-first century fiction. By engaging with both utopian and posthumanist discourses in their different concerns, this fiction explores how subjectivities are reconstructed in and through contexts of human and nonhuman entanglements.

Emre Güler, *Masculinity Crises in 60s' Novels: A Blast From the Past?*

Supervisors: Maria Boletsi, Ernst van Alphen

This dissertation will analyze a collection of eight novels written in 1960s in Turkish from a gender-sensitive perspective. In this respect, masculinity representations in these narratives will be analyzed. The novels will be analyzed within the framework of New Historicism as a literary criticism method. The theoretical tools that will be used while approaching masculinity representations in these literary texts are 'hegemonic masculinity', alongside 'dominant fiction'. Located at the intersection of literary studies, history, gender studies and politics, this dissertation intends to fill a gap in cultural studies that focus on Turkey. In that sense, the uniqueness of the Turkish sixties will be put forth from a different perspective.

Frédérique Khazoom, *Representation of cultural identities in Netflix series: a transnational experience of television? The case of Criminal*

Supervisors: Toni Pape, Misha Kavka

This project will investigate how Netflix's global distribution practices impact the European production context and the production of Netflix's original content with a special focus on the articulation of cultural identities. The hypothesis is that Netflix is developing entirely new production formats –such as the "collection"– which go beyond conventional practices of transnational franchising or adaptation and that these new formats also transform the articulation of national and European cultural identities. The project will take a mixed-method approach that integrates production studies, content analysis and audience research to study *Criminal* (Netflix, 2019-present), a procedural drama that functions both as a transnational "collection" and as four separate local programmes: *Criminal: UK*, *Criminal: France*, *Criminal: Germany* and *Criminal: Spain*. The mixed-method approach makes it possible to situate specific cultural productions such as *Criminal* within the fundamental changes of the globalized television market brought by digitization and media convergence and their impact on multiple areas of the television environment like production, distribution, content and reception. These changes also continue to blur the lines between the local, transnational and global. As a result, the complex transformations of television also shape local economic

and cultural ecosystems as well as cultural identities. Drawing on the work of Creswell, Hartley, Mayer, Mikos, Rizzo, Schröder and other television and media theorists, this project turns to the concepts of rhizomatic assemblage and DIY citizenship for theorizing Netflix's distribution of "collections" as a further step in the ongoing double development of globalizing distribution and audience fragmentation.

Anna Kleiman, Provisional thesis title: *Dirty Looks: feminine visibility in discursive normalization of sexual violence*

Supervisors: Murat Aydemir, Noa Roei

This project will explore the relationship between prevalent discourses regarding the representation of racialized feminine bodies in public, and the normalization of sexual violence towards these bodies. Furthermore, it investigates resistance practices that employ the very means of bodily visibility to expose and resist such discourses. I examine representations of and debates surrounding nudity of differently racialized bodies in three mediums, situated within three historical and socio-cultural contexts. I suggest approaching to these representations and debates as a scarlet thread in Eurocentric discourses on feminine bodies and their aesthetics, passing throughout three centuries and remaining highly influential in contemporary phallogocentric views of women's bodies. Research objects include nude genre paintings in the Parisian Salons of the mid-19th century and their ambivalent receptions; covers of Playboy magazines from the 1980s and their contemporaneous anti-pornography receptions; and the spatio-visual tactics utilized by SlutWalk, a contemporary protest movement against sexual violence and victim blaming, and surrounding debates on social media. In choosing the terms "feminine bodies" I aim to distance my writing from

assumptions of women as exclusively female and describe "women" inclusively of trans* and intersex women. Furthermore, in "racialized bodies" I will include not only bodies of black women and women of color but also address whiteness as a racialized position.

I will examine the means of display of each space (the Salon, the commercial magazine, the streets, and Facebook) and the relations they stage between spectators and displayed bodies. I will address the potentials and pitfalls of imaging bodily exposure via different platforms of circulation, in convivial and critical relations to gendered and racialized social orders. In so doing, I will map the complex network of enduring institutional and social discourses that create and maintain the normalization of sexual violence in apparent relation to persisting imperial ideologies.

Sinine Nakhle, *From the Streets to the Screens: Following Activists in Contemporary Beirut*

Supervisors: Thomas Poell, Eliza Steinbock

Since 2019, Lebanon witnessed massive protests that were attenuated by a series of crises occurring under the rule of a failed sectarian state. The unprecedented movement, involving artists, activists, and cultural institutions, symbolically reclaimed public space. However, state repression coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic forced the movement to morph into creative forms of digital resistance. Research on digital activism has produced important insights into the dynamics of protest mobilization, organization, and communication in embodied and digital space (Gerbaudo 2012; Milan 2015; Poell and van Dijck 2018). Research on the geography of urban uprisings has also explored the relationship between protest practices and the media systems organizing them (AlSaiyad and Guvenc 2015). Little is known, however, about how *artists* mobilize politically across urban and digital spaces and what these spaces can afford to different bodies. This project takes up the challenge of bridging this research gap by employing the cultural analysis approach to interdisciplinarity to bring into dialogue the distinct but crucially intersecting concepts and methods of software studies, urban studies, and critical theory to examine embodiment in space. By following the digital, emplaced, and subjective bodies of artists and activists in Beirut today, my research will enhance the scholarly understanding of the complex, dynamic, and now globally relevant relationship between the materiality of the body and the affordances of digital platforms in contemporary social movements.

Shao Shao, *Celebrating the Chinese Rural? A Postfeminist Analysis of Female Rural-based Online Celebrities in China*

Supervisors: Esther Peeren, Tommy Tse

This study aims to unpack the controversial surge of attention to the rural world on Chinese social media. In particular, I seek to examine the power relations and cultural dynamics that construct the disseminated images of (pseudo-)empowered rural women through a postfeminist lens. I aim to interrogate the rural-life videos produced by popular rural online celebrities, and to examine how postfeminist sensibilities are localized in Chinese contexts, contributing to the construction of a regime of truth about rural Chinese women. I will mainly use visual and textual analysis, including social semiotic visual analysis and critical discourse analysis, to examine the rural-life videos produced by rural-based online celebrities.

Jie Shen, *Algorithmic Imaginaries in Contemporary China*

Supervisors: Joost de Bloois, Thomas Poell

This research aims to develop a novel framework to illuminate and examine the cultures and politics of algorithms and AI in contemporary China: how Chinese society is framing and coping with possible benefits, risks, and ethics of new technological revolution, socio-politically and culturally. By

challenging the dominant perspective of Cognitive Science and building on the Philosophy of Technology and Media Studies, this research will develop a novel theoretical approach to analyze how AI and algorithms channel and condition imaginations, such as automation anxiety, and transhumanism. In contrast to existing scholarship, which mainly focuses on Western sociotechnical imaginations, I will investigate how contemporary China frames the ethics and sociopolitical reforms provoked by new technological revolution, by comparing the discourses and social practices at different levels in contemporary China. This research hopes to shed light on an alternative way of imagining socio-technical assemblages, and of co-evolving between technology and society. Although scholars have analyzed Chinese technological landscapes, my project will be the first to adopt a Stieglerian approach to examine socio-technical imaginations in contemporary China.

Brian Trinanda, *Ki Ageng Qithmir: Traditional Islamic Cosmology and the Making of Its Cosmological Music*

Supervisors: Barbara Titus

In today's context where anthropocentrism becomes a hegemonic way of live, men are considered to have been cut from his spiritual roots and thus give them the absolute right to desacralize nature. This problem of anthropocentrism leads to the environmental crises is responded by Gus Umar Fayumi through his teaching of *Munajat Kosmik* then it is implemented into the making of cosmological music by Ki Ageng Qithmir.

There are, at least three important cases investigated through this research. First is the unique approach in the making of cosmological music by Ki Ageng Qithmir. Second is the emergence of local Islamic teaching which opposes the trend of anthropological and hyper-anthropological dimension of religious teaching common in the world religions (Islam is one among those categories). Third is about the meaning of the searching of metaphysical knowledge both for Gus Umar and Ki Ageng Qithmir; how and why they do it. This research will be based on literature reviews ranging from ecological to cosmological standing points in ethnomusicology. A fieldwork research will be conducted through observation and direct experience in studying sound. I will also employ musical ethnographies and phenomenological approach supplemented by field noting and focus group discussion.

Considering the lack of spiritual approaches in ecomusicological research and no research fully devoted to dispute the cosmological music in traditional Islamic community (or Islam in traditional worldview), I believe that this research will give new atmosphere in the constellation of ethnomusicology and religious studies.

Rui Vilela, *On the anticolonial politics of sound: the archive collections of the National Radio Broadcaster of Guinea-Bissau*

Supervisors: Julia Kursell, Barbara Titus, University of Aveiro; Susana Sardo

The research project aims at placing the restoration and digitisation of the sound archive collections of the National Radio Broadcaster of Guinea-Bissau within a transdisciplinary framework. Apart from integrating theories from the fields of archival science, cultural anthropology, ethnomusicology and sound studies, the research project foresees collaborative actions that attest to the resourcefulness of archival, aural memories as a means for art practices. To this purpose, firstly, it infers on the acoustic environment of the anticolonial struggle, and secondly, it devises strategies that allow for an echoing of sounds, voices and musics that comprise the archive. By working towards the reanimation of the archive collections, the project inquires on the possibilities of reconstructing an anticolonial politics of sound. It may be that herein lies a possibility for acting out an 'epistemic disobedience' in the humanities, put forward by decolonial approaches, that considers art practices as a place of a plural, affective production of knowledges.

Tianran Zang, *Fluid Heterotopias: Gendered Bodies and Spaces in Modern British and Chinese Women's Writing*

Supervisors: Ben Moore, Carrol Clarkson

This project focuses on gendered bodies and spaces in modern British and Chinese women's writing, and examines how they perform as sites that inspire female consciousness and accommodate alternative modernities. Drawing on Michel Foucault and Elizabeth Grosz's theories on geography, space and the body, it will analyze the interactions between gendered bodies and spaces in modern women's writing, thereby revealing how female individuals are positioned in the grid of power relations and how they can transform spatial hierarchies and demonstrate alternatives to the dominant narratives of patriarchy, hierarchy, and colonialism.

Structured chronologically, this project classifies the 1900s-1920s, 1920s-1940s and 1940s-1960s as three phases of modern British and Chinese women's writing. It analyzes how the representations of domestic spaces, public areas and natural landscapes shift across these periods, and explores how women writers renew their understanding of subjectivity through these spaces. The selected women authors include most prominently Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923), Bing Xin (1900-1999), Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), Hope Mirrlees (1887-1978), Ding Ling (1904-1986), Doris Lessing (1919-2013) and Eileen Chang (1920-

1995). And as this project also examines women's writing before the 1900s and after the 1960s, Jane Austen (1775-1817), Emily Brontë (1818-1848), Gu Taiqing (1799-1877), Angela Carter (1940-1992) and

Hong Ying (1962-) are highlighted in it. By exploring how these writers accommodate female subjectivity in their spatial experiments in literature, this project reads these women's writings as heterotopias that transcend temporal, geographical and cultural boundaries and explores the extent to which they are able to function as ideal, utopic spaces beyond the existing order.

HOW TO DO RADICAL INSTITUTIONALISM?

First IMAGINART Panel Discussion with Wayne Modest, Helena Nassif, and ruangrupa's farid rakun | In the framework of the IMAGINART project at the University of Amsterdam | Friday, July 2, 2021, 12:00-13:30 CET

Please register for the Zoom panel discussion here: <https://uva-live.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwvc-2tpz0iGNH4XqOxlN4-ghiUFaYZIGFk>

Invitees to this roundtable lead established cultural institutions, museums, and biennials that they are trying to change into more open, inclusive, emancipatory and transnational bodies—thinking public space and publics otherwise. In Audre Lorde's words, they are trying to "dismantle the master's house with the master's tools." We'd like to ask them how they are doing that.

We want to hear from our invitees how they think and practice radical institutionalism. Towards this end, we ask how they translate transformative and decolonial ideas into a program of sustained action to change established institutions. How are they changing their institutions and/or see it changing, and how much control do they have over this process? How can one create commons and micro-utopian spaces within, across and beyond established institutions? How do they relate to grassroots groups and activists that want to hold their institution accountable for the histories and power relations they are part of? How do they see this relationship transforming in the future? Are we moving from classic institutional forms towards shifting ecologies of networked organisms?

Wayne Modest is the Director of Content for the National Museum of World Cultures and the Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam and head of the Research Center for Material Culture. He is also professor of Material Culture and Critical Heritage Studies (by special appointment) in the faculty of humanities at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam (VU). Wayne Modest was previously head of the curatorial department at the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam; Keeper of Anthropology at the Horniman Museum in London, and Director of the Museums of History and Ethnography in Kingston, Jamaica. He has held visiting scholar positions at the Yale Centre for British Art, Yale University and the School for Museums Studies, New York University. Wayne Modest's work is driven by a concern for more historically contingent ways of understanding the present, especially in relation to material culture/museum collections. His research interests include issues of belonging and displacement; material mobilities; histories of (ethnographic) collecting and

exhibitionary practices; difficult/contested heritage (with a special focus on slavery, colonialism and post-colonialism); Caribbean Thought. More recently Modest has been researching and publishing on heritage and citizenship in Europe with special attention for urban life, and on ethnographic museums and questions of redress/repair.

Helena Nassif is a multi-disciplinary researcher of culture. She is currently the managing director of Culture Resource (Al Mawred Al Thaqafy), a non-profit organization working on supporting the arts and culture sector in the Arab region and diaspora. Helena received her PhD in Media Studies from the University of Westminster in 2015. Her career in culture and media research builds on years of work in the non-governmental sector, the development industry, program design and evaluation, grants management, adult training, and television and documentary film production.

farid rakun trained as an architect (B.Arch from Universitas Indonesia and M.Arch from Cranbrook Academy of Art). He wears different hats, depending on who is asking. A visiting lecturer in the Architecture Department of Universitas Indonesia, he is also part of the artists' collective ruangrupa, with whom he co-curated TRANSaction: Sonsbeek 2016 in Arnhem, NL, and currently acting as the documenta fifteen's collective Artistic Direction.

ruangrupa, a Jakarta-based collective established in 2000, is currently preparing documenta fifteen (Kassel, 2022) in their capacities as the event's first ever collective Artistic Direction. It is a non-profit organization that strives to support the idea of art within urban and cultural contexts by involving artists and other disciplines such as social sciences, politics, technology, media, etc, to give critical observation and views towards Indonesian urban contemporary issues. ruangrupa also produce collaborative works in the form of art projects such as exhibitions, festivals, art labs, workshops, research, as well as books, magazines and online-journal publications. As an artists' collective, ruangrupa has been involved in many collaborative and exchange projects, including participating in exhibitions such as Gwangju Biennale (2002 & 2018), Istanbul Biennial (2005), Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (Brisbane, 2012), Singapore Biennale (2011), São Paulo Biennial (2014), Aichi Triennale (Nagoya, 2016) and Cosmopolis at Centre Pompidou (Paris, 2017). In 2016, ruangrupa curated TRANSaction: Sonsbeek 2016 in Arnhem, NL. From 2015-18, ruangrupa co-developed the cultural platform Gudang Sarinah Ekosistem together with several artists' collectives in Jakarta, located at Gudang Sarinah warehouse, Pancoran, South Jakarta. It is a cross-disciplinary space that aims to maintain, cultivate and establish an integrated support system for creative talents, diverse communities, and various institutions. It also aspires to be able to make connections and collaborate, to share knowledge and ideas, as well as to

encourage critical thinking, creativity, and innovations. The results of these joint collaborations are open for public access—and presented with various exhibitions, festivals, workshops, discussions, film screenings, music concerts, and publications of journals. In 2018, learning from their experience establishing Gudang Sarinah Ekosistem and together with Serrum and Grafis Huru Hara, ruangrupa co-initiated GUDSKUL: contemporary art collective and ecosystem studies (or Gudskul, in short, pronounced similarly like “good school” in English). It is a public learning space established to practice an expanded understanding of collective values, such as equality, sharing, solidarity, friendship and togetherness.

The IMAGINART project at the University of Amsterdam explores how artists and cultural workers are reimagining public institutions. Following the so-called social turn in contemporary art, several political and cultural theorists have argued that art’s primary function is to “imagine reality otherwise” and incite social change. Still, despite this theoretical interest in art’s capacity to reconfigure society and politics, there is a dearth of empirical studies showing how this happens in artists and political movements’ everyday practices. Accordingly, this multi-researcher project undertakes a series of ethnographic studies exploring the role of artistic practices in reimagining and transforming societies from below. Against the backdrop of state failure, transformation or withdrawal under (post)colonial, postsocialist, neoliberal, and (post)pandemic conditions, art and cultural workers create “micro-utopias”: alternative spaces of collaboration and cohabitation in which to prefigure new forms of organized collective life. IMAGINART researchers explore creative institutional experiments in Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Kurdistan, Palestine/Lebanon, and South Africa. In these contexts, artistic practice has figured prominently in recent protest movements against oppression, corruption, neoliberal restructuring, inequality, and racism. What does it mean for political and social projects to present themselves as art, and what agency does this enable and/or disable? Can we reimagine the state and our failing institutions through art?

Group members: Chiara De Cesari, Nuraini Juliastuti, Yazan Khalili, Abdulkerim Pusat, Aria Spinelli, Eszter Szakács, Carine Zaayman.

<https://imaginart.humanities.uva.nl/>

CFP: SPEAKING ABOUT THE HUMANS

Animal perspectives on the multispecies world

October 4th 2021, 1 pm – 8 pm CET – Online – University of Amsterdam

Prairie dogs discuss humans in detail. Elephants have a word for humans. Sperm whales warn each other about human attacks. Many if not most more-than-human animals need to deal with human intrusion in their lives in some way – as companions, workers, prey, for tourism or in other roles – and communicate with one

another and humans about this. They do so in order to survive, but perhaps sometimes also to maintain their culture and communities, out of affection or for fun.

For the purposes of this workshop, we propose to understand ‘speaking about humans’ broadly such as (combination of) sounds, bodily movements, facial expressions (kinesics), touch (haptics), space (proxemics), and sensorial capacities. Examples to think of are throwing feces to human visitors in zoos, leaving one’s habitat, changing one’s color, misleading humans, or passing on cultural, including linguistic, knowledge in embodied ways.

This one-day interdisciplinary workshop aims to get a better understanding of other animals’ perspectives on humans and the implications of these perspectives for developing better relations. We invite presentations on the following and other questions:

- How do we know that animals speak about humans? Do they speak as an individual and/or as a group? Are animal languages species-specific, communal or individual?
- What could be humans’ ideologies/impediments for (not) recognizing that animals speak about them?
- What do animals say about humans, and how do they say it and how do we know?
- How can we develop new listening practices and (how) should we speak back?
- What is the role of anthropomorphism in better understanding other animals? What are possible nonhuman animal equivalents of this practice?
- What are the ethical and political implications of the fact that animals speak about humans? Are their messages always political?
- Do (animal) scientists/humans recognize their own language as violent? Should they?
- How can animal perspectives inform our ideas about just multispecies societies? Should they?
- Do we need new interspecies languages and/or cultural practices for the Anthropocene?

This workshop will take place online. Invited speakers will be asked to present a 20-minute paper. To participate, please send a 100-300 word abstract to eva1.meijer@wur.nl before July 4th. Participants will be notified before August 1st. Organisation: Eva Meijer (University of Amsterdam) and Leonie Cornips (Maastricht University, KNAW). Confirmed participants: Sue Donaldson (Queen’s University, Kingston), Con Slobodchikoff (Northern Arizona University).

This event is hosted by ASCA, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

CFP: POSTHUMAN FUTURES IN ART AND

LITERATURE

Constellations & Cartographies

Soapbox Journal for Cultural Analysis, Special Issue
Deadline: July 5th, 2021 | Sponsored by OSL & NICA. In collaboration with Amalia Calderón & J. Bernardo Couto Soares

Critical posthumanism (Braidotti, 2016) works as an analytical tool that exposes restrictive structures of dominant subject-formations as well as expressing alternative representations of subjectivity. At the intersection with New Materialism (van der Tuin, 2012), knowledge production/transmission becomes a discursive and material production of reality: understood as situated and embodied visions (Haraway, 1988).

With the speculative turn (van der Tuin, et al. 2015), epistemic inquiry shifts beyond the limits of human perception, refusing to make a separation from (non)human subjecthood. The emergence of divergent epistemic processes have opened the spectrum of scrutiny to other disciplines, such as spiritual (Griffin, 1978), embodied (Alaimo, 2016) and artistic research (Cotter, 2017). Artistic methodologies are challenging the normative structures of present ontologies, instead formulated as a planetary necessity and method for survival (Haraway, 2016) that can reclaim spaces of contested heritage (Skawennati, 2016) and re-map our materiality.

Art is enacted as a disruptive force beyond hierarchical epistemology that also exposes the violence attached to any methodology. Posthuman art practices have the potentiality to envision a future wherein humanity reformulates its hegemonic ontology in relation to the living, breathing world it coexists with (see the feminist world-building archive *Potential Wor(l)ds*); and whose power is gathered through alternative knowledge methods in the pursuance of a radical relational planetary existence.

In collaboration with Amalia Calderón & Bernardo Couto Soares, Soapbox Journal will publish a special issue on 'Cartographies and Constellations of Posthuman Futures' based on the 'Posthuman Futures: Art & Literature' symposium. This publication aims to carry on and disseminate the work brought forth during the symposium, but also invites new contributions from scholars, artists and artist-scholars, both established and emerging. The publication intends to provide an interdisciplinary framework that enhances hybridity in knowledge transmission, spaces for affirmative ethics (Braidotti, 2017) and "thinking with" (de la Bellacasa, 2012) alternative onto-epistemologies: in short, a constellation of divergent voices.

This issue is kindly supported by NICA, Netherland School for Cultural Analysis, and OSL, Netherlands Research School for Literary Studies.

The editorial board welcomes proposals on topics including, but not limited to:

- Ecofeminist pedagogies
- Speculative fiction & ecopoetics
- The science and art: fluctuating borders
- Posthuman rights & legislation
- Multispecies entanglement
- Indigenous studies & reclaiming territories
- Queer (in)humanities
- Ecological exile & spatial justice

- Gaia & systems beyond the Anthropocene
- Power/violence in art methods
- Care and forms of Caring as earthly resistance
- Non-linear history & memory
- Storytelling as de-colonial practice
- Artistic methods of the non-human
- Oppressive art & propaganda narratives
- Planetary bodies
- Interspecies communication
- Neurodiversity as emancipation
- Posthuman consciousness & psychedelics
- Irrational epistemes of madness, spirituality, nature
- Posthuman methodologies

Please make sure to follow the guidelines below when submitting:

Text

- We accept academic articles, essays, position papers (max. 3000 words),
- We also welcome creative nonfiction, experimental writing, poetry, and other forms of speculative text (max. 1000 words)
- Please include a short abstract/introduction to the work (max. 250 words)

Visual Artwork

- Email the original file (avoid sending links).
- Include a short introduction for context (max. 250 words).

General Guidelines

- Include a short bio (e.g., artistic and research background, interest and practice, affiliations, links to own site or previous work, etc.) of max. 200 words.
- Add up to six keywords for context. (e.g., affect, AI, Butler, postmodernism, etc).
- Contributions may have a hybrid nature (academic/creative text, visual art), as interdisciplinary methods of knowledge production are encouraged.
- Follow MLA referencing and formatting styles where necessary.
- Secure permissions from copyright holders for any content that is not your own (e.g., illustrations, audio, etc).
- Mention whether this work has been, or will be, published elsewhere (e.g., blog, social media, other publishers).
- We accept submissions in English, Dutch, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and German.

Please submit your contributions to submissions@soapboxjournal.net with "Posthuman Futures" in the subject line by 5 July 2021.

CFP: "INVISIBLE MEMES FOR CULTURAL TEENS"

For our 34th issue, *Invisible Culture* seeks both scholarly and creative works that approach internet memes as aesthetic, cultural, and political objects of study. Memes have been discussed largely in their communicative and participatory capacities, particularly in the fields of communications, political science, and other social sciences. However, there are few examples of

humanistic work approaching memes and memetics as world-building practices and as cultural objects that foreground meaningful sense-making. Since the last major journal issue devoted to the topic—a 2014 special issue of *The Journal of Visual Culture*—memes have moved from niche to mainstream, from diversion to discourse, from formally simplistic to kaleidoscopically complex.

Memes draw endlessly from the ever-growing dustbin of popular visual culture, returning modified images that are, in turn, instantly modifiable. Memes are as much, if not more, part of most people's daily cultural exposure as television, film, or radio. Savvy creators of "legacy" media anticipate memification (one need only think of Lil Nas X sliding down the stripper pole to Hell) and marketing professionals "in on the joke" leverage the authorless form for free advertising.

The bulk of anglophone meme research since 2015 has focused on the role of memes in the spread of extremist ideologies as a means of "[weaponizing] irony to attract and radicalize potential supporters, challenge progressive ideologies and institutions, redpill normies, and create a toxic counterpublic" (Greene 2019). This attention is both necessary and appropriate. However, we hope to address memetics more broadly and to emphasize areas that haven't received the same attention. Memes are hardly unique to any one age group, race, class, or indeed any region of the world; nor do they exclusively reside in the domain of humor. Memes spread and develop online and can never be fully untethered from the exigencies of platform, algorithm, location, and law. Yet vernacular meme cultures are as varied as the panoply of human experience. Memes move across and within ethnic and national identifications, expressions of gender and sexuality, political ideology, and language family. In this issue we seek work that speaks to that capacious view of memes, from part to elusive whole, whether focusing on the deeply contextual particularities of a specific meme or community, the subversive or revolutionary potential of particular imagery, discussing the practice of meme artist or reckoning with memetics as a worldwide phenomenon. We hope for submissions of scholarly and creative work across disciplines, methodologies, communities, and positionalities.

Contributions to this issue may address (but are by no means limited to) the following topics and themes:

- Global platforms, networks, and communities: mainstream social media, photo and video sharing, social aggregation, image boards, live streaming, blogs, the "dark web"
- Vernacular meme cultures, hyper-specific communities and identities in niche groups and networks
- Far Right networks and platforms including Parler, Gab, 8chan, Voat, Clouthub, Pilled.net, Patriots.win, Greatawakening.win, Pilled.net

- African American and Black meme cultures, Queer meme imaginaries, diasporic meme publics and other online channels of identification and solidarity for people(s) whose identities have been marginalized
- Meme Formats; Image Macros; Reaction GIFs; Shitposting; Copy Pasta and Creepy Pasta; Generational Memes (Gen Z, Boomers, etc.); Prank links such as Rickrolling and shock and gore links; Codewords and codified imagery; Deep Fried Memes, Meme Art
- Tik Tok and other moving image memes and the role of sound, repetition, and performance therein
- The transnational use of memes (e.g. the very different contexts surrounding the Joker, Pepe, and Guy Fawkes in different countries and cultures)
- Non-US platforms such as Weibo, Tencent, Renren, WeChat, VK, and OK.ru
- Authorship; "Meme lords"; "Blue checks"; licensed imagery
- Commodification and Decommodification; Ownership and NFTs
- Media archaeology; dead platforms; nostalgia

Please send completed papers (with references following the guidelines from the *Chicago Manual of Style*) of between 4,000 and 10,000 words to invisible.culture@ur.rochester.edu by June 30, 2021. Inquiries should be sent to the same address.

Creative/Artistic Works

In addition to written materials, *InVisible Culture* is accepting works in other media (video, photography, drawing, code) that reflect upon the theme as it is outlined above. Please submit creative or artistic works along with an artist statement of no more than two pages to invisible.culture@ur.rochester.edu. For questions or more details concerning acceptable formats, go to <http://ivc.lib.rochester.edu/contribute> or contact the same address.

**InVisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture (IVC)* is a student-run interdisciplinary journal published online twice a year in an open access format. Through peer reviewed articles, creative works, and reviews of books, films, and exhibitions, our issues explore changing themes in visual culture. Fostering a global and current dialog across fields, IVC investigates the power and limits of vision.

NEW BOOK BY JEFF DIAMANTI

Climate and Capital in the Age of Petroleum Locating Terminal Landscapes (Bloomsbury 2021)

Jeff Diamanti describes the destructive relationship between climate and capital through the exponential growth of the petroleum industry over the last 40 years. Building on key insights in the environmental and energy humanities, Diamanti introduces the concept of the 'terminal landscape' as a site of storage, transformation and transition, essential to critical ecology in the 21st century.

Climate and Capital in the Age of Petroleum presents these scenes of transformation as sites through which post-industrial capitalism distributes fossil fuels into the world. Diamanti uses this concept to redefine the post-industrial landscape by revealing the global flows of exchange and storage that precede the distribution of fossil fuels into the world as social form. Advancing a new media theory of energy, fossil fuels and other finite resources become new types of distributable media. Through this line of thinking, the book makes solid connections between media technologies and energy cultures that help to shape a radical critique of the current energy infrastructure that characterises global capitalism.

Arguing that this infrastructure rests on millennia of compact matter, centuries of colonial violence, and decades of technological development, Diamanti's analysis deepens our understanding of the environment as a 'terminal landscape' through case studies of oil companies, countries, artworks, and historical events. Using his under-examined typology of global energy further theorises and politicises the climate crisis for scholars and activists alike.

NEW LEGENDA BOOK SERIES: VISUAL CULTURE

Legenda, the book imprint of the Modern Humanities Research Association, is launching its newest book series: Visual Culture, edited by Carolin Duttlinger. Full details of the series and its first five titles can be found at <http://www.mhra.org.uk/series/vc>.

Visual culture is a vibrant and fast-growing field which showcases the interdisciplinary nature of research in Modern Languages and the Humanities more generally. The new Legenda series Visual Culture reflects the dynamism of this field. It publishes cutting-edge monographs and edited collections on any aspect of global visual culture from the Middle Ages to the present day. In line with this expansive scope, areas of interest include photography, advertising, memorials, urban visual studies, installation and performance art, commercial art and design, museum and gallery studies, and text-image relations in a variety of media and contexts. The first five volumes

Editorial Board:

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Proposals should be submitted in the first instance to the General Editor, [Carolin Duttlinger](#). Visual Culture

publishes research monographs and edited collections on any aspect of visual culture except (a) art history in the strict methodological sense, for which there are numerous publication opportunities with university presses, and (b) film studies, which has its own Legenda series, *Moving Image*.

Books in the Visual Culture series are fully illustrated. As with all Legenda publications, they are initially published in hardcover and ebook editions, and subsequently as affordable paperbacks. No subvention or other funding from authors is required. As publisher of Legenda, the MHRA is conscious that rights fees are an increasing burden for scholarly authors in visual culture, and particularly for early career researchers who may have less access to institutional funding. For a period of three years in the first instance, authors are able to apply for grants of up to £500 per title to meet these costs where other funding sources (from research grants or departmental allowances) are unavailable.