

Nieuwsbrief 260

March 2023

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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; Moiloo; 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.

FORMS OF (MORE THAN) HUMAN RELATIONALITY

Call for Papers ASCA Workshop 2023 - Organized by Nadica Denić, Jasmijn Leeuwenkamp, and Eszter Szakács | Amsterdam, June 28 – 30, 2023

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

Possible questions and lines of inquiry might include:

- How can relational frameworks help imagine new ethical connections to humans and/or non-humans without overlooking destructive or violent aspects of relationality?
- What kind of ecological ethico-political commitments emerge from a relational ontology (thinking in terms of network, assemblage, kinship)?
- How does aesthetics mediate relationality?
- What kind of ethical relations are enabled/obstructed by a certain aesthetics?
- How do transparency or opacity as modes of representation affect aesthetic mediation of relationality?
- How do cultural objects and artistic practices enact relationality?
- How does relationality inform different ways of organizing, including (initiating) infrastructures?

- How can relationality be thought through and enacted across opposing (geo)political paradigms and contexts?
- How can a relational framework help understand different forms of ethnic and racial embodiment?
- In what ways can relationality be a method for connecting, e.g. between the “Global North” and the “Global South,” in sensitive, non-hierarchical, and complex modes that bypass the representational ethos resulting in the simplification/decontextualization/reappropriation of origins and “sources” for the use of the more powerful?

Confirmed keynotes

Pooja Rangan (Amherst College)

Kathrin Thiele (Utrecht University)

Patricia MacCormack (ARU Cambridge)

General information

ASCA Workshop 2023 is a three-day in-person event taking place in Amsterdam, Netherlands (within the “Universiteitskwartier”). Please note that we cannot accommodate virtual presentations.

How to apply?

We welcome individual applications in the form of academic and artistic research. Please submit a 300-word abstract, 5 keywords, a short bibliography, and a short bio. Presentations should be up to 20 minutes in length. If you are considering a different presentation format, please get in touch with us and we will do our best to accommodate your request.

Events such as workshops, roundtables or seminars are also welcome. Please submit a proposal that includes a title, a short description (300 words) and a list of participants.

All applications should be submitted by March 31, 2023 to ascaworkshop2023@gmail.com. We will notify the applicants about selection by April 14, 2023.

Attendance

There are no registration fees. Conference attendance is free of charge for presenters and for general public.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE: ARNOUD ARPS



Forever Narrating “Merdeka”. Memori Melompat, Popular Culture, and the Indonesian War of Independence. Supervisors: Jeroen de Kloet, Leonie Schmidt, 29 March, 11.00 hrs. Aula

The Indonesian War of Independence is ubiquitous in Indonesian popular culture. Memories of the past and the cultural products that represent it go hand in hand. These cultural products participate in a narrativizing project that help to define the Indonesian War of Independence and the meaning of freedom (*merdeka*) after Indonesia’s independence. By analysing case studies from historical re-enactment, cinema, and music, this dissertation studies how cultural memories of the Indonesian War of Independence (1945-1949) are produced, represented, and consumed through contemporary Indonesian war-themed popular culture released between 2009 and 2019. It proposes to see these cultural memories as a form of *memori melompat* (“jumping memory”). In Indonesia, memories of the war travel temporarily, briefly, and not far from the nation. It therefore suggests more of a jump rather than a journey.

NIELS STENSEN FELLOWSHIP FOR ARNOUD ARPS

As a Niels Stensen Fellow, Arnoud will conduct research at the University of Oxford and at the University of California, Los Angeles. This project investigates how the end of the Dutch colonial era is transculturally, transnationally, and cross-medially remembered in the Netherlands and Indonesia. With a special emphasis on cinema and literature, it hypothesizes that the focus on processing historical trauma in remembrance texts, rather than the acts of violence themselves, offer an opportunity to go beyond simple black-and-white definitions of perpetratorship on the one hand, and victimhood on the other. The project aims to provide a model for further comparative research on how ‘shared colonial history’ between nations is remembered across cultures, nations, and media by mapping out structures of memory-making and determining how the complex relationship between countries is intrinsically linked by media that continuously return to the colonial past.

PEI-SZE CHOW AND CLAUDIO CELIS BUENA IAS FELLOWS



[Pei-Sze Chow](#) (Film Studies) and [Claudio Celis Buena](#) (New Media and Digital Culture) have been

appointed Fellows of the UvA [Institute for Advanced Study](#). Over the next 12 months, they will work on their project 'Automated Cinema: Technographic Explorations of Artificial Intelligence in Film Culture'. Emerging from their work in the [AI and Cultural Production research group](#) at ASCA, the project investigates how AI-powered tools are being used in the film industry and how a growing shift towards algorithmically assisted filmmaking may impact creative, economic, technical, and aesthetic aspects of film production.

Faculty members and research students are welcome to subscribe to the mailing list <http://eepurl.com/hWewBz> for updates and write to Pei-Sze and Claudio directly to learn more or discuss ideas for collaboration.

MEË YAMOMO WINS COMPOSER'S PRIZE 'THE OPEN EAR'

meLê yamomo is the fourth winner of the biannual prize for composers 'The Open Oor'. The prize consists of a bronze ear sculpture, designed by artist Ansuya Blom, and a money sum of €35,000.



Award winner meLê yamomo is a composer, researcher, theatre maker and assistant professor of Theatre and Performance Studies at the UvA. As a researcher, he is affiliated with the [Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis](#) (ASCA).

The foundation *Trillende Lucht* awards the prize once every two years to composers 'whose music reveals a world of its own or those for whom such a world is clearly in the making.'

From the jury report:

'yamomo uses text, sound and image compositionally to create works that offer new ways of framing our idea of art. Complex issues relating to colonialism are addressed through the sonic archive, resulting in works that are poetic, poignant, sometimes humorous and always profound.

His creation of artistic and sonic bridges allow us as audience members to transverse between a cognitive understanding to something experienced on other levels of our being. This is not a surface investigation but one that generously offers the audience an opportunity for expanded insight, one that asks us to

look beyond the easy notion that the West is the only centre of new thought and experience.'

CHINA FASHION POWER – MEET THE TEAM

Fashioning Power through South-South Interaction: Re-thinking Creativity, Authenticity, Cultural Mediation and Consumer Agency along China-Africa Fashion Value Chains

Tommy Tse (Media Studies) ERC Consolidator Grant 2022-2027 | Tse's project will investigate how, in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, China's global power is manifested, negotiated and resisted in people's daily life in a South-South setting using fashion as an exemplary case.

Fashion is recognised as a significant economic force globally and one of the most poignant indicators of cross-cultural exchange. By critically examining China-Africa networks of fashion production, trade and consumption using a multi-disciplinary, multi-method, multi-sited, and multi-scalar approach, this project will theorise how fashion is created, circulated, valued, and consumed in and through Global Souths Value Chains (Guangdong-Nairobi-Maputo), dissecting complex dynamics and expressions of power.

[Read more](#)

The Team is complete and ready to go:



Johanna von Pezold

Johanna von Pezold

Postdoc in Authenticity, Cultural Mediation, and Consumption: Ethnography of African Fashion Marketplace

With a background in Chinese Studies, Johanna von Pezold has been conducting ethnographic research on Chinese fashion in Africa for more than six years. After studying in Hamburg, Rio de Janeiro, Oxford, and Beijing, she recently graduated with a PhD in Sociology from the University of Hong Kong, examining the creation of fashion in the trade and retail of Chinese-made garments and textiles in Mozambique. She has worked for various think tanks and management consulting firms in Germany, Brazil, and China, and is the first recipient of the CHAT Research Grant, awarded by the Hong Kong Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile. Johanna is enthusiastic about China-Africa relations, pop culture, chickens, and everything colourful.



Wei Wang (Jupiter)

Wei Wang

Postdoc in Creativity, Authenticity, and Cultural Mediation: Ethnography of China-Africa Fashion Production

Wei Wang (Jupiter) received his PhD in the Department of Social Work and Social Administration at the University of Hong Kong. His research explores China's multi-dimensional global influences on Africa through ethnographic inquiries with grounded Chinese-African interactions. He previously studied the African community in Guangzhou, China. His Ph.D. thesis focuses on the cross-border marriage between Chinese men and Ethiopian women who formed their marriages in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, and its neighboring areas. It spotlights global China's incompatible hard and soft power as a rising global South instead of a global North country.



Fairuzah Atchulo

Fairuzah Munaaya Atchulo

PhD in Affect, Agency, and Memory: African Consumers' Wardrobes and Everyday Fashion Practices

Fairuzah Atchulo is a PhD researcher in Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam. She holds a joint master's degree in ERASMUS Mundus Master's Excellence Programme "Euroculture" from the University of Groningen and the University of Uppsala. She spent over five years in South Korea to pursue a master's degree in Development Policy from KDI School of Public Policy and Development, and also attained a bachelor's degree in International Studies

with a concentration in International Law and Diplomacy and East Asian Studies from Ewha Womans University. In Uppsala, Fairuzah worked with the EU RESPOND Horizon 2020 Project on issues related to migration, refugee law and integration within the EU. Her research areas range from history, culture, diplomacy, East Asian Studies, public policy to international law.

As a Ghanaian, the topic of colonialism and its variations have always been of Fairuzah's interest. They informed her study on the varying relations between Europe and Africa post-independence, leading to her research on the neo-colonial relationship between France and its former African colonies via Cooperation Agreements and its continuous impact on social, political, and economic growth and development. To this ERC project, Fairuzah will be expanding on her studies into more contemporary relations between Africa and China, with a focus on the aspects, conduits, and impacts of neo-colonialism in these relations and the use of fashion as a medium of mediation, networking, and resistance.



Qidi Feng

Qidi Feng

PhD in Creativity, Authenticity, and Cultural Mediation: Ethnography of China-Africa Fashion Trade

Qidi Feng received his bachelor's degree in English and Anthropology from Sun Yat-sen University, with a focus on the recreational life of Nigerian expats in Guangzhou. His five-year ethnographic research (2017 - 2022) documented the changes in the African diasporic community in China through the COVID-19 pandemic. Qidi received his master's degree in Urban Studies from London School of Economics and Political Science in 2021.

After that, Qidi worked as a research curator at Guangdong Times Museum for two years. His work consisted of art projects and exhibitions focusing on migration life, ethnicities and identity politics, especially in Southwest China and Indochina. He worked with artists, designers, researchers and curators across disciplines.

In this ERC Project, Qidi will adopt methodologies from different disciplines, focussing on the materiality of fashion items and identity-making through production.

NEW ASCA PHD CANDIDATES IN 2023

In the first months of 2023, seven new PhD candidates joined our community. Warm Welcome!

Timoteus Anggawan Kusno, *Dismantling the Nostalgia: Art Practices Dealing with Colonial Leftovers*

Supervisors: Leonie Schmidt, Jeroen de Kloet

Throughout my doctoral research, I want to examine and reflect on my practice as an artist, dealing with and working on the (de-)colonial issues within the slippery terrain of history. I will dig into the specter of Indonesia's colonial histories through my art projects, in which I mobilize an ethnographical approach. In this Ph.D. in the arts, I will investigate my practice of working with Indonesian colonial objects, matters, and discourses; including my collaboration with the Rijksmuseum for the "Revolusi!" exhibition, my video art series "Phantoms," and my long-term project of the 'fictional' Centre for Tanah Runcuk Studies.

Parvez Alam, *On the Genealogy of Walter Benjamin's Conception of Now-Time: The Significance of Sufi Influence in the Analysis of Theoretical, Cultural and Political Representations of the Now.*

Supervisors: Maria Boletsi, Joost de Bloois, Yaniv Hagbi

Walter Benjamin in his *On the Concept of History* constructed a concept called "now-time", which he also describes as a non-linear conception of messianic time. In this research, I will propose an interpretation of this concept that genealogically connects it with the concept of *waqt* found in Sufi literature and Islamicate philosophy. We live in a present in which the production of perpetual crisis has become the norm in mainstream popular culture, conspiratorial and far-right subcultures, as well as in mainstream political rhetoric. The proposed genealogy of now-time will shed new light on the relevance of the concept in the study and critique of cultural objects that represent our present as a period (often perpetual) of crises.

Vanessa Richter, *Imagineries of Artificial Intelligence - Mapping (Social Media) Platforms' Role in Shaping (Public) Tech Imagineries*

Supervisors: Thomas Poell, Christian Katzenbach

The imagination and future perception of what AI can and should become have led to different trajectories showcasing the importance of social and cultural discursive imagination in envisioning and determining trajectories of AI and its integration into society. These imaginations can be understood as "sociotechnical imagineries" (Jasanoff, 2009; Jasanoff & Kim, 2015), i.e. the societal understandings of how the possibilities, potentials, and risks embedded in certain technologies are socially constructed. Imagineries greatly influence how societies deal with emerging key technologies like AI (Bareis & Katzenbach, 2021). In turn, different stakeholders try to push their own imagineries into

public discourse through different channels such as media and policy to become publicly institutionalized. Social media platforms (SMP) such as Twitter, YouTube, TikTok, and Douyin play an essential role in this process as both stakeholders themselves and spaces for stakeholders from industry, politics, media, civil society, and academia to interact in the ongoing AI discourse. Simultaneously, as SMPs employ and innovate AI products, they benefit from positive AI imaginaries, which leads to a conflict of interest where the platform has clear incentives to shape public discourse around AI. Therefore, my PhD project questions the impact of (social media) platforms on AI imaginaries while considering different stakeholders from industry, politics, media, academia, and civil society.

Veerle van Wijngaarden, *A Duty to Desire? On the Politics of Sexual Desire*

Supervisors: Daniel Loick, Jana Cattien

This project analyses how sexuality and sexual desire – interpreted as not only biological or personal, but also already social or cultural – can be understood within the framework of political and social repression and justice. Social critiques of sexuality commonly focus on either 1) problems of consent, or 2) social repression concerning sexual desires. However, recently, in the wake of #MeToo, several feminist theorists have argued that even consensual sex should be scrutinised more thoroughly. They argue that *all* forms of sexuality and sexual desire are related to intersecting forms of social domination (Angel 2021; Rose 2021; Srinivasan 2021). This research examines what social and political claims can be made concerning sexuality and sexual desire: if sexuality and sexual desire are culturally constituted and intertwined with domination, does that mean that we should change our desires to make them less oppressive? To answer this question this research 1) analyses the cultural constitution of sexuality and sexual desire; 2) investigates historical attempts of changing desires; 3) conceptualises desire in poststructuralist and psychoanalytical philosophy; and 4) interprets and combines these insights together with political theories on social inclusion and equality. The aim of this research is to examine theories concerning the social constitution of sexuality and sexual desire, while at the same time leaving space for the deeply felt personal experience of desire as inextricably bound to personal feelings and preferences. Doing so, the project offers a theory of sexuality and sexual desire that is adequate to 21st century politics and society.

Julian Fernandez, *A Postmodern Vaudeville: Analysing the dramaturgical devices for distancing, commentary and reflection in the musicals of Bob Kander and Fred Ebb*

Supervisors: Kati Röttger, Millie Taylor, Julia Kursell

Best known for Broadway and West End musicals, such as *Cabaret* (1966), *Chicago* (1975) and *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1993), writing duo John Kander (*1927) and Fred Ebb (1928-2004) played a significant part in the development of the American musical in the second half of the 20th century.

This research project examines Kander and Ebb's work from a theoretical perspective, by focusing on the assimilation of earlier theatre forms, such as Varieté, Vaudeville and Minstrel Shows, etc. The research will determine the dramaturgic use of these theatre forms, their motivation, as well as their consistency as a stylistic device throughout the duo's career, while drawing parallels to Brechtian methods and inspecting Kander and Ebb's work for postmodern and concept musical aspects, as well as self-commentary and irony. An in-depth look at the development of these musicals, as well as Harold Prince and Bob Fosse's contributions to their work will establish this discussion. Furthermore the project will deal with the reception of the most well-known Kander and Ebb shows and their revivals-investigating the factors that helped them to their successes and how these factors help shape an analysis based on interpretation and social context.

Serra Hughes, *Worlding Communication: Novel Communication Barriers in Global Science Fiction and Speculative Literature*

Supervisors: Esther Peeren, Emelia Quinn

The novel communication barrier, an innovation beyond the norms of empirical reality that obstructs mutual understanding, is identified in this thesis as a distinct literary trope across a transnational range of science fiction and speculative literature. Locating this mechanism across a diverse corpus of texts from the Cold War period to the present and from the United States to Britain, Canada, Nigeria, Poland, Spain and China, this PhD project is the first to untether these novelties from their local contexts to develop urgently needed clarity on communication in a world of deepening divides. *Worlding Communication* uses Eric Hayot's theory of worldedness to demonstrate how novel communication barriers confront a world-representational norm, affirming the existence of a universal world-concept of communication while calling attention to the possibility of its transformation. The thesis identifies three key categories through which the novel communication barriers manifest – through ontological alterity, differing modes of consciousness, and physical blockages – and substantiates their transformative potential through Jurgen Habermas's theory of communication in order to demonstrate how the friction generated by communication disturbances creates new worlds. Taking a world literary approach to a global crisis, this project answers the call to approach literature in more expansive ways, not only to

reflect on the economic, cultural, and social transformations of globalization but also to address them, demonstrating, in the process, the vital role literature has to play in reimagining the ways the world can be transformed.

Tijn Smits, *Moral Truth: Exploring the Concept of Practical Cognition in Kant's Ethics*

Supervisors: Beate Roessler, Thomas Nys

Constructivism has become the dominant meta-ethical interpretation of Kant's ethics, positing that Kantian moral judgments can be true or false but only as the valid result of a human procedure of construction. This has led to the widespread view that the truth status of moral judgments is derivative to a condition of practical adequacy. This project proposes a competing model of moral truth based on the concept of practical cognition, drawing a close analogy between theoretical and practical forms of cognition, by which the 'real possibility' of (moral) objects is tested. The research formulates a robustly realist meta-ethical account that provides a stronger foundation for moral objectivity than its constructivist alternative, but also avoids the speculative metaphysics of existing intuitionist models. The project researches the reception of Kant's moral metaphysics by his British and German successors and investigates the implications of the proposed meta-ethical model for our belief in the existence of free will and for the role that intuitions are thought to play in ethical decision-making.

ASCA PHD DRINKS!

All ASCA PhD candidates are invited to join for drinks in **Skok, Zeedijk 4-8, 1012 AX Amsterdam**. This is an informal recurring event every first Thursday of the month, starting at 18.00, with first two drinks on ASCA. It is not necessary to reserve a spot, just drop by! The dates for Spring 2023 are: March 2, April 6, May 4. Contact: Jasmijn Leeuwenkamp j.leeuwenkamp@uva.nl

CLEVER MONKEY – STUBBORN DONKEY

Seminar exploring the emerging tripartite relationship between animals, humans and technologies | Organized by Gavin Mueller and Mari Bastashevski. | First session is on 8 March 2023, 2-5 pm. Bushuis F2.11C

Today the absence of animals in our lives is inversely proportional to the multitude of media beings that look back at us from eternally scrolling canvases. Following the monkey & the donkey as our guides, this seminar will examine how these animal figures, frequently referenced in in continental philosophy, are deployed to reinforce age-old clichés and hierarchies. Our goal will be to transcend this rather vapid metaphorical trope to explore the emerging tripartite relationship between animals, humans and technologies. Focusing on the instances that already succeed as examples of what Isabelle Stengers calls a "diplomatic intervention", the

seminar will match cultural theories with concrete and material media practices in an attempt to enable a shift from thinking *about* animals and technologies to thinking *with* other-than-human cultures.

Situated around a specific enduring problem, each of the six sessions will follow the proverbial monkey and the donkey from the “bad” new things to the “good” old ones and back again, concerning ourselves less with finding one particular moment where things all went wrong, but rather the auxiliary paths that perhaps offer greater unexplored potentialities.

During this seminar we’ll engage with and reference authors including: Carol Gigliotti, Lorraine Daston, and Gregg Mitman, Cary Wolfe, Tom Tyler, Oxana Timofeeva, Patricia McCormack, Ted Chiang, and Tim Ingold. We will also analyse the questions that arise in each session by drawing on historical and contemporary media practices concerning animals and tech, touching on works by Karin Bolender, Renata de Bonis, Ian Ingram, Deke Weaver, Pierre Huyghe, Nicolas Primat, and Alexandru Solomon. During the seminar, all participants will be asked to prepare conceptual proposal, a question, or a critique relevant subjects discussed by the group as well to engage with the ideas of other participants.

After the first seminar, the readings will be provided three weeks in advance of the upcoming seminar session.

While this seminar is structured towards students and scholars who have some experience with cross-disciplinary ideas, it is open to anyone willing to contribute from their particular knowledge position in a constructive and supportive way.

Gavin Mueller is Assistant Professor of New Media and Digital Culture at the UvA. He is the author of *Breaking Things at Work* (Verso 2021) and *Media Piracy in the Cultural Economy* (Routledge 2019).

Mari Bastashevski is an ASCA visiting researcher. She is an artist and researcher who has taught at KIT NTNU, Academy of Architecture, and KABK. Her current work centers on future imaginaries that cut beyond the culture of techno-optimism and collapsism. In 2021, while at ALICE lab at Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne, she spend a lot of time with a rout of garden snails, thinking through the tripartite relationship between animals, humans, and technology and working on research that explores how emerging technologies of seeing, such as VR, could become sites of field research into said relationships. She has exhibited with Bonniers Konsthalle, Maison Populaire, Musée de l’Elysée, HKW Berlin, Art Souterrain, Noorderlicht, and published in Time Magazine, The New York Times, Courier International, Le Monde, e-flux, VICE, among others. She was artist-in-residence at Chateau D’Oiron, Cité des Art, Mediamatic, and IASPIS and a research fellow at the Data & Society Institute in New York and ISP, Yale.

Interested participants should register with Gavin Mueller g.c.mueller@uva.nl to receive the readings.

THIS IS FILM!

The programme of This is Film! Film Heritage in Practice is now [online!](#) 8 March - 24 May 2023

This is Film! Film Heritage in Practice is an annual public lecture series devoted to notable projects in the fields of film restoration and film heritage, with international guest speakers and film screenings. Under the overarching theme of ‘Activating the Archive’, also the theme of this year’s Eye International Conference, scholars and film professionals worldwide present and discuss remarkable archival practices and initiatives.

Each of the six sessions will highlight different institutional and non-institutional efforts to save and activate audiovisual heritage. Together with guests, we explore topics like the work of Cimatheque - Alternative Film Centre Cairo, the preservation of Chilean exile films, and audiovisual heritage in India. Each session will feature a short introduction by Giovanna Fossati (Chief Curator at Eye and Professor of Film Heritage at the University of Amsterdam), followed by a lecture and Q&A with an international expert on the topic and a film screening.

#1: Cimatheque - Alternative Film Center Cairo

8 March - 15:30 | Lecture by Tamer El Said (Artistic Director of Cimatheque) paired with screening of Atteyat Al-Abnoudy’s documentaries.

#2: Dispossessed Archives

22 March - 15:30 | Lecture by Amal Alhaag (3rd Eye Scholar in Residence), Barby Asante and Jeftha Pattikawa paired with film excerpts.

ON THE ECOLOGICAL COMPLEXITY OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Talk by Adam Nocek & discussion | 8 March 2023 16.00 – 19.00 Humanities Labs (Bushuis), F0.01, Kloveniersburgwal 48, 1012 CX Amsterdam

The premise of this talk is that we need to think about artificial intelligence as a complex ecosystem, and that doing so requires navigating thorny disputes in the theoretical humanities and social sciences concerning the autonomy and environmental dependency of machine learning algorithms. Further, the talk contends that steering this course requires entering into series of debates concerning AI and its metaphysical, political, and ecological existence, and underway in fields strongly influenced by the history of critical theory and continental philosophy, and also operating under the umbrella of posthumanism and speculative and materialist philosophy.

My proposal for an ecologically complex view of machine learning takes shape against the backdrop of various tensions and dead ends that arise in two competing theoretical discourses: the first, stresses the

autonomy of computational rationality; and the second, emphasizes the dependency and impact these algorithmic systems have on planetary systems. Along the way, I trace the ways in which these different conceptual projects also become legible through divergent but equal investments in Karl Marx's work on automation. But ultimately, certain intractable problems regarding machine learning and its relation to the interiority and exteriority of algorithmic systems will give us permission to search for a revised conception of ecological complexity in the work of Conrad Hal Waddington, Lynn Margulis, and Alfred North Whitehead. Such a reframing will also seed new potentials for political critique, and also reaffirm the central importance of the theoretical humanities for engaging AI futures.

Adam Nocek is Associate Professor of Philosophy of Technology and Science and Technology Studies at the School of Arts, Media + Engineering, Arizona State University. He is the Founding Director, [Center for Philosophical Technologies](#) (CPT) and Editor of [Techniques Journal](#). He is the author of *Molecular Capture: The Animation of Biology* (2021) and is working on his next monograph, *Governmental Design: On Algorithmic Autonomy*. Website: adamnocek.com

READING GROUP: PLATFORMIZATION

A Reading Group for Early Career Scholars

A Global Digital Cultures organized monthly reading group discussing the literature and processes of platformization | 8 March – June 14, 2023.

Commercial online platforms have been inserting themselves into almost all areas of our lives, all around the world. This reading group discusses literature about the process of platformization, its influences and methodologies to study it. Topics discussed in the group have for instance included: gig work, platform infrastructures, geographies of platformization, and influencer labour. During the monthly reading group sessions we discuss a couple of pieces of literature around a specific theme related to online platforms, or other members' work-in-progress.

The platformization reading group is a monthly 2-hour discussion bringing together an interdisciplinary group of early career scholars. Currently, the group meets every second Wednesday of the month from 15.00-17.00, followed by drinks. As the group deals with published literature as well as work-in-progress, commitment to more than just one session as active group members is highly encouraged.

The sessions will take place on the following dates: March 8 at REC C1.08, April 12 at REC C1.08, May 10 at REC C2.06, June 14 at REC C1.08

Readings for each session will be sent to participants after registration.

MASTER, SLAVE AND THE NEGATIVE POWER OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

Introductory session with Charlotte Szász, Thursday March 9, 15-18h, OMHP A0.08 | ASCA-NICA Seminar We Have Never Had Sex | Coordinator: Dr. Marija Cetinić
Registration: catrinelradoi@gmail.com and see [here for readings](#)

This seminar will ask whether we can read Hegel's master slave dialectic as a battle between the unconscious and conscious. Taking at its starting point Hegel's claim that "the individual's unconscious spirit has its existence in women", we will discuss feminist readings of Hegel, mapping the unconscious/conscious sexualization on the master slave dialectic, drawing on Lacan's reading of this passage. We will consider the debate on the difference between recognition and cognition in Hegel's sexual difference in the phenomenology.

Charlotte Szász is a philosopher. She teaches at the Leuphana University of Lüneburg on psychoanalysis, history of philosophy and feminist philosophy and is part of the Research Group "Cultures of Critique". Her PhD, titled "*Eternal Irony – Femininity and Knowledge*" is on the question of sexuality in Hegel's self-consciousness.

ARIAS WRITE-IN

Artists and researchers (and everything in between) writing together, an initiative by Arias.

Every two weeks, we gather to keep each other company while writing. Whether you need to work on a paper, a chapter for your PhD or apply for a residency, join us in these collective writing sessions and find the attentive moment to put words to paper. No rsvp required.

We have a new location! From 2023 we will be hosted at the AHK Culture Club at the Marineterrein.

The upcoming date is: 09 March, 09:30 - 12:30, Kattenburgerstraat 5, 27K, 1018 JA Amsterdam. Find us in Telegram under ARIAS Write-In

CLIMATE FICTION, REALISM, AND ALI SMITH'S SEASONAL QUARTET

English Department Lecture Series: The second lecture this semester will be Dr. Jesse van Amelsvoort, Thursday March 9th at 17:00-18.30, P.C. Hoofthuis 1.04, Spuistraat 134.

The novels that make up Ali Smith's *Seasonal Quartet* (2016–20), famously written as closely as possible to their moment of publication, have been interpreted as being about hospitality, migration, Brexit, the election of Donald Trump, xenophobia, covid, and the transformative power of art and literature. Much less noticed has been their inclusion of climate change and life in the Anthropocene, even if a character in Autumn laments the arrival of a yearlong 'monoseason' and Winter includes unusually warm weather around

Christmas. In this talk, I take up these and other cues to argue that the Seasonal Quartet is actually an example of climate fiction in a realist mode. Rather than representing worlds after the catastrophe, Smith's novels show the slow violence inherent to living in a changing climate. I will argue that they specifically make visible the enduring lure of climate denialism. Please contact Dr. Marc Farrant (m.w.farrant@uva.nl) for details.

ASCA THEORY SEMINAR: METHODS AND FORMS: AUTO-THEORY

The upcoming ASCA Theory Seminar session on auto-theory on 9 March 2023 at 3 pm. will be chaired by Sinine Nakhle and Luc Marraffa. The readings are:

- Robyn Wiegman. "Introduction: Autotheory Theory." *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 76.1 (2020): 1-14.
- Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: An American Lyric* (2014).
- Maggie Nelson, *The Argonauts* (2015).

THE AESTHETICS AND POLITICS OF CINEMATIC PEDESTRIANISM: WALKING IN FILMS,

Launch of Asli Özgen's new book published by Amsterdam University Press in the series "Film Culture in Transition". | 10 March, 15.30-17.30 hrs. | Eye Collection Centre, Asterweg 26 | RSVP: eyeacademic@eyefilm.nl.

Asli Özgen will introduce her book and show fragments of films discussed, and in conversation with Floris Paalman she will speak about her research, film historiography, and its implication for archival practice. After the launch there will be drinks at Eye Bar, Eye Filmmuseum, IJpromenade 1, and the possibility to obtain the book with discount. See below for further information on the book and the author.

The Aesthetics and Politics of Cinematic Pedestrianism: Walking in Films offers a rich exploration of the cinematic aesthetics that filmmakers devised to reflect the corporeal and affective experience of walking in the city. Drawing from literature in urban studies, film theory, and aesthetic philosophy, it is the first monograph to approach the history of cinema from the perspective of walking. A series of case studies providing nuanced analyses of widely referenced figures, such as the flaneur/flâneuse, vagabond, and nomad, reveal how filmmakers articulated their objection to repressive structures through depictions of walking: a common, everyday act yet transgressive, bold, and indomitable. Through the lens of Henri Lefebvre's theory of space, Michel de Certeau's concept of pedestrian acts, and Jacques Rancière's treatment of the politics of aesthetics, *Walking in Films* traces how cinema evolved in conversation with the mobile body and the new images, styles, and techniques that emerged with it.

Asli Özgen is Assistant Professor in the Department of Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam, teaching in the BA Media and Culture and in the MA Preservation and Presentation of the Moving Image. Besides the subject of cinematic pedestrianism, her research interests include film historiography, focused on contested pasts and feminist and decolonial interventions, and archival practices in regard to film heritage of ethnicized, racialized, and migrant communities.

QUEER ANALYSIS

Queer Analysis meeting organized by Diego Semerene and Misha Kavka | Tuesday, March 14, 5-7 pm., room 5.19 in the PCHoof. | Discussion Session Text: Sheila L. Cavanagh, "Transpsychoanalytics".

RESTLESSNESS AND INTIMACY

Third Session of the ASCA Film and Philosophy seminar organized by Monique Roelofs, Sudeep Dasgupta, Patricia Pisters, Pinar Türer | Thursday March 16, 15.00-18.00 Buzzhouse (BG5), for directions please see [the website](#) | If you want to join the seminar and receive the readings, please email: asca.filmphilosophy@gmail.com

After last year's focus on Aesthetics of Contingency, the Film and Philosophy seminar returns in the new academic year by zooming in on a more specific form of contingency, which is inspired by a sense of restlessness, disquiet and feelings of disturbance, uncertainty and simmering anxiety in general. Film and philosophy have provided rich engagements with, and provocations and arguments for understanding the self-world relationship through notions of intimacy and uncertainty/disquiet. While disquiet and restlessness are clearly connected to the multiple crises in the world, we propose to relate these crises through a specific focus on the more personal and subjective dimensions of restlessness, through engagements with intimacy, affect, (urban) erotics and related concepts.

Moderated by Pinar Türer and expanding on the year's theme "Restlessness and Intimacy", this session will revolve around concepts of fragility, vulnerability, and their link to intimacies in relation to questions of (social and political) change. We will engage with feminist theories on vulnerability, affect, kinaesthetic and temporal experience of trauma, and more, and consider what it could mean *to exist in restless times, intimately*. Next to our textual engagements, we will discuss Nicolás Grandi and Lata Mani's "videocontemplation" film *The Poetics of Fragility* (2016), and examine the poetics and politics of uncertainty, attention, attunement, and compassion, while questioning the motions of restlessness.

Readings:

- Erinn C. Gilson, "Vulnerability Beyond Opposition," *Ethics of Vulnerability: A Feminist Analysis of Social Life and Practice* (2014), pp. 138-158

- Alphonso Lingis, "Our Uncertain Compassion," *The Alphonso Lingis Reader* (2018), pp. 391-398
- Carolyn Pedwell, "Affective Habits," *Revolutionary Routines: The Habits of Social Transformation* (2021), pp. 28-56
- Alberica Bazzoni, "Reduction in Time: Kinaesthetic and Traumatic Experiences of the Present in Literary Texts," *The Case for Reduction*, pp. 191-212.

Film:

- Lata Mani & Nicolás Grandi, [The Poetics of Fragility](#) (2016)

FORMALISM AND VIOLENCE

Masterclass with Eugenie Brinkema | 17 March 2023, 2-5 pm., PCH room 3.08 | Please register at asca-fgw@uva.nl

Despite the recent appearance of various "new formalisms" in literary, film, and visual studies amidst a broader, transdisciplinary "return to aesthetics," there is robust disagreement and tension in critical accounts of what form is (or what forms are); what reading for form does (or might do, or cannot do); and the value of formalism for the humanities. Nowhere are these debates more acute than on the terrain of violence, where attention to formal, aesthetic, and structural workings of texts seem to operate in an almost defiant indifference to ethical and political concerns.

This workshop will approach this subject from two directions simultaneously: we will read and unpack two very different approaches to formalism (one emphasizing its theoretical affordances, one emphasizing its theoretical disaffordances) and tease out a range of different ways in which scholars use the term "form," distinguish form from aesthetics, articulate form's relationship to politics, and defend reading methods that rely on a (re)turn to form. Then we will consider the special case of violence, inquiring as to what happens when violence is formalized and treated as a matter of topology, attending to what such an approach critically makes available and possible, and what such an approach critically forecloses.

Biography

Eugenie Brinkema is Professor of Contemporary Literature and Media at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and currently a fellow at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis. Her work in film studies and critical theory focuses on violence, affect, sexuality, aesthetics, and ethics. Her articles have appeared in numerous journals, including *Angelaki*, *Camera Obscura*, *Criticism*, *differences*, *Discourse*, *film-philosophy*, *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, *LIT*, *qui parle*, and *World Picture*. Her books include *The Forms of the Affects* (2014) and *Life-Destroying Diagrams* (2022), both with Duke University Press.

Readings:

Eugenie Brinkema, "Postscript. *Ars Formularia*: Radical Formalism and the Speculative Task," from *Life-*

Destroying Diagrams (Duke University Press, 2022) [33 pages]

Caroline Levine, "Introduction: The Affordances of Form," from *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (Princeton University Press, 2015) [23 pages]

Byung-Chul Han, "The Macro-Logic of Violence," from *Topologie der Gewalt* [Topology of Violence] [10 pages]

Optional but recommended:

Martyrs (Laugier, 2008) [Film; runtime 99m]

EASTSPAINERS #4: LITERATURE

23 March 2023, 17:00-18:30 hrs. VoxPop.

In this lecture, Russian writer Maxim Osipov shares his sober take on the Russian war in Ukraine, migration, and on the question: what does it mean to be a Russian writer in times of full-blown Russian imperialism?

'Cain, where is Abel your brother?' These words were written on a sign that the Russian writer Maxim Osipov upheld during a small-scale anti-war protest in his hometown Tarusa, directly following the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. Not long after, Osipov left his country.

Shame, self-hatred: these are the words with which he typifies the first days after the invasion. In this lecture, Osipov reflects on migration, guilt, and the difficult question: what can literary writing (not) do in times of war? Associate professor of modern German and Russian culture Dorine Schellens and senior lecturer of Russian Literature Otto Boele (both University of Leiden) join Osipov as, respectively, moderator and discussant.

[Register here](#)

Maxim Osipov is a Russian writer and cardiologist. In the early 1990s, he was a research fellow at the University of California, San Francisco, before returning to Moscow, where he founded a publishing house that specialized in medical, musical, and theological texts. In 2005, while working at a local hospital in Tarusa, a small town ninety miles from Moscow, Osipov established a charitable foundation to ensure the hospital's survival. Since 2007, he has published short stories, novellas, essays, and plays, and has won a number of literary prizes for his fiction. Osipov's writings have been translated into more than a dozen languages. He lived in Tarusa up until February 2022, when he left Russia. Now, he lives in Amsterdam and teaches Russian literature at Leiden University.

Dorine Schellens is an assistant professor of modern German and Russian culture and literature at Leiden University. Her research focuses on the interaction between Russian and German cultural history of the late 20th and 21st centuries. In her book *Kanonbildung im transkulturellen Netzwerk* (Transcript 2021) she wrote about the reception history of the Moscow Conceptualist movement, an underground art

movement that emerged in the Soviet Union in the 1970s and became enormously popular in Germany, in particular after the Wende. She also publishes on contemporary Russian protest art and literature.

Otto Boele is a senior lecturer of Russian literature at the University of Leiden. He is the author of *The North in Russian Romantic Literature* (1996) and *Erotic Nihilism in Late Imperial Russia. The Case of Mikhail Artsybashev's "Sanin"* (2009). He is co-editor of the collection *Post-Soviet Nostalgia. Confronting the Empire's Legacies* (2019), as well as of the online journal *Kinokultura.com*. In 2022, he released a podcast series called "Scandals and Controversies in Russian literature" (in Dutch). Currently he is teaching and working on the cultural memory of the 1990s in literature and film.

DESIRE FOR TRANS

Symposium organized by the Queer Analysis group of Diego Semerene and Misha Kavka | Friday, 24 March, 2023, 13.00 – 17.00 o'clock | Room: D 0.08 in OMHP

The politics of trans have been richly researched, but how might we navigate the terrain of trans desire(s), expanding from the desire *of* to the desire *for* trans? One of the most undertheorized dimensions of trans life remains the field of desire of those who are sexually attracted to trans subjects – or bodies – and how trans subjects position themselves in this field of desire. This symposium thus aims to put the desire for trans at the center of the debate, focusing on how trans people are desired, by whom, and why there is so little written about it yet so much of it going on. A starting point for such theorization may be to distinguish the desire "to be" trans from the desire "to have" trans – although, often, it seems as though these forms of desire quickly slide across and into each other.

Speakers:

Eva Hayward (Utrecht University): "Phobia into Fetish: Transmutations"

Marija Cetnic (University of Amsterdam): "There is no Object worse than a Woman"

Eliza Steinbock (University of Maastricht): "T4T: Historically Speaking"

Adnan Hossain (Utrecht University): [title TBA]

TOXIC COLONIALITY OR COLONIAL TOXICITY?

ASCA Political Ecologies // Terrains of Struggle seminar with Samia Henni | ASCA Political Ecologies is directed by Jeff Diamanti and Joost de Bloois. This year's thematic, "Terrains of Struggle," is guest curated by Fred Carter. | March 24th, 17:00-18:45 | PC Hoofthuis, room 1,05.

The trace of the explosion of France's first nuclear bomb in the ground zero, the Algerian Sahara © 1960, Raymond Varoqui / SCA / ECPAD

Samia Henni is a historian and an exhibition maker of the built, destroyed, and imagined environments. She is the author of the multi-award-winning [Architecture of Counterrevolution: The French Army in Northern](#)

[Algeria](#) (gta Verlag, 2017, EN; Editions B42, 2019, FR), the editor of [War Zones](#), *gta papers* no. 2 (gta Verlag, 2018), and [Deserts Are Not Empty](#) (Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2022). She is also the maker of the exhibitions Archives: Secret-Défense (ifa Gallery, SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin, 2021), [Housing Pharmacology / Right to Housing](#) (Manifesta 13, Marseille, 2020) and [Discreet Violence: Architecture and the French War in Algeria](#) (Zurich, Rotterdam, Berlin, Johannesburg, Paris, Prague, Ithaca, Philadelphia, Charlottesville, 2017–21). She teaches history of architecture and urban development at Cornell University's College of Architecture, Art and Planning.

On February 13, 1960, six years after the outbreak of the Algerian Revolution, or the Algerian War of Independence (1954–1962), the French colonial authorities denoted their first atomic atmospheric bomb in Reggane in the colonized Algerian Sahara. Codenamed "Gerboise Bleue" (Blue Jerboa), it had a blast capacity of 70 kilotons, about 4 times the strength of Little Boy, the United States' atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima a month before the end of the Second World War. Blue Jerboa was followed by other atmospheric detonations, as well as various underground nuclear bombs in In Ekker, which continued until 1966, four years after Algeria's formal independence from France.

To secretly conduct their nuclear weapons program in the colonized Sahara, the French army designed and built two military bases: one in Reggane, in the Tanezrouft Plain, approximately 1,150 kilometers south of Algiers, and another one in In Ekker, in the Hoggar mountains, about 600 kilometers south-eastern of Reggane. The use of the Algerian Sahara as a nuclear firing field spread radioactive fallout across Africa and the Mediterranean, causing irreversible contaminations among human and nonhuman lives, natural, and built environments.

This lecture aims at tracing and naming the spatial, atmospheric, and geological impacts of France's atomic bombs in the Sahara. It exposes the coloniality and toxicity of the norms and forms of France's weapons of mass destruction, including the classification of its very sources. It also examines the spatialities and temporalities of France's *colonial toxicity*, or *toxic coloniality*, and explores the lives and afterlives of radioactive debris and nuclear wastes.

JORIS ROELOFS IN BIMHUIS

31 March 2023 | Music, dance and speech reflect the world in a challenging performance, with improvisation as a key element. | Starring: Joris Roelofs, Meg Stuart, Claire Vivianna Sobottke and Jeff Ballard.

<https://www.bimhuis.nl/en/calendar/joris-roelofs-with-meg-stuart-claire-vivianne-sobottke-a-o/>

Jazz finds roots in activism. In challenging or bypassing conventions. A conversation with the status quo. Through improvisation, jazz is constantly exploring new forms of interaction. This quest, and the conversations that are found along the way, are central to REFLEX. In the series we invite musicians to create new work that reflects on the world and its society. In this edition, bass clarinetist Joris Roelofs incites an interaction between musicians, dancers, speakers, and the audience.

Joris Roelofs is a renowned (bass) clarinetist and ASCA PhD candidate. For fifteen years he was the lead alto saxophonist with the Jazz Orchestra of the Concertgebouw. He's currently working on a PhD dissertation on the political dimension of improvisation. In the context of REFLEX he also emphasizes the importance of improvisation in politics and rhetoric. For this concert he welcomes dancers and choreographers from the international theatre avant-garde. The idea is to create interaction with speakers and the audience.

Dancers and choreographers Meg Stuart and Claire Vivianne Sobottke have collaborated closely since 2015. Meg Stuart leads her company Damaged Goods out of Brussels and Berlin. She explores dance as a source of healing and a way to transform the social fabric. Meg Stuart received the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the Biennale di Venezia. The voice can become a driving force for the choreography of Claire Vivianne Sobottke. In her work, dancing becomes a way of activating the knowledge of the body, of making its inner turbulence visible. Claire Vivianne Sobottke is based in Berlin.

CALL FOR PAPERS: STORIES OF ILLNESS AND HEALTH

Limits and Opportunities of a Narrative Medical Ethics

Summer School | 5-10 July 2023 | University of Antwerp Lectures, classes and workshops with Angela Woods, Havi Carel, Arya Thampuran, Anna Gotlib, and Hilde Lindeman
The Antwerp Summer School in Philosophy and Society seeks to address philosophical issues and problems pertaining to recent developments in Western societies. Its specific aim is to reflect on some of the major themes and debates that have recently emerged in the public sphere.

This edition will focus on narratives as an important resource of ethical knowledge for medical scholars and moral philosophers. This summer school brings together research from medical and health humanities, feminist philosophy, philosophy of medicine, phenomenology, cultural studies, literary studies, decolonial and race studies and (bio-)ethics.

For Ma-students, Masters and PhD-students interested in topics from medical humanities, health humanities, narrative ethics, and feminist bio-ethics.

For more info about application: <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/summer-winter-schools/philosophy-and-society/>

CALL FOR PAPERS: FUTURE/FUTURES

XIII Lisbon Summer School for the Study of Culture, Lisbon, July 3 – July 8, 2023 | Extended deadline for submissions: March 17, 2023 |

<https://asca.uva.nl/shared/subsites/amsterdam-institute-for-humanities-research/en/news/2023/01/futures.html?origin=cjZQUILAOSSKtNLvUihH4sMQ>

For centuries thinking about the future was basically an optimist and progress driven endeavor, aimed at advancing towards the best of possible worlds through the improvement of science and technology. Throughout the 20th century, euphoria about progress slowly but steadily turned into discomfort, due to the growing awareness about scientific development's immense capability to cause pain and infortune. The shortcomings and aporias of the present have strangely produced a new retrotopia, focused on reinventing the past and less on clearly conceiving of the future-to-be. This is caused by the globalization of indifference, the crisis of democratic states, the deepening of cultural and religious wars and the rising visibility of extreme violence, linked to terrorism and war. We are likewise faced with a resource crisis and an obvious planetary exhaustion, just as the fourth technological revolution forces us to question the future of work and hence of the very definition of the human as a homo laborans.

CALL FOR PAPERS: SOAPBOX – SWAMPED

We invite extended proposals (500-1000 words) to be submitted to submissions@soapboxjournal.net by **March 3rd, 2023**. Following conditional acceptance, an initial draft version (3000 words) will be due two weeks after receiving the acceptance email. The editing process will take place throughout Spring/Summer 2023. If you have any questions regarding your submission, do not hesitate to contact us at info@soapboxjournal.net. Editing and peer review guidelines will be sent to authors individually upon acceptance of their submission. For full call for papers and submission guidelines, please see our website <https://www.soapboxjournal.net/join#call>

JOB: POSTDOC - GENDERSCI LAB HARVARD

Are you passionate about feminist science and shifting the needle on sex/gender analyses? Come work w/ us at the GenderSci Lab! We are recruiting for a 2-yr postdoc position starting Sept. 2023. Description & application information here:

<https://academicpositions.harvard.edu/postings/12096>