

Nieuwsbrief 281

February 2025

<i>New ASCA Vice-Director: Carolyn Birdsall</i>	1
<i>ASCA Borrel 27 February 2025</i>	1
<i>ASCA Workshop 2025: Re-Imagining Universality in the Pluriverse</i>	1
<i>Dissertation Defense: Barbara Bleij</i>	3
<i>New ASCA Member: Alice Fleerackers</i>	3
<i>Guest Researcher: Gladys Pak Lei Chong</i>	3
<i>Guest Researcher: Omri Bar-Adam</i>	4
<i>Abolition and Democratic Confederalism</i>	4
<i>Form and (Dis)Order</i>	5
<i>'You just have to learn to live with it'</i>	5
<i>Social Epistemology / Jennifer Lackey</i>	5
<i>Mapping the Erasure</i>	6
<i>An Introduction To Hermaphrodite Logic</i>	6
<i>From "Unnamed Blanks" To Self-Consciousness — From Critical Intersex Studies to a new Movement History</i>	7
<i>Country of Words</i>	8
<i>Doxastic Wrongs and Denial of Sexual Violence</i>	8
<i>ASCA Theory Seminar: Environmental Humanities</i>	8
<i>Speculative Fictions and (Non) Modern Futures</i>	9
<i>Book Launch Multispecies Dialogues</i>	9
<i>Haint Blue: African American Gothic, Afropessimism, and the Possibilities of Black Narrative</i>	10
<i>ASCA Pop-in Office</i>	11
<i>Queer Analysis</i>	11
<i>Glissant's Opacity: Bodies, Relations, Translations</i>	11
<i>The Ludification of Vision, Part 1</i>	11
<i>Antisocial Queer Theory, 2005-2023</i>	12
<i>Rhythm and (Digital) Methods</i>	12
<i>Call for Papers: Towards an Ethics of Possibility</i>	12
<i>Call for Papers (Convergence Special Issue): Utopian Media Studies</i>	13
<i>Call for Abstracts: Absence as artistic strategy in contemporary art</i>	13
<i>Individual Fellowships with NIAS</i>	14

We are very happy to announce that Carolyn Birdsall has accepted our invitation to become ASCA's new Vice-Director! Carolyn is Associate Professor of Media Studies. She joined ASCA in 2004 as a PhD candidate and defended her thesis in 2010. Her first book, [Nazi Soundscapes](#) (AUP, 2012) was the recipient of the ASCA Book Award 2013, and most recently she published [Radiophilia](#) (2023).

Carolyn is director of the [ASCA Cities Project](#), and she recently completed the NWO-Vidi project [TRACE \(Tracking Radio Archival Collections in Europe, 1930-1960\)](#), which examined how European radio recordings were archived, circulated and re-used under conditions of war, occupation and reconstruction. Since December 2024, she is leading a 1-year follow-up project [AV-DATA: Developing A Toolkit for AV-Collection Histories to Enrich Data and Public Value](#).

Carolyn will start as Vice-Director on February 1, 2025, and she will be responsible for the ASCA PhD Community. Carolyn is looking forward to serving as ASCA's Vice-Director, working together with Jaap, Eloë and Jantine, and meeting with ASCA's PhD candidates and researchers.

ASCA BORREL 27 FEBRUARY 2025

Dear ASCA Members and Friends, You are all cordially invited to the ASCA Borrel on 27 February 2025 at 5 PM. In the Leeuwenkuil at PCH, Spuistraat 134, Amsterdam. We will welcome our new Vice-Director and new ASCA PhDs and members. Please join us!

ASCA WORKSHOP 2025: RE-IMAGINING UNIVERSALITY IN THE PLURIVERSE

Organizers: Laila Bouziane, Serra Hughes, Lucy Gaynor.
Call for Papers ASCA International Workshop 26-28 May 2025 | Deadline for submissions: February 28, 2025 | Contact: ascaworkshop2025@gmail.com

In a period of increased global division, political polarization, and inequality, while the planet faces the common threat of a worsening ecological emergency, it is important to reconsider and investigate anew the potential for human commonalities. In order to adequately understand and address the alarming rise of far right parties across Europe, the widening appeal of populist leaders, and the surge in anti-immigration sentiment across the world, all while the planet is increasingly under threat by inadequate attention to global warming, it seems crucial to arrive at a universal

NEW ASCA VICE-DIRECTOR: CAROLYN BIRDSALL



understanding of concepts like “nation,” “racism,” “colonization,” or “climate emergency.” However, the premise of universalism has been challenged by decolonial critiques as the edifying project of imperialism that privileges a singular version of reality over others (Braidotti, Escobar, Mignolo, Santos, Walsh), while the concept of the “pluriverse” conceives of a reality where humans are part of a multitude of diverse worlds that are also more-than-human.

Universality is thus often rejected by contemporary critics and theorists who see it as an extension of or another term for universalism that imposes one singular reality constructed on European Enlightenment ideals of reason, democracy and human rights. In fact, much of the history of colonization and imperialism has been justified in the name of such a version of reality which imposed a Eurocentric epistemology on the rest of the world (Mignolo). The imposition of universalism led to the suppression of non-Western ways of knowing, the marginalization of Indigenous cultures, and the establishment of global inequalities that persist today. In contrast, pluriversality challenges this hegemonic production of knowledge and reality by advocating for the coexistence of multiple ways of knowing and being (Esteva), which some scholars also see resonating with posthumanist discourse on decentering anthropocentric and Eurocentric perspectives (Ghosh, Braidotti, Escobar). Emerging from decolonial thought, this approach seeks to dismantle the legacy of universalism by recognizing the validity of diverse epistemologies, particularly those marginalized by colonial histories.

This workshop asks if it is possible to establish a new vision of universality through pluriversality. Can diverse epistemologies be recognized and honored while also potentially revealing glimpses of universality that can contribute to a sense of shared space and time necessary to address the needs of the globalized present? In his introduction to the recently published *Literature and the Work of Universality*, “The Fire This Time: Working with Universality” Stefan Helgesson asks, “how can we even know that there is something seriously wrong with our contemporary moment unless there is a world - a reality - that humans at some level can share?” (5). In other words, is it possible to address the concerns of the planet without finding a constructive way to talk about human commonalities that do not equate to universalism as oppression? Is it possible to distinguish universality from imperial and hegemonic notions of universalism and, if so, how? This workshop will bring together cultural analysts, theorists, artists, and researchers to investigate if universality can be approached *through* pluriversality. The aim is to do the urgent work of

looking at *universality*, as opposed to imperial universalism, from new perspectives and find constructive ways to conceptualize a shared but diverse world.

The 2025 ASCA workshop will engage with both theoretical and empirical dimensions of universality and pluriversality from an interdisciplinary perspective, investigating their historical, cultural and geopolitical contexts through themes that include. Submissions might include:

Cultural and artistic expressions that stage the tension between the particular and the universal: How can art, fiction and media contribute to an understanding of pluriversal worlds in their shared universals? (we encourage including case studies or close readings)

The ways that certain theoretical approaches that radically oppose any sense of universality could potentially prevent much-needed solidarity and social renewal (or the inverse, promote much-needed solidarity)

Epistemic injustice and knowledge hierarchies: How have Western knowledge systems, representing all that is universal, been privileged over non-Western knowledges, while also denying/ignoring all acts against what is universal, such as violation of human rights, climate crisis and genocidal acts in colonized territories? What role have academic institutions played in sustaining these epistemic hierarchies, and how can we act, as scholars, to unveil and dismantle such hierarchies while rethinking the concept of universality in its pluralistic dimension?

Decolonial theory and practice: How do decolonial thought and pluriversality challenge universalism in their theoretical and practical frameworks? And how can they reach a level of universality, this time, through the very particular and singular of the decolonial experience? In other words, can decolonial and pluriversal perspectives genuinely integrate into academic institutions on a global level, through a fundamental rethinking of educational programmes, research methodologies and recruitment and collaboration practices?

Reimagining universality through posthumanist discourses: How does posthumanism challenge traditional notions of universality that are centered on the (Western) human subject as the measure of the universe? In what ways can posthumanist discourse intersect with decolonial and pluriversal perspectives to reshape universality in global discourses about nation, colonialism, racism, gender? And how does the decentering of the human affect the articulation of shared universals, particularly in areas like environmental justice, advanced technologies and global decision-making?

ASCA Workshop 2025 is a three-day in-person event taking place in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Please note that we cannot accommodate virtual presentations.

We welcome individual applications in the form of academic and artistic research. Please submit a 300-word abstract and a 100-word bio. Presentations should be up to 15 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.

Applications should be submitted by February 28, 2025 to ascaworkshop2025@gmail.com. We will notify the applicants about the selection by March 28, 2025.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE: BARBARA BLEIJ

An Annotated Theory of Tonal Jazz Harmony



Photo: Nine Ijff.

The dissertation presents a theory of tonal jazz harmony in which melodic, harmonic, and stylistic aspects of tonal jazz harmony are integrated and grounded in a solid theoretical foundation. The thesis includes an introduction to the work and its contexts, followed by a commentary on the harmony theory through extensive annotations.

The work's point of departure is that tonal jazz harmony is a specific variant of Western harmony and does not require a fundamentally new theoretical framework but, rather, crucial modifications of Western harmonic theory to accommodate and explain the musical phenomena adequately. Therefore, it adopts the *Harmonielehre*-format, a hybrid of speculative theory and pedagogical instruction. The work also touches upon key issues in jazz culture and jazz research, such as the long-standing questions of "ownership" and

"entitlement" in jazz, gender, and the recent debates in the US around racism in and through music theory.

NEW ASCA MEMBER: ALICE FLEERACKERS



Photo: Alfred Hermida (UBC)

Alice Fleerackers (she/her) is Assistant Professor of Journalism and Civic Engagement in the Department of Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam. Her research examines the intersections of journalism, health and science communication, and scholarly communication. She is also an (occasional) freelance writer, the Vice President of the Public Communication of Science and Technology Network (PCST), and co-founder and co-chair of PCST's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee. Find her at alicefleerackers.com.

GUEST RESEARCHER: GLADYS PAK LEI CHONG



Gladys Pak Lei Chong is Associate Professor of the Department of Humanities and Creative Writing at

Hong Kong Baptist University. She received her Ph.D. in Media and Cultural Studies and MA (cum laude) in Migration and Ethnic studies from the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. She has teaching experiences in courses about Humanities, Cultural Studies, Youth Cultures, Media & Multiculturalism, Globalisation. She is the author of *Chinese Subjectivities and the Beijing Olympics* (Rowman and Littlefield International, 2017), co-editor of *Trans-Asia as Method: Theory and Practices* (Rowman and Littlefield International, 2020), and *Critiquing Communication Innovation: New Media in a Multipolar World* (Michigan State University Press, 2022). Her journal articles have appeared in *interconnections: journal of posthumanism*, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, *Visual Studies*, *Global Media and China*, *Science, Technology and Society*, *The Information Society*, *Chinese Journal of Communication*, *China Information*, *International Journal of the History of Sport*, and *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*. Her research interests encompass a wide array of topics, such as (Chinese) governmentalities, cultural governance, power-relations, process of subjectification, discourse analysis, governing practices, technology, security, risk, surveillance, globalization, nationalism, gender, gender, place-making, (techno-)nationalism, home, dwellings, digital governance, social credit, communication technology, smart home, artificial intelligence, ageing, visual analysis, infrastructure, platform studies, with a particular focus on (Asian) Cultural Studies, Inter-Asia referencing.

GUEST RESEARCHER: OMRI BAR-ADAM



Omri Bar-Adam is a PhD candidate in the Department of English and American Studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. His research on *Homosexual Melancholy* explores the nexus of politics and emotion within the gay community. He investigates how homophobic oppression, transgenerational trauma,

collective memory, fictional narratives, autobiographical accounts, and visual representations have shaped and captured the melancholy experienced by gay men from the early twentieth century to the present. His work engages with the identification of 'homosexual melancholy' as a psycho-political category, focusing on its narrativisation and aesthetics. He will be visiting ASCA from February through April 2025.

ABOLITION AND DEMOCRATIC CONFEDERALISM

Joint seminar of the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis and the University of Rojava (Kurdistan)

This seminar is organized by Leila Faghfour Azar, Safae El Khannoussi El Boudrin, Daniel Loick, Shahin Nasiri, Abdulkemir Pusat, and Oscar Talbot, in collaboration with our partners from the University of Rojava. The seminars will take place every week Mondays, 8.30-10.30 h Amsterdam Time, starting March 3rd. The last session will be on April 7th. The seminar is open to MA students and PhD candidates.

The [University of Rojava](#) and the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA) are pleased to announce the launch of a series of collaborative research seminars in March and April 2025. These seminars, designed in the form of hybrid sessions, aim to foster a dynamic intellectual exchange by bringing together students and scholars from Rojava and Amsterdam. The main purpose is to engage participants in a critical dialogue that bridges the theoretical frameworks of (Western) critical thought with the unique experiences and insights of the Rojava Revolution. In addition, to build a constant collaboration in the future.

The emergence of abolitionism as a pivotal framework in critical theory in recent years, particularly in the aftermath of the Black Lives Matter demonstrations, has emphasized the need to rethink state-inflicted violence. Parallel to this, the Rojava Revolution and the profound societal transformation it upholds has introduced groundbreaking epistemic practices to reimagine safety and self-defence beyond state-centric paradigms of violence. This transformative vision is exemplified by the intellectual contributions of jinojology and the establishment of community-oriented safety initiatives such as the Asayish. With the aim of envisioning a transnational exchange of knowledge that bridges activism and academia to develop insights into building less violent societies, we will organize five joint online seminars. Our seminars rely on an in-depth engagement with foundational texts from key proponents of these movements, such as the works of Abdullah Öcalan and Angela Davis. In addition to active readings and discussions, our seminars will also foster collaborative creative outputs, encompassing essays, interviews, and artistic works. These

contributions will be documented and made publicly accessible through a dedicated archival platform.

This seminar is open to 15 students from the Amsterdam side. For Research Master students in philosophy, it is possible to receive credits as a tutorial; other students please inquire about possible credits. Please send a registration with a short motivation letter by February 10th to o.l.talbot@uva.nl. You will be informed shortly thereafter whether your application can be confirmed. Active engagement and interest are expected, previous knowledge of the situation in Rojava and/or abolition theory are an advantage.

FORM AND (DIS)ORDER

New ASCA Reading Group co-organized by Michael F. Miller and Stephan Besser | 4 February 2025, 16:00-18:00, PCH 4.22.

From perspective to narrative, database and beyond, symbolic forms organize experience and shape epistemic horizons. If Lev Manovich's key insight was to recognize the entanglement of symbolic and technical form, we may now ask how (post)digital culture and seemingly limitless data flows generate a new desire for form in critical theory and cultural production. Situated at the intersection of literary theory, media theory, and the poetics of knowledge, this reading group will explore a wide range of symbolic and literary forms and their epistemic and ideological affordances. We will ask how various new formalisms understand terms such as structure, organization/disorganization, and order/disorder, and how these concepts travel across discourses and scales. In our inaugural session on 4 February 2025 (16:00-18:00, PCH 4.22) we will discuss the first half of Anna Kornbluh's book *Immediacy, or The Cultural Style of Too Late Capitalism* (2024). For this meeting we will discuss the introduction through "Writing." After finishing *Immediacy* in the second session on 4 March (16:00-18:00, PCH 6.31), future readings may include Yuk Hui's *Recursivity and Contingency* (2019), Bernard Dionysius Geoghegan's *Code: From Information Theory to French Theory* (2023), or other suggestions by participants. We are eager to discuss participants' work-in-progress in the group meetings as well. Please direct any questions to Michael Miller (m.f.miller@uva.nl).

'YOU JUST HAVE TO LEARN TO LIVE WITH IT'

Living with Chronic Illness in Relation to Linear and Non-progressive Temporalities

Long Covid Conversations organized by Eva Meijer | Speaker: Femke van Hout – PhD-researcher, Tilburg University | 4 February 2025 7 pm (CET), Online | Registration: asca-fgw@uva.nl

In March 2024 the Dutch Health Council stated that fibromyalgia, a chronic disorder characterized by widespread musculoskeletal pain and fatigue, should be recognized as a valid health problem by the Dutch Ministry of Public Health. Since fibromyalgia lacks a known physical cause, patients receive little to no financial and social support and are often faced with stigma and social isolation. According to Jan Willem Förch, the director of Reuma Nederland, recognition might lead to more research into possible causes and treatments. 'For too long, people with fibromyalgia have only been told that they just have to learn to live with it.' (NOS, 2024).

'You just have to learn to live with it' is a reaction that many people with persistent physical or mental conditions receive. In this talk I take a philosophical-anthropological approach, questioning what possibilities people in late modern, capitalist societies have to meaningfully 'live with' a long-term or chronic condition. With the help of historian George Weisz (2014), I will show that the history of the concept of chronic illness in medical and political discourse is intertwined with narratives of progression, capitalist production and crisis. Nowadays, people with chronic illness are often faced with either of these two reactions: they either hear that they have to work hard to get better, or, when 'nothing can be done', they hear that they will have to 'live with' the fact that the disease will probably never end. I argue that these extremes are in fact two sides of the same coin: both are intertwined with a linear, progressive conception of time which does not allow for other kinds of futures except those that fit on a linear timescale (Hutchings, 2008; Cazdyn, 2012; Baraitser, 2017; Davies, 2023). This makes living with a condition that does not develop progressively seem like an almost impossible task.

Despite the dominance of linear narratives in medical and political discourse, phenomenologists and queer philosophers of time and care show that concrete, embodied daily life experiences of chronic illness involve meaningful ways of sharing and taking care of non-progressive temporalities (Freeman, 2011; Baraitser, 2017; Wool & Livingston 2017; Wright 2022; Davies, 2023). At the end of this talk, I suggest that taking time for these embodied, relational practices might open up ways to help people to meaningfully live with a non-progressive condition.

SOCIAL EPISTEMOLOGY / JENNIFER LACKEY

Reading Group Organized by Annemijn Kwijkers and Yorgos Karagiannopoulos | First session: 6 February 2025, 3-5 pm.

In light of the upcoming visit of the Spinoza professor Dr. Jennifer Lackey, we organize a reading group on

social epistemology. We will meet 3 times on Thursday afternoon at PC Hoofthuis.

We will read texts by Lackey, but also other renowned authors in the field. For the first meeting we suggest reading one of Lackey's classic works, while the other meetings we organically decide what to read.

We will meet on the following dates:

February 6th 15.00-17.00; March 6th 15.00-17.00; April 3rd 15.00-17.00.

For the first meeting we will read Lackey, J., 2021, *The Epistemology of Groups*, Oxford: Oxford University Press., Chapter 2: What Is Justified Group Belief?

If you want to join the reading group and receive the text and the details about the location please email Annemijn Kwikkers: a.b.kwikkers@uva.nl or Yorgos Karagiannopoulos: g.t.karagiannopoulos@uva.nl.

MAPPING THE ERASURE

Spui25 6 February 2025, 5 pm.

Human geographer Hashem Abushama sheds his light on the significance of understanding the multiple Palestinian spatial realities that exist – taking al 'Arub refugee camp in the West Bank as his starting point. What unfolds is a geography prone to rupture and transformation. Abushama will introduce the notion and practice of "countermaps" – a map creation process which challenges the maps produced by states. He explores the ways in which counter-mapping can bring into focus the contingent and differentiated nature of settler colonial dispossession and fragmentation, as well as the embodied, spatial practices and processes of Palestinian return and freedom.

Starting at al 'Arub refugee camp in the West Bank and moving between the territories Israel occupied in 1948 and in 1967 as well as the Palestinian refugee camps, we see a geography unfold which remains prone to rupture and transformation. Hashem Abushama addresses the significance of understanding the multiple Palestinian geographies and how it is a map without guarantees: where there is neither a guarantee that settler colonialism's intent to eliminate the Palestinians will succeed, nor a guarantee that Palestinians will take up a particular form of resistance. This already constitutes a socio-spatial practice that pays attention to rehearsals of Palestinian return in a context of genocidal violence and dispossession.

But aren't the production and erasure of maps part of the very same systems of power and exploitation? Why do alternative maps or counter maps matter? After his talk, Hashem Abushama will be joined in conversation by Annelys de Vet, Chiara de Cesari and Eleri Connick to discuss these questions and practices of resistance.

About the speakers

Hashem Abushama is an Associate Professor in Human Geography at the University of Oxford. He holds a DPhil in Human Geography and an MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies from the University of Oxford, and a BA in Peace and Global Studies from Earlham College in the United States. He is also a EUME Fellow at the Forum Transregionale Studien in Berlin as well as a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Palestine Studies. He has authored several academic and journalistic articles on dispossession, arts, urbanization, the archives, and postcolonial Marxism.

Annelys de Vet is a designer, researcher, and educator with a practice for long-term, participatory design projects that engage with social and political struggles. She is the founder of *Subjective Editions*, a publishing initiative that maps regions from the inside out through the perspectives of their inhabitants. She has also co-founded *Disarming Design from Palestine*, a platform for thought-provoking design that develops artisanal products from Palestine to convey alternative narratives about life under occupation. De Vet recently completed her PhD *Disarming Design, Politics of Participatory Practices* at ARIA (Antwerp Research Institute for the Arts). Currently she teaches at Sint Lucas School of Arts in Antwerp at the Socio-Political masters context.

Chiara De Cesari is Professor of Heritage, Memory and Cultural Studies, and Chair of Cultural Studies at the University of Amsterdam. Her wide-ranging research explores how forms of memory, heritage, art, and cultural politics are shifting under contemporary conditions of post- and decoloniality, globalization and state transformation. An important strand of her research examines how artists and activists are reclaiming and reinventing cultural institutions. She is the author of *Heritage and the Cultural Struggle for Palestine* (Stanford UP, 2019), and co-editor of two key volumes in memory studies (*Transnational Memory*, de Gruyter, 2014; *European Memory in Populism*, Routledge, 2019).

Eleri Connick (moderator) is an ASCA PhD candidate. She was the PhD Fellow at Darat al Funun (Amman) February 2023 – July 2023. Her doctoral project titled: "The Materiality of Exile in Jordan: The Palestinian House", proposes a radical conceptualisation of home and all that it can provoke to ground her work both conceptually and methodologically.

AN INTRODUCTION TO HERMAPHRODITE LOGIC

Lecture by Dr Juliana Gleeson | Session 4 Sex Negativity Seminar, February 6th, 15-18h, OMHP C 2.17

In most European and North American nations, by the mid-20th century visibly intersex children were routinely subjected to nonconsensual surgeries,

hormonal injections, and invasive examinations including medical photography featuring ‘forced stripping’. These procedures were hidden from intersex people themselves, and intended to hide their physiques from those around them. By convention (not by birth), sex as a twofold split could accept no exceptions. How did this become controversial?

The intersex movement began at the latest possible moment in the 20th century counterculture: emerging through private channels (especially emails) between 1990-1994, building as a clandestine community through the mid-1990s, then finally erupting as a political force in 1996. This historical moment was both rich in renewed prospects for international community building (through then-nascent internet channels and other breakthroughs in cheap publication technologies), while barren for truly internationalist political prospects. True to this moment, the intersex movement was profoundly edgy, while enjoying much more constrained horizons than earlier movements had enjoyed around depathologisation (especially 70s GayLib). The result was what Hermaphrodite Logic terms the aesthetics of “90s edgy”—quick to demonstrate a fluency in previously authoritative clinical language, while favouring a certain dispassionate coldness over more obvious appeals to public displays of pathos, or appeals to popular sympathy.

This lecture will examine two artifacts from the intersex liberation movement’s unlikely birth during the 1990s—the [‘mutilated Rudolph’ that appeared in the first issue of Hermaphrodites With Attitude magazine \(Winter 1994\)](#), and the [The Murk Manual: How to Understand Medical Writing on Intersex \(published in the Chyialis special issue on Intersex in 1997\)](#). These two glimpses of intersex satire (from before and after the movement’s first public appearance, in 1996) will provide an entry point to the argument made throughout Juliana’s debut book *Hermaphrodite Logic*. The book’s history of the intersex movement advances a fully responsive philosophy of sex (which Juliana argues the movement reveals to be labile and expressive, while those outside its dyadic strictures are left hidden away, by circumstance of birth and conditioning of upbringing). These two movement artifacts provide a glimpse of each moment.

FROM “UNNAMED BLANKS” TO SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS — FROM CRITICAL INTERSEX STUDIES TO A NEW MOVEMENT HISTORY

Session 5 Sex Negativity Seminar organized by Marija Cetinic, Catrinel Radoi and Imogen Grigorovich | February 7th, 11-13h | OMHP C 1.17

Following directly from the introductory lecture, this seminar is focused around the intersex movement’s

rhetoric: the techniques used to challenge clinical (sexological) authority, in both satirical and theoretical registers. Satire was deployed primarily as a tool to establish intersex self-consciousness: allowing intersex people to come to terms with the (traumatic) ways in which they’d been apprehended by clinical observers. (I call these the terms used to know over them.) Theoretically, intersex writers have attempted to disrupt conventional outlooks on sex (revealing themselves after decades being hidden away, as the underbelly of sex’s fabricated bifurcation), while pulling useful frameworks from existing radical traditions. These registers—political and intellectual, satirical and theoretical, trolling and analytic—have seldom been read together (until now!)

The first part of this seminar will preview and discuss two extracts from Juliana’s forthcoming book *Hermaphrodite Logic*. The book aims to provide a history of the intersex movement, furthering a fully responsive philosophy of sex (which Juliana argues the movement reveals to be labile and expressive, while those outside its dyadic strictures are left hidden away and thus left needing to reveal or unveil themselves). The two extracts are intended to give glimpses of each of these twin faces (historical and philosophical, political and intellectual). The key point is that intersex people are known over through frameworks applied to them: but have proven able to master a fluency in these clinical ‘terms of art’ more quickly than clinicians can keep track of. (Far from the last word, the outlooks of medics came to serve as a movement punchline.)

The first extract recounts the first public appearance of the Intersex Society of North America (represented by just two members: Max Beck and Morgan Holmes), who together with allies picketed the American Academy of Pediatrician’s annual event, in Boston. The second extract provides an overview of two intersex theorists who provide quite divergent accounts of sex: Christopher Breu and Iain Morland, despite closely shared personal experiences with intersex variations (and the mis/treatments routinely meted out to those born with them). As well as a political challenge to clinical authority, the intersex movement elaborated on fully elaborated theoretical challenges to conventional understandings of sex. This means a fully-fledged history of intersex liberation must also be an intellectual history.

The closing hour of the session will open the floor to existing intersex scholarship, discussing specifically David Rubin’s essay on John Money: “An Unnamed Blank that Craved a Name”: A Genealogy of Intersex as Gender. Here Rubin outlines the limitations of “gender” as a means of understanding intersex (as opposed to intersex mis/treatments as the origin of gender—as sexologists faced down the limitations of

their efforts to comprehensively “map” sex between two developmental buckets, M/F). Gender is the cart, and intersex the horse.

Throughout, Hermaphrodite Logic is methodologically critical of scholarship which reduces our scope to “critical histories of sexology” (rather than fully integrating the intersex movement which most challenged clinical authority around sex). Concepts are always rewritten by struggle (both for future generations, and retroactively). Nevertheless, the work of Rubin and many other historians of sex(ology) provides a “condition of possibility” for the argument made throughout Hermaphrodite Logic. A critical history of sex is the ladder which a dedicated view of intersex struggle must kick away beneath it, as we climb. Between us, this animating contradiction will be fully teased out as we close.

Juliana Gleeson is a writer. Raised in west London—based in east Berlin—she’s known for exploring lesbianism, comparative religion, leather culture, and communism. Her debut Hermaphrodite Logic is out with Verso Books in June 2025—providing a new history of the intersex movement (just in time for Pride). She was an editor of groundbreaking anthology Transgender Marxism (2021), with Elle O’Rouke. Juliana’s many essays, reviews and dialogues have been published in both high and low presses. Since 2017 she’s performed with queer comedy troupes, hosted salons for subversives, and lectured for pay worldwide. (No pdfs of readings will be circulated in advance but print outs will be distributed at the lecture on February 6.) For registration: catrinelradoi@gmail.com.

COUNTRY OF WORDS

Storytelling Between Palestine and Sweden

<https://wassap.se/country-of-words/> With Layan Ftouni on February 11th and Neferti X. M. Tadiar, on February 25th.

Country of Words is a collaborative course between Palestinian and Swedish universities on the politics, poetics, and cultural history of storytelling. Participants are invited to reflect on the meaning of storytelling and the power of narratives in a world in crisis. Narratives are used both to justify immense violence and to survive despite that violence. In this extracurricular, open course between humanities departments in Palestine and Sweden, students are able to develop together a basis for thinking about the politics and poetics of stories.

In each seminar, a guest teacher is invited to select a few texts on Palestinian storytelling. The texts for each session are posted at the bottom of this page. The seminars take place every other Tuesday, at 5pm Swedish time / 6pm Palestinian time, on Zoom. The link for upcoming sessions is posted on the website.

DOXASTIC WRONGING AND DENIAL OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The next session of the Philosophy and Public Affairs Colloquium will take place on **February 12**. Dr. Seunghyun Song (Tilburg University) will present a paper on doxastic wronging and denial of sexual violence. Please find the details below. We will meet in the OTM Faculteitskamer between 16:00 and 17:30. You are also welcome to join us on Zoom: <https://uva-live.zoom.us/j/89282729979>.

This paper discusses apology as an important reparation for intergenerational doxastic wrongdoing. The paper proceeds as follows. First, I provide a structural defence of doxastic wrongdoing. Second, I defend the possibility of intergenerational doxastic wrongdoing. Third, I conceptualize apology as a crucial measure of reparation for intergenerational doxastic wrongdoing. Focusing on the doxastic element of apology, i.e., where a wrongdoer communicates their belief that they have committed a wrongdoing, I argue that apology serves an important moral function for reparation.

I am assistant professor at Tilburg University. Before coming to Tilburg, I was at KU Leuven, where I held FWO junior postdoc mandate. I also completed my PhD at KU Leuven prior to my postdoc there.

My main area of expertise is in linguistic justice and intergenerational justice. I am particularly interested in issues of reparative justice, historical injustice, and structural injustice approach. I am also invested in the field of social epistemology, especially on epistemic injustice and reparation, and lived experiences of marginalisation.

ASCA THEORY SEMINAR: ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES

Wednesday 12 February, 15:00-18:00, OMHP room A 009
| Organizers: Maarten Arnoldus, Chen Zhou, Nick Psomas, Maria Suarez Caicedo

Readings:

- Neimanis, Astrida, Cecilia Åsberg, and Johan Hedrén. "Four problems, Four Directions for Environmental Humanities: Toward Critical Posthumanities for the Anthropocene." *Ethics & the environment* 20.1 (2015): 67-97.
- Whyte, Kyle. "Critical Investigations of Resilience: A Brief Introduction to Indigenous Environmental Studies & Sciences." *Daedalus* 147.2 (2018): 136-147.
- Moulton, Alex A. "Plotting a New Course for Environmental Humanities: Provision Grounds, Race, and the Future." *Environmental Humanities* 16.2 (2024): 271-290.

SPECULATIVE FICTIONS AND (NON) MODERN FUTURES

Reading group organised by Elio Baldi, Verónica Copello-Duque and Irene Villaescusa Illán. To sign up and receive readings please email Irene Villaescusa Illán: i.villaescusaillan@uva.nl | 12 February 2025, 15:00 -17:00, P.C. Hoofthuis PCH room 308

We assume that all fiction is, indeed, a form of speculation therefore, in this reading group, we are particularly interested in **the politics of such speculation and the forms that it can take**. The umbrella term speculative fiction includes science fiction, utopian/dystopian fiction, feminist fiction and numerous other genres and writing modes. We think of speculative fiction as a mode of creating which not only focuses on science, technology and futurism but one that is also experimental, unfamiliar, posthuman.

We propose to engage with the **concept of modernity and of the future** through speculation. Human beings try to adapt to (anthropogenic) “slow violence” by adopting all kinds of future scenarios driven by dominant ideas on modernity, informed, mostly, by advances in science and technology which generally display AI generated/controlled worlds, climate apocalypses and geoengineering in an increasingly technocratic Global North. But forms do speculative fictions about the future that are liberatory, decolonial and sustainable take? What about past and peripheral imaginations of the future? What imaginations of the future envision less ‘futuristic’ futures for both (human) animals and the planet?

Since ‘modernity’, ‘human beings’ and ‘environment’ are dynamic and plural notions, they need to be investigated critically, especially in a context in which neoliberal capitalism and techno-utopianism combine to create mostly conservative futuristic solutions that reproduce Western, patriarchal and anthropocentric worldviews.

These worldviews (re)produce an essentially monolithic idea of the future through linear notions of time and progress and extractivist and expansionist conceptions of space (conceptions that are more and more projected in another space to be conquered and claimed for nation states and megacorporations, such as the outer space and the deep seas). We want to study how speculative fictions from literature, film and other art forms employ a strategy of indirection to think through visions of the future that interrogate constructed identities and the gendered, racialized, and speciesist elements of our contemporary world.

In these seminar sessions we are also interested in **diversifying our library** by reading fiction works across languages and critical theory. In these seminars we would also like to explore the boundaries and porosities of (non) European texts and Western

epistemologies in relation to transnational languages and transcultural texts.

This seminar is open to academics, MA students, PhD candidates and postdocs with an interest in deepening knowledge on speculative fiction as it relates to contemporary issues and in the theoretical frameworks that help us rethink that relationship. If you are interested in joining, please send us an email beforehand.

In our meetings we are interested in discussing topics such as the following:

- Forms/genres/modes of speculative fiction
- Indigenous narratives & decolonial theory
- Stories and theory of science and technology (i.e. food, architectures, engineering)
- Eco and Feminist utopias/dystopias
- Geo-narratives
- Narratives that redraw the boundaries of time and space
- Multilingual narratives and/in translation

Sessions in Semester 2, 2025 will take place on the following Wednesdays from 15 to 17 hrs. 12 February (PCH 308); 12 March (PCH 308); 16 April (PCH 4.22); 14 May (PCH 4.22)

BOOK LAUNCH MULTISPECIES DIALOGUES

Eva Meijer's new book, *Multispecies Dialogues*, will be published by Amsterdam University Press, on 12 February 2025, 19:00 -21:00, Online.

To celebrate this, there will be an online book launch. At this event Issy Clarke will ask Eva some questions about the book, then some humans will share a more-than-human dialogue that matters to them, and after that we open up the dialogue to whomever wants to join.

In *Multispecies Dialogues* Eva Meijer develops a new understanding of the concept ‘dialogue’, which includes embodied, material and spatial interaction. Meijer does not do this alone: each chapter of the book is devoted to a dialogue, or set of dialogues – with street dog Olli, a community of former lab mice, amphibian neighbors, the North Sea, human children, art, and other beings and entities. Taking multispecies dialogues seriously is a way to do justice to more-than-human agency and to become more worldly in a time dominated by humans. Rethinking the model of the dialogue also opens up new ways of doing philosophy in multispecies world, which is urgently needed to address the ecological, political and philosophical problems of our time.

The event takes place on February 12th, 2025, 7 pm CET via zoom: Please contact Eloë Kingma for the Zoom Link: asca-fgw@uva.nl.

HAI NT BLUE: AFRICAN AMERICAN GOTHIC, AFROPESSIMISM, AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF BLACK NARRATIVE

English Department Lecture by Dr. Marco Petrelli (Assistant Professor of American Literature at the University of Pisa). Organized by Michael Miller. PCH 1.04, 13 February, 2025, 17:00-18:30.

Among the plethora of incendiary claims we owe to Afropessimism, one in particular cannot fail to strike the literary scholar's imagination: Frank B. Wilderson's assertion that narrative is "inherently" anti-black. According to this interpretation, the epistemological roots of Western narrative are to be found in the birth of the modern era, and thus in a Eurocentric system of knowledge also responsible for pseudo-scientific racism, slavery, and the dehumanization of Black people. As a result, Euro-American literature becomes a vessel for deep-seated racialized representations aimed at reinforcing white domination.

This is evident in the gothic, a genre that, as pointed out by H. L. Malchow, developed in symbiosis with colonial discourses on race. Scholars such as Maisha Wester and Corinna Lenhardt have shown how gothic fiction—and American gothic fiction in particular—reiterates dominant discourses of Black otherness and abjection; but also how, when appropriated by the Black Other, this tradition can conversely offer literary strategies to disrupt dominant racial narratives.

Such ambiguity is epitomized by the trope of the ghost. On the one hand, an African American ghost is the perfect representation of the paradigmatic social death that, according to Afropessimism, defines Blackness by virtue of its historical association with enslavement. On the other hand (and drawing on Jacques Derrida), the ghost's peculiar ontology implicates a spacetime disjuncture that, from a narratological standpoint, becomes a disturbance in the fabric of storytelling itself—and that, on a higher level of abstraction, represents a fissure in the linearity of Western master narratives, including those responsible for Black subjugation.

In this regard, the dynamics of spectrality in African American literature somewhat echo a distinguishingly Black mode of expression: the blues. As defined by Houston A. Baker, the "blues force" is a "matrix" that creates "conditions of possibility" by transforming an "unceasingly oppressive" landscape. By examining the convergence of spectrality and the blues, I argue that these frameworks offer tools for rethinking storytelling in the service of cultural and racial justice, and for constructing narratives capable of accommodating the complexity of Black American existence.

Marco Petrelli is assistant professor of American literature at the University of Pisa. He authored two books, and a number of essays dedicated to the

literature and culture of the US South, American Gothic fiction, African American literature, geocriticism and graphic narratives. Among his latest publications are "A Theory of Southern Time and Space: Memory, Place and Identity in Natasha Trethewey's *Native Guard*" (in *The Southern Quarterly* 58.3), and "'I need the story to go': Sing, Unburied Sing, Afropessimism and Black Narratives of Redemption" (in *Jesmyn Ward: New Critical Essays*, Edinburgh University Press 2023). He co-founded and is co-editor-in-chief of *Jam It!—Journal of American Studies* in Italy. His current research project focuses on storytelling, ghosts, and the blues in African American gothic narratives.

ASCA CITIES SEMINAR – PLAYABLE CITIES

First session of the 2025 ASCA Cities Seminar-Playable Cities | Co-organized by Carolyn Birdsall, Alex Gekker, and Linda Kopitz. For more information and registration, please contact Linda Kopitz (l.kopitz@uva.nl). First session – Introductory/discussion session: Fri. 14 Feb 2025 | Location: room 0.16 (E-lab), Turfdraagsterpad 9, Amsterdam, Time: 3-5pm. | Second Session: Fri. 21 Feb. 2025: Dr. Ekim Tam, Time: 3-5pm, Location: room 0.16 (E-lab), BG1 Media Studies, Turfdraagsterpad 9, Amsterdam, Time: 3-5pm.

The 2024–2025 ASCA Cities seminar will approach the city through the lens of play. Taking up the theme of 'Playable Cities', we are interested in how play functions both as a concept and method in representing, designing and building the urban.

From the use of simulation games in city planning (cf. Lammes 2008) to urban installations that invite playfulness, from alternative cityscapes in video games to activist interventions for more public spaces: Play can be understood both as a way to imagine the city – and a way to disrupt it. It is often positioned as an alternative to a more constraining and utilitarian form of "smart" urbanism, one that emphasizes contingency and freedom (De Lange 2015; Gordon and Walter 2016). What makes a city 'playable'? How is play rendered (in)visible in the city? What forms of play and playing are possible/desired/designed in the city? How are urban environments represented in virtual games? How can activist interventions in public space draw on or be framed through play? And what happens when cities are compared to – or even built upon – games, toys, playgrounds, performance spaces and the like?

Engaging with and expanding on such questions, the seminar seeks to bring together perspectives from media and game studies, environmental humanities, cultural geography, anthropology and technology studies as well as architecture and design research.

For more information and our full programme, see <https://www.cities.humanities.uva.nl/news/2024-2025-playable-cities/>

ASCA POP-IN OFFICE

Every third Monday of the month, Jaap and Eloë will hold an open office in VoxPop, from 11:00-12:00. You are all welcome to pop in and have a chat, a coffee or tea, and some company. The second ASCA Pop-in will be on Monday February 17th, 11:00-12:00.

QUEER ANALYSIS

Discussion session organized by the Queer Analysis group on February 20th at 17:30 OMHP (Oudemanshuispoort 4-6 1012), Room: A 008.

All events are in-person only. No need to sign up in advance, unless noted. Everyone is welcome. To request a text and/or be added to the mailing list please email at least five days before the session:

d.semerene@uva.nl

Reading: Sigmund Freud, "Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia" [The Case of Schreber]:

https://www.sas.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Freud_PsychoanalyticNotes_Schreber.pdf

GLISSANT'S OPACITY: BODIES, RELATIONS, TRANSLATIONS

Friday, February 21, 2025, 10 am – 12 pm. Guest respondent and lecturer, Lieks Lettinga, Assistant Professor, Utrecht University, Gender Studies. Organized by Alessandra Benedicty-Kokken.

Dr. Lieks Hettinga is Assistant Professor in Gender Studies at Utrecht University. Their research is situated at intersections of transgender studies, disability studies, critical theory, and visual culture. Their research examines ways in which artists and activists visualize, represent and/or enact non-normative embodiment, more specifically looking at the intersection of trans and disability visual politics and poetics of the body. Their research interests include trans-crip affinities in critiques of (neo)liberalism and debates about how race and disability underpin and/or trouble contemporary Western consolidations of 'transgender' as an identity category. They are currently preparing a monograph based on their PhD dissertation (2021), tentatively titled *Appearing Differently: Trans-Crip Aesthetics of Refusal*.

This event works towards its final conversation with Dr. Lieks Hettinga to think through how Glissant's work pays itself forward into "the right to Opacity," a means to engage more respectfully in our aspirations towards "togetherness" (Amal Alhaag, Wayne Modest).

In the first part of this event, Alessandra Benedicty-Kokken pays explicit attention to Glissant's novels, arguing that they are fundamental, even necessary to fully grasping the urgency of the Glissantian inquiry. More specifically, in paying attention to the theory that is generated in and by his novels, this article thinks

through what the relationship between Opacity and Afropessimism most necessarily might be. If in recent years, and increasingly, Glissantian thought excitingly and crucially has become highly attractive to scholars, curators, and artists whose work interrogates late capitalism, what remains undertheorized is the relationship between the particular historical circumstances that inform his oeuvre and how these grounded experiences—even if, and especially because they are speculative—are taken up in the broader contexts sketched out by his *Tout-Monde* [Whole-World]: both thinking 'South-South' articulations, but also what it means for scholars of anti-capitalist critique thinking from the Global North to deploy Glissantian work in ways that forget, estrange, or even underestimate how his theoretical considerations constantly "trace" back into the material realities of Martinique.

This lecture takes place in the context of the course: *Literary Worlds: World Literature and Globalisation*, in Literary and Cultural Analysis undergraduate program.

THE LUDIFICATION OF VISION, PART 1

Seminar organized by Mathieu Li-Goyette and Toni Pape | Date and time: Thursday, February 27, 3-5pm, BG1, room 0.03 | Sign up: <https://forms.office.com/e/sG9aySv3iE>

Topic: Chalk Talking and an American Sequential Art

This session aims to offer new perspectives on the emergence of comic strips in North America by reframing Rodolphe Töpffer's somewhat exaggerated paternity in the birth of sequential art outside of Europe. Sourcing our study from 19th-century humour publications and the proliferation of rebus and other visual riddles in US Magazines, we will see different sequential and live drawing practices. One of them was a cradle for future cartoonists and was most commonly known at the time as chalk talking, a tradition deeply rooted in a much-needed pedagogical Americanism that emerged during the post-Civil War Reconstruction era. But what is chalk talking about? How does it prepare the close reading demanded by comic strip reading, and in what way does it inform us of multiple and parallel histories of the birth of a medium?

Readings:

Gardner, Jared. "Fragments of Modernity, 1889–1920." *Projections: Comics and the History of Twenty-First-Century Storytelling*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012. 1-28

Goody, Jack. "Language and Writing." *The Interface between the Written and the Oral*. Studies in Literacy, Family, Culture, and the State. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987. 258-289.

Jared Gardner's first chapter of *Projections* will serve as a clear and enlightening bridge between 19th-century politics of vision and technological momentum and the modern historiography of comic strips. Jack Goody's last chapter of his analysis of the written and oral interfaces between artists and the public will give us the tools to go through some chalk talking exercises to think and discuss how this practice finds agency in the gesture of creating comics. You can access the readings [through this link](#).

ANTISOCIAL QUEER THEORY, 2005-2023

Convened by Murat Aydemir | Practical info: all meetings are on Zoom, every last Friday of the month starting February and ending in June (i.e., 28/2, 28/3, 25/4, 30/5, 27/6) from 15:00-17:00 hrs. Students participating in the reading group as a tutorial can earn 6 EC. If you're interested, please sign up through m.aydemir@uva.nl.

Antisocial queer theory claims that sexuality, at its core, disrupts or negates forms of identity, relationality, and sociality. In this reading group and tutorial, we'll trace the development of the theory from its early formulation following a 2005 MLA Annual Convention panel to the 2023 *Postmodern Culture* special issue on "The Afterlives of the Antisocial" (edited by Austin Svedjan and John Paul Ricco). We'll read contributions by Tim Dean, Lee Edelman, Jack Halberstam, José Esteban Muñoz, Robyn Wiegman, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Leo Bersani, and others. Issues we'll address may include the relation of sexuality to other aspects of identity and control, such as race, class, and gender; the tension between an essentially negative sexuality and sexuality functioning as apparatus for constituting human subjects; and the historical bearing of the Aids crisis, progressive neoliberalism, homonationalism, and the rise of the far right.

RHYTHM AND (DIGITAL) METHODS

ASCA Digital Rhythmanalysis Reading Group organized by Daniel de Zeeuw and Sal Hagen | 28 February 2025, 15:30 - 17:30, [University Theatre](#), Room 101A | Please register by sending an email to d.dezeeuw@uva.nl.

How to do justice to the pulsing, runaway, dynamic, emergent, cyclical, and ephemeral character of "terminally online" lifeworlds? In this reading group we explore various (new and old) theoretical frameworks and methodologies for studying the vernacular rhythms of digital culture. We are interested in tying the notion of rhythm to similar materialist temporal concepts of 'difference-with-repetition' such as (dark) refrains, cycles, formulas, vibes, motifs, flows, and of course memes. How are acoustic/environmental concepts used to register the flows of contemporary digital culture (including ideas of 'ambience' and 'resonance' deployed after the affective/new materialist

turn in media studies)? How can we move beyond the static network visualization to capture the wild innovations of online slang or the becoming-viral of a hashtag or conspiracy theory? What would a genuinely 'rhythmic media theory' look like?

In the group's inaugural iteration we read two short chapters on rhythmanalysis by the French Marxist philosopher of everyday life Henri Lefebvre: 'The Critique of the Thing' and 'The Rhythmanalyst: A Provisionary Portrait'. We also had an open discussion on the reading group's key theme(s) and potential future readings. From this we planned the following sessions for the coming academic year (readings will be distributed two weeks in advance of each session).

CALL FOR PAPERS: TOWARDS AN ETHICS OF POSSIBILITY

Paying Attention to Planetary Conditions of Livelihood

*3rd Interactive Workshop of the Empirical Ethics Workshop Series at IAS, 4 March 2025, 9:00–14:00 | Places are limited. If you are interested in joining the workshop, please submit a **short (100–150 word) motivational statement** connecting your research to concepts of possibility and attention **by February 14th**. We will confirm whether your abstract was accepted on Tuesday, February 18th. | Organizers: Paula Helm and Selin Gerlek*

The IAS Empirical Ethics Research Group, represented by Paula Helm, Selin Gerlek, Huub Dijstelbloem, Tobias Blanke, and Peter van Baalen invites you to a closed workshop with two special guests: Amade M'Charek and Arjun Appadurai.

The goal of the workshop is to take steps **Towards an Ethics of Possibility** through **Paying Attention to Planetary Conditions of Livelihood**.

The concept of an ethics of possibility is inspired by Arjun Appadurai's work in *Future as Cultural Fact* (2013). In the final chapter of his book, Appadurai proposes an ethics of possibility, which focuses on ethical life as it unfolds in the everyday hopes and struggles of ordinary people. This approach contrasts with an ethics of probability, which is a power-conserving, risk-mitigation framework that dominates critical fields such as AI ethics. An ethics of possibility, by contrast, is more attuned to the fluid, messy, and often unpredictable dynamics of human experience and social change. In our exploration, we will investigate what such an ethics entails, what it can offer, and what empirical research methods could help inform its development.

At the latter point, we draw on Amade M'Charek's notion of "the Art of Paying Attention" (2015), which provides a lens through which we can consider how paying attention shapes ethical practices. We ask how "paying attention" can be understood and enacted, and

under which conditions it should be regarded as a normative act of care—or neglect. In this context, we will also incorporate the active engagement of the senses, which are positioned as essential to the very act of paying attention. This approach comes with the invitation for participants to engage with their own research perspectives and experiences, while experimenting with the act of "doing attention." Through this, we aim to focus on our often-overlooked senses as vital tools for empirical insight.

We also warmly invite workshop participants to attend our **Public Event at Spui25, on 3 March 2025, 17.00-19.00**, where Arjun Appadurai and Amade M'Charek will give presentations of their work on this topic, followed by commentaries by the IAS Empirical Ethics team and discussion with the general audience.

CALL FOR PAPERS (CONVERGENCE SPECIAL ISSUE): UTOPIAN MEDIA STUDIES

There is a growing sentiment within new media studies that the work of researchers is not limited to the diagnosis of current issues around media. While critique is necessary to articulate the matters of concern that are the roiling subtext of contemporary life, there is an emerging sense that the task of media studies research must also be to imagine hopeful alternatives. Yet how do media studies researchers move with and beyond critique? Luckily, it is not necessary to devise a completely new research program, as numerous scholars are already doing work that nourishes resilience, hope and utopian thinking.

Some researchers have critiqued metaphors and developed new ones for understanding media, while others have created book-length lexicons for imagining new material relationships. Still more researchers have created provocative art, creative fictions, and speculative proposals for how to engage the uncertain conditions of the future. Additionally, some focus on the here and now by designing civilian and activist publics that challenge the most concerning technological developments.

This call for papers is dedicated to exploring the various ways that media studies scholars are doing utopian work when they critique, reconstitute and reimagine their research objects. In gathering work around this theme, the special issue seeks to map the shape of the utopian within contemporary media studies. For a longer version of this CFP, please see: <https://textaural.com/utopianmediastudies/>.

Submissions may include (but are not limited to) explorations of the following topics:

- Media theorists, collectives, and projects that have contributed to media studies' utopian tradition.
- The utopian disciplinary visions of the political economy of communication, feminist media studies,

new materialism, cybernetics, the environmental humanities, etc.

- Media studies collectives/conferences/working groups dedicated to critiquing and reconstituting digitally mediated societies.

- The genres of utopian media studies research such as the manifesto, participatory research with civil society, new media art and design, the speculative or fabulatory final chapter of monographs, policy recommendations reports.

- The role of hope, optimism and utopian thinking in the study of technology. – The ways a utopian media studies can avoid the traditional perils, risks and exclusionary mechanisms associated with utopian thinking.

- Reflections on how utopian and hopeful thinking can inform, shape and re-orient media studies methodologies.

- Distinctions between the planetary and the local when it comes to media utopias.

- The question of how utopian traditions can be more structurally integrated into media studies programs and curricula.

Please submit an extended abstract of 500 words (including references) that includes the research question and argument, outlines the theoretical framework, and clearly explains the contribution to the special issue theme. We especially welcome submissions from researchers from the Global South. Please email abstracts to utopianmediastudies@gmail.com by **1 March 2025**. If you have further questions, please contact the guest editors, Steve Jankowski (s.jankowski@uva.nl) and Jakko Kemper (j.kemper@uva.nl).

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS: ABSENCE AS ARTISTIC STRATEGY IN CONTEMPORARY ART

Symposium organized by Paula Haroey, Felipe Martinez, Stephanie Noach, Laura Bertens. Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society, department of Art History - Leiden, The Netherlands, June 11, 2025 (10.00-17.00). Submission deadline: March 24, 2025.

The symposium is organized as a starting point for the publication of an edited volume – a selection of symposium attendants will be invited to submit book chapters. We invite abstracts for papers focused on the theme of absence in contemporary art. The subject can be understood very broadly, including art that erases, leaves things out, emphatically hides things, highlights negative space, refuses to close a narrative arc, suggests a presence that is not there, overrepresents something to the point of making it invisible, etcetera. Essays should analyse contemporary artworks that incorporate some form of absence as a key artistic strategy. Please note, we do not seek analyses of artworks that are about

absence, i.e. only in terms of their meaning or context; absence must be a fundamental aspect of the work itself. Some examples are Rachel Whiteread's casts, Hiroshi Sugimoto's theatre series, Doris Salcedo's Atrabiliarios, Gillian Wearing's Trauma, Ger van Elk's Missing persons series, Song Dong's Writing diary with water and Christian Boltanski's monument installations.

We welcome a broad range of theoretical approaches, with a preference for art theoretical analysis. The focus is on artworks from the 1980's onwards. We are hoping for contributions from authors and artist researchers around the globe. If you have an idea that does not entirely fit the described criteria but feels relevant nonetheless, please send us an email to discuss it with us!

How to submit: please submit an abstract of max. 500 words to absence.in.art@gmail.com by March the 24th. You will receive a response by the beginning of April. Please attach an author bio of 100-150 words and include your institutional affiliation, country of residence, and email address. We aim to organize the symposium as an in person event but will make it possible to attend online for those who cannot come. We are committed to reducing the carbon footprint of academia and fully support (and encourage) decisions not to fly to academic events. If you have any questions, please contact us at l.m.f.bertens@hum.leidenuniv.nl

INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIPS WITH NIAS

The 2025-call for [Individual Fellowships with NIAS](#) for the academic year 2026-2027 is now open. This fellowship offers time and space for humanities and social sciences scholars who wish to work on their own research project as part of an interdisciplinary community. Fellowships can last five or ten months, and are open to researchers in the Netherlands and abroad. Applicants should have acquired at least three years of research experience since they obtained their PhD.

This year only the first 215 applications will be considered by the selection committee. The call closes in any case on 17 March 2025 at 12.00. Please note that you must [inform the grant team](#) before submission in order to ensure the feasibility of your plans. Thank you for getting in touch!