

Nieuwsbrief 282
March 2025

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Dramaturgie van het antropoceen. Theatraliteit in transitie(s) (Dramaturgy of the Anthropocene. Theatricality in Transition(s))

4 March 2025, 13.00 hrs. Agnietenkapel, Supervisors: Kati Röttger; Odile Heynders.

In this PhD project I research how dramaturgies of contemporary Dutch theatrical performances engage with issues related to the (concept of the) Anthropocene. Through practicing creative concepting (Van der Tuin and Verhoeff 2022), I develop an ontoepistemological understanding of the concept theatricality as tool of analysis. In each case study, this notion of ontoepistemological theatricality is at the core of the analysis of the dramaturgy of each performance in connection respectively with the following concepts representative of the Anthropocene: astronaut | pandemic | islands |

Synthesized, the case studies' performance analyses form a collection of speculative future scenarios for living and dying in and after the Anthropocene, connected to central problems associated with climate change: dying forests, sea level rise, colonizing space, and most recently the COVID-19 pandemic. My PhD project aims to research these alternative climate change narratives for the Anthropocene, focusing on how theatre makers are applying theatrical strategies and developing new dramaturgies to make sense of this geological epoch in which the influence of humankind on the planet became visible.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE: IRA SOLOMATINA



Politics and the political in women's fashion magazines: Perspectives from India, Russia and the USA

DISSERTATION DEFENSE: ALICE BREEMEN



27 March 2025, 13:00 hrs. Agnietenkapel. Supervisors: René Boomkens and Christine Delhaye

In the first quarter of the 21st century, fashion media's coverage of political and social issues, although still largely perceived as novel and unusual, has become ubiquitous. This thesis focuses on the increased visibility of political coverage in fashion media, exploring how politics and the political are expressed in fashion publications, and what change the newly sharpened focus on politics signifies in the genre of the fashion magazine. To address these questions, the research examines how fashion publications' political coverage relates to locally and globally shifting views on citizenship, activism, and civic duty. The study explores the conflation of spectacle, activism, consumption, and politics that characterises the current moment, alongside the exigencies, limitations, and historically gendered nature of fashion media. The study focuses on the time span between late 2019 and early 2023, and analyses political discourses in fashion media situating them within wider political and cultural contexts. It is based on data from three countries – India, Russia and the USA, and draws on examples from nine mainstream fashion and lifestyle publications for women.

ASCA GUEST RESEARCHER: GAMZE EKMEKÇIOĞLU



I am a PhD candidate in Journalism, specializing in media, migration, media literacy, and hate speech. I have been awarded the TÜBİTAK 2214-A PhD Scholarship and am currently conducting research on "Hate Speech Towards Immigrants in the Media: A Comparative Study of Turkish and Dutch Media" at the University of Amsterdam, where I am also a guest researcher at ASCA.

In my PhD thesis, I explore how media representations of immigrants contribute to the spread of hate speech. My project aims to analyze the framing of immigrants and its implications for public opinion.

I hold a Master's degree in Journalism from Istanbul University. I have also contributed to academic

publishing, including a book section in *Social Media Ecology* (Cizgi Publishing, 2021) on the analysis of Covid-19 vaccine news circulating on social media from an infodemic perspective.

In addition to my academic endeavors, I have also worked as an Editorial Assistant and Content Creator for 'The Slovenia Times' and as an English Language Instructor at Istanbul University, teaching a range of language skills from grammar to academic writing.

RE-IMAGINING UNIVERSALITY IN THE PLURIVERSE

[ASCA Workshop 2025](#) | Organizers: Laila Bouziane, Serra Hughes, Lucy Gaynor. Call for Papers ASCA International Workshop 26-28 May 2025 | Extended Deadline: March 15, 2025 | Contact: ascaworkshop2025@gmail.com

Confirmed Keynote Speakers:

Prof. dr Markus Messling, Saarland University, Professor of Romance literatures and Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies

Prof. dr Barnita Bagchi, University of Amsterdam, Professor of World Literatures

Dr Paulo Lemos Horta, NYU Abu Dhabi. Associate Professor of Literature; Global Network Associate Professor of Literature

Dr Ruth Clemens, Postdoctoral Researcher, Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society (LUCAS)

Read more on the ASCA website: www.asca.uva.nl.

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 Faghfouri Azar, Safae El Khannoussi El Boudrin, Daniel Loick, Shahin Nasiri, Abdulkarim Pusat, and Oscar Talbot, in collaboration with our partners from the University of Rojava. 3 March 2025, 08:30 -10:30 | [Oudemanhuispoort](#), Room OMHP, D 1.18B.

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 jinology 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. The seminars will take place every week Mondays, 8.30-10.30 h Amsterdam Time, starting March 3rd. All sessions take place in the Oudemanhuispoort, OMHP, D 1.18B. The last session will be on April 7th. The seminar is open to MA students and PhD candidates. 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.

Other sessions are scheduled on March 10, 17, 24, 31.

THE UNREAL MADE IDEAL: GENDER, ROLE-PLAYING, AND INTIMATE BONDS IN LI YU

“The Unreal Made Ideal: Gender, Role-Playing, and Intimate Bonds in Li Yu’s (1611-1680) “A Male Mencius’s Mother Raises Her Son Properly by Moving House Three Times,” with Shengyu Wang, Visiting Research Fellow at Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study | Friday, March 7, 2025, 10:15 am – 11:45 am | OMHP D0.09 (Oudemanhuispoort 4-6, 1012 CN Amsterdam)

Is beauty truth and truth beauty? Does the artifice of role-playing necessarily contradict the ideal of authenticity? Should genuine feelings serve as a foundation for developing truly intimate relationships? These questions are of crucial importance to Chinese writers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a period that witnessed profound transformations in the economic, social, and cultural spheres. In this talk, I work from Li Yu’s vernacular short story “A Male Mencius’s Mother Raises Her Son Properly by Moving House Three Times” to explore these complex questions. Focusing on Li Yu’s masterful use of humor, parody, and wordplay to subvert gender norms, this

talk illuminates the intricate tensions between Confucian orthodoxy and the discourse of authenticity in narrative. My talk will further link Li Yu’s story to contemporaneous discussions about the power of human desire and its cosmological significance, demonstrating that the protagonist, an embodiment of an “ideal femininity,” affords interesting comparisons with a host of boundary-crossing characters in late imperial Chinese literature. Through this talk, I hope not only to provide a nuanced analysis of Li Yu’s story but also to offer historical insights that can inform critical thinking about gender, sexuality, and togetherness.

This lecture takes place in the context of the course: *Literary Worlds: World Literature and Globalisation*, in Literary and Cultural Analysis undergraduate program. The course coordinator is Alessandra Benedicty-Kokken. Any questions may be sent to a.benedicty@uva.nl

EMPIRICAL ETHICS: ON THE ART OF PAYING ATTENTION

SPUI25 3 March 2025, 20:00 hrs. | Event organized by Paula Helm and Selin Gerlek

What would an ethics of possibility look like? How can “paying attention” be understood ethically? In contrast with classical applied ethics, these types of empirical ethics seek to ground ethical reflection in the observation of concrete practices. Tonight, guest speakers will explore how to account for the messiness, ambiguities, and contradictions through which ethical life unfolds in the everyday experiences of real people.

This event seeks to advance Arjun Appadurai’s idea of an ethics of possibility, which stands in contrast to a risk-reduction oriented ethics of probability. This we will do by connecting empirical insights with value considerations. While there are several approaches to empirical ethics, we focus on lines of tradition within philosophy and anthropology that build on a situated understanding of knowledge. We investigate what an empirically informed ethics of possibility entails, what it can offer, and what research methods could help inform its development. At the latter point, the event explores Amade M’charek’s notion of “the Art of Paying Attention” (2015), which provides a lens through which we can consider how attention shapes ethical practices. How can “paying attention” be understood and enacted, and under which conditions should it be regarded as a normative act of care—or neglect? In how far is attention normative?

About the speakers

Arjun Appadurai is a world-known anthropologist and cultural theorist prominent for his influential work on globalization, modernity, and the cultural dynamics of imagination. Born in Mumbai, he has held academic

positions at prestigious institutions, including New York University and the University of Chicago. Appadurai's research explores the intersections of technology, media, and social life, with a particular focus on the ethics of possibility—emphasizing human agency, cultural diversity, and the power of imagination in shaping futures beyond dominant techno-centric paradigms.

Amade M'charek is a professor of Anthropology of Science at the University of Amsterdam. Her research focuses on the intersection of science, race, and identity, with particular attention to forensic science and the social construction of race in Europe. Drawing from her own background, M'charek critically examines how race and ethnicity are produced through scientific practices. She is a leading voice in science and technology studies (STS), advocating for more inclusive and situated approaches to scientific knowledge. Her most recent attention also goes towards the role of the senses in empirical research.

Huub Dijstelbloem is a professor of Philosophy of Science and Politics at the University of Amsterdam and Scientific Director of the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS). His research focuses on the political implications of technology, particularly in relation to borders, migration, surveillance, and the governance of science and innovation. Dijstelbloem is the author of several influential books and articles on border technologies, democracy, and citizenship. He is a leading voice in science and technology studies (STS) and public philosophy, advocating for more democratic and inclusive technological practices.

Paula Helm (moderator) is Assistant Professor in Empirical Ethics and Data at the University of Amsterdam, where she co-leads the Empirical Ethics Research Group and coordinates the MA program on Cultural Data & AI. With a background in Cultural Anthropology and Peace & Conflict Studies, she earned her PhD with an ethnography on addiction therapy. She has led interdisciplinary research projects on AI, data ethics, and security, and held postdoc positions at Goethe University Frankfurt and TU Munich, as well as fellowships with David Lyon in Kingston and Helen Nissenbaum in New York.

Selin Gerlek (moderator) is Assistant Professor for Philosophy of Technology and Politics at the University of Amsterdam. Her research focuses on digital citizenship, transformative processes in human-technology relations, mediated cultural practices, empirical ethics & value change, as well as embodied and hermeneutic relations. The traditional lines of thought she follows include (Post-)Phenomenology, Philosophy of Technology, Science and Technology Studies (STS), Pragmatism, Practice Theory, Political

Philosophy, Feminist Philosophy, Gender Theories, and both vertical and horizontal ethics.

FORM AND (DIS)ORDER

ASCA Reading Group co-organized by Michael Miller and Stephan Besser | 4 March, 15:00-17:00, PCH 6.31

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 second session we will discuss the chapters "Video," "Antitheory," and the conclusion to Kornbluh's *Immediacy*.

COMMUNITY TV IN THE CARIBBEAN

Inside Errol Fabien's Gayelle the Caribbean in Trinidad & Tobago | ASCA Seminar | 5 March 2025, 15:00-17:00 hrs. Flamingo Room, Buzzhouse/Humanities Venture Lab, Oudemanhuispoort (E-building). Please register for your on-site attendance in advance via Rebecca Robinson (r.r.robinson@uva.nl). Join the Zoom link for online attendance: <https://uva-live.zoom.us/j/89199258793>

Join us on **Wednesday, March 5** from **15.00-17.00 hrs** for a seminar on the role of community television in the Caribbean, with a special focus on *Gayelle the Caribbean*, a groundbreaking community television station in the postcolonial twin-island nation state of Trinidad & Tobago. The seminar will explore the television history of the Caribbean's southernmost island nation and examine the opportunities and challenges of local production in a media landscape dominated by foreign and particularly US-American content.

PhD researcher **Rebecca Robinson** (ASCA) will explore how *Gayelle* has provided a platform for local content through talk shows, music programs, news, and variety shows since its launch in 2004. Through a series of interviews with its founding director, **Errol Fabien**, she has examined the station's efforts to create alternative content in a media landscape dominated by foreign programming. At the same time, she has explored the economic and management challenges that led to *Gayelle's* decline in the course of the 2010s. Errol Fabien will join online to respond to these findings and share

his personal experiences as a pioneer in community television in the Caribbean. The seminar will be introduced by **Emiel Martens**, Assistant Professor in Postcolonial Media Studies and historian of the Caribbean audiovisual industries.

This seminar is organized by the ASCA Research Group [Postcolonial Film Histories and Heritages](#) and hosted by [BuzzHouse](#). The seminar takes place on-site, but online attendance via Zoom is possible as well.

PERFORMING LAND AND THE NON-HUMAN

Necrosonic Landscapes and The Return of the Wolf

First session of the Climate Imaginaries seminar organized by Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca | Wednesday 5th March, 5-7pm | Guest speakers: Berkveldt Collective (Noëlle Ingeveldt and Juriaan van Berkel) | ASCA respondent: Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca with Agat Sharma | Location: DAS Graduate School, Studio 2.10, Overhoeksplein 2 (2nd floor)

Seminar 1: Performing land and the non-human: Necrosonic Landscapes and The Return of the Wolf

Date/time: Wednesday 5th March, 5-7pm

Guest speakers: Berkveldt Collective (Noëlle Ingeveldt and Juriaan van Berkel) | ASCA respondent: Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca with Agat Sharma | Location: DAS Graduate School, Studio 2.10, Overhoeksplein 2 (2nd floor)

Berkveldt is a Rotterdam-based audiovisual art studio founded by Noëlle Ingeveldt and Juriaan van Berkel. In this seminar, the artists will share insights from their research, focussing on two recent: [Necrosonic Landscapes](#) (2023) and [The Return of the Wolf](#) (2021).

Necrosonic Landscapes is an immersive audiovisual installation that integrates the sounds of decomposing organisms with visually captivating landscapes, creating a sensory experience that explores the complex cycle of life and death in nature. *The Return of the Wolf* is a transformative journey, where Berkveldt becomes wolf (but to do so also ought to become sheep) in order to interrogate a cultivated and disconnected landscape of the Netherlands. The story is told as a contemporary fairy tale through film. Various costumes and props allow this transformative journey to take place. For the body to become other. As explored by scholars like Donna Haraway and Karen Barad, the project questions the centrality of the human subject and acknowledges the agency and importance of non-human entities and the role they play in shaping societies, cultures, and their architectures. With this work, Berkveldt re-evaluates spatial design methodologies, emphasizing a collaboration with the natural material world. They put forward a more holistic and ecological approach by going far in exploring the entanglement of matter and meaning and indeed engage with the ethical responsibilities that arise from this entanglement.

[Climate Imaginaries](#)

POSTCOLONIAL HAUNTOLOGIES: ART IN THE PRESENCE – ABSENCE OF THE PAST

International Symposium organized by Assel Kadyrkhanova, Mehmet Berkay Sulek, and Alexandra Tsay. 5 – 8 March 2025.

Postcolonial Hauntologies: Art in the Presence – Absence of the Past is an international symposium held jointly at the University of Amsterdam (Netherlands) and Concordia University (Canada). It aims to establish cross-cultural solidarities and foster transdisciplinary dialogues, including voices from diverse regions that address colonial legacies. It focuses on art as a medium to aesthetically transform spectral traces, while exploring the decolonial potential of institutional sites, such as archives and museums.

Marked by the publication of Derrida's *Specters of Marx* in 1994, the spectral turn saw the spectre as a conceptual signifier of the "invisible visible" or not-fully-realised presence that claims space (Derrida: 1996; Peeren, Pilar Blanco: 2013). The spectre can signify a form of traumatic presence that continues to haunt individuals and societies that have not confronted their troubled pasts. For example, Nicholas Abraham's term "phantom" is linked to the transgenerational transmission of shame and guilt. In a broader sense, legacies of violence can persist in affected societies, manifesting in various forms and carrying the threat of re-emergence. In postcolonial contexts, the haunting legacies may include traumas resulting from centuries of racial othering or the delayed consequences of environmental violence.

Art plays a crucial role in addressing colonial legacies by offering a space for reflection, reconnection, and resistance. Contemporary artists explore the potentialities of their media – indexical, performative, or time-based while touching upon traces and resonances of past and ongoing violence. Museums and institutions face the challenge of dealing with ruptures and continuity within postcolonial structures.

This three-day symposium brings together artists, art historians, curators, and early-career researchers to discuss the following questions: What role does art play in addressing difficult pasts? How do artists use their media to make the invisible visible and actualize traces of trauma? What kinds of temporalities do they create when engaging with haunting legacies? In what ways can museums challenge and transform postcolonial legacies? How do artistic and curatorial methods address the absence in archives and reimagine archive and archival practices? How can engaging with postcolonial hauntologies help us build cross-border solidarities?

Schedule:

Day 1: University of Amsterdam (Amsterdam) – 5 March 2025

Day 2: Concordia University (Montreal) – 7 March 2025
 Day 3: online (Zoom) – 8 March 2025

Event organisers:

Assel Kadyrkhanova – visual artist, researcher and a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Amsterdam.

Mehmet Berkay Sulek – PhD Candidate in Art History at the University of Amsterdam.

Alexandra Tsay – curator and researcher, currently a PhD student in Art History department at Concordia University.

The Amsterdam event is supported by Netherlands Institute for Cultural Analysis, and Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis. It is realised as part of the Artistic Research Research Group (ARRG).

A CRITICAL HISTORY OF PSYCHOANALYSIS IN THE NETHERLANDS

Organized by the Queer Analysis Group, with Carolina Moreirão. Everyone is welcome. There is no need to sign up. In-person only. Contact: d.semerene@uva.nl. Thursday, March 6, 2025 at 17h30 OMHP (Oudemanshuispoort 4-6 1012), Room: A 009

Dialogue with psychoanalyst Carolina Moreirão, who will speak about the psychoanalytic movement in the Netherlands, from the foundation of the Nederlandse Vereniging voor Psychoanalyse (NVPA) in 1917 and Freud's presence in the 1920 International Congress of Psychoanalysis in Den Haag to the Dutch psychoanalytic scene of today.

WAVES OF MEMORY IN THE RED SEA

Unpacking Mixedness through Italo-Eritrean Livescapes

 Date: 6 March 2025 |  Time: 16:00-17:30 | 
 Location: African Studies Centre Leiden (or online)

This seminar explores themes of identity, memory, culture, and post-colonial dynamics, focusing on the Italo-Eritrean community. It provides a unique opportunity to engage in discussions around inclusivity, cultural heritage, and the complexities of mixed identities. We believe this topic will resonate with your institution's expertise in identity, heritage, post-colonial studies, inclusivity. Attending the seminar will foster valuable exchanges with researchers and professionals from various fields. For more information and registration:

<https://ascleiden.nl/news/ascl-seminar-waves-memory-red-sea-unpacking-mixedness-through-italo-eritrean-livescapes>

TRANS FEMME FUTURES BOOK LAUNCH WITH NAT RAHA AND MIJKE VAN DER DRIFT

In this book launch, authors Nat Raha and Mijke van der Drift engage in conversation with writers Simon(e) van

Saarloos (author of *Against Ageism: A Manifesto*) and Alejandra Ortiz (co-founder Papaya Kuir, author of *De Waarheid zal Mij Bevrijden*) on topics such as radical transformation, mutual aid, transfeminism, and abolition. 7 March 2025, 17:00 -19:00, [Roeterseilandcampus - building A Room REC A 209 Register here](#) before 6 March 2025.

'Femme' describes a constellation of queer, gendered expressions that uproot expectations of what it means to be feminine. Building upon experiences of transformation, belonging and harm, *Trans Femme Futures* (Pluto Press) is a transfeminist call for collective liberation. *Trans Femme Futures* envisions the future through everyday actions that revolutionise our lives. Nat Raha and Mijke van der Drift discuss struggles around trans healthcare, the need for collectives over institutions, the importance of mutual care, and transfeminism as abolition. The authors show how social change can be achieved through transformative practices that allow queer life to thrive in a time of climate, health, political and economic crises.

In the words of Marquis Bey, "When one thinks of trans, feminism, and radical as genuinely, inextricably entangled, one thinks of this book. This is what we need at this moment: a powerful, steadfast commitment to liberation. And this is it."

In this book launch, authors Nat Raha and Mijke van der Drift engage in conversation with writers Simon(e) van Saarloos (author of *Against Ageism: A Manifesto*) and Alejandra Ortiz (co-founder Papaya Kuir, author of *De Waarheid zal Mij Bevrijden*) on topics such as radical transformation, mutual aid, transfeminism, and abolition.

Bios:

Mijke van der Drift works on transfeminist and anti-imperial ethics through philosophies of movement, collective action, and counter-cultural production. This work takes the form of writings, performances, and sound pieces, often by way of inter-disciplinary collaborations. Mijke is Tutor (Research) at the Royal College of Art, London and co-chair of its Union branch. Mijke is founding member of the arts collective *Red Forest*. Together with Nat Raha, Mijke co-authored *Trans Femme Futures* (Pluto 2024). They published in *Social Text*, with Cambridge University Press, and co-edit the *Radical Transfeminism Zine*.

Nat Raha is a poet, and Lecturer in Fine Art Critical Studies at the Glasgow School of Art. Her poetry is of an experimental queer lyric, attending to histories of struggle and resistance to racial capitalism, through de/re/materialising sound, form and syntax, on the page and in performance. Her books of poetry include *apparitions (nines)* and *of sirens, body & faultlines*. Her performance work, *epistolary (on carceral islands)* was co-commissioned by Edinburgh Art

Festival, Scotland and TULCA Festival of Visual Arts, Galway, Ireland, 2023. With Mijke van der Drift, Nat is co-author of *Trans Femme Futures: Abolitionist Ethics for Transfeminist Worlds* (Pluto Press, 2024), and the article "'They would plant the rose garden themselves': Femmeness, Complicity, Solidarity", published in *Social Text*.

Alejandra Ortiz is a published author, researcher, and community builder. A brown Mexican trans woman with a history of marginalization, violence, and sex work among other intersections. In the Netherlands since 2015, Alejandra devotes her activism to the visibility and empowerment of marginalized communities with projects by organizations and collectives such as TNN, TranScreen Film Festival, Queer Network Alliance, Transgender Europe and her collective; Papaya Kuir. In 2022, her memoirs *De waarheid zal me bevrijden* was published by Lebowski Publishers. In 2023, she was awarded the Winq Community Award. She was the curator of Queer Currents 2023 and Pride Photo Award 2024 and was named Rising Start of 2024 by Harper's Bazaar Nederland."

Simon(e) van Saarloos is a writer, artist and curator based between Berkeley, California and Amsterdam, the Netherlands. They are the author of six books and have contributed to over more than thirty edited volumes, books, and journals. Van Saarloos is the author of *Against Ageism. A Queer Manifesto* (Emily Carr University Press, 2023); *Take 'Em Down. Scattered Monuments and Queer Forgetting* (Publication Studio 2021) and *Playing Monogamy* (Publication Studio 2019) as well as several books in Dutch: *Herdenken herdacht* (Prometheus 2019); *Enz. Het Wildersproces* (Atlas Contact 2018); the novel *De vrouw die* (Nijgh & Van Ditmar 2016); the collection of columns *Ik deug / deug niet* (Nijgh & Van Ditmar 2015) and *Het monogame drama* (De Bezige Bij 2015).

This event is made possible through the generous sponsorship of NICA: Netherlands Institute for Cultural Analysis; Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis, and, Amsterdam Research Center for Gender and Sexuality.

THE QUEER FORMALISM READING GROUP

Organized by Imogen Grigorovich, Jakob Henselmans, Samuel Ludmila Feline Constantin | 10 March 2025. Our first session takes place on Monday March 10, 13:00. We will read and discuss Leo Bersani's 1987 essay "Is the Rectum a Grave?" next to and against the first chapter of Eugenie Brinkema's 2022 book *Life-Destroying Diagrams, on form, horror and the body: "Horrere or."* Contact & registration: queerformalism@gmail.com
Registration deadline: 7 March 2025

Two provocations: *The history of queer theory is one of a disarticulated investment in form and formalism, and formalisms (can) produce queer readings of texts.* What is at stake, in short, is an unlikely encounter between methodology and politics, between a set of academic dispositions and a conceptual culture. That is the prompt for this reading group and the organizing principle behind the selection of texts we want to read together, which re(t)read queer theory and its central interventions in critical thinking through the spectre of its aesthetic investments, its wavering attachment to form, and its shy formalisms.

Two movements:

1) *Queerness to form(alisms)*. Queer theory's relationship to form and formedness, and to formalist reading practices, is at once disarticulated and smuggled into queer theory under various disguises. It is true that neither the Russian formalists of the 1920's nor the American New Critics of the 1950's spring to mind as particularly queer readers of literature. And yet our suggestion is that there is in queer theory an undertheorized element of such highly interested (and interesting!) readings of form. It is none other than Eve Sedgwick, after all, who tells of a childhood marked by "a kind of formalism, a visceral near-identification with the writing I cared for, at the level of sentence structure, metrical pattern, rhyme" ("Queer and Now," 1993). Entirely against a traditional understanding of who or what 'the formalist' is, she re-describes formalism as the trait of a "perverse reader." Lee Edelman likewise argues without condemnation that "formalism expresses the excessive element in any world that exposes that world as not-all" (*Bad Education*, 2022). And Leo Bersani succeeds his work on sex, homosexuality and AIDS ("Is the Rectum a Grave?," 1987) with a book dedicated entirely to formalist readings of Beckett, Rothko and Resnais (*Arts of Impoverishment*, 1993), as if to imply that there somehow exists an obvious and complete continuum between theorizing sexuality and formalist readings of art. *What*, then, is this relationship between sex, sexuality and form; between queer theory and formalism? But if there is indeed one, how to think about the seeming opposition between queer theory's common celebrations of ambivalence (Berlant) and even formlessness (Halberstam), and the rigorous, methodological fascinations with form that formalism champions, with all its emphasis on the innocuous in objects: lines, rhymes, rhythms, shapes? How and where does (or should?) queerness encounter form(s), and queer theory formalism(s)? And what is finally at stake in neglecting such an encounter?

2) *Form(alisms) to queerness*. Recent strands of formalist scholarship, such as the work on methodology by Eugenie Brinkema, sound increasingly and remarkably

queer. Brinkema's plea for a "radical formalism" attends to the "disaffordances" of form — its "capacity to trouble, disrupt, even void grounds of meaning, to render readings that are bad investments." Her work presents an unmistakable echo of queer theory's infatuation with bad educations, non-reproductions, failures, non-essentiality. At the same time, however, this queer-like formalist tendency stands in stark contrast with the work of other contemporary formalists, such as Anna Kornbluh and Caroline Levine. Both, in different voices, have recently turned to the promises of meaning and structure that form can afford. In urgent responses to crises of the university and politics (if not the world!), they call for a greater attendance to (theories of) form for the purposes of critical and social betterment, to counter what Kornbluh has called critique's fatal retreat into the "beautiful fantasy of formless life." Indeed, what to think of queer theory's own contributions to that fantasy, with all its utopian emphases on breakdown, anarchitecture, disruption? And, more broadly: how can form be at once what escapes any definitive politics *and* what sounds so politically relevant?

"Form" has meant surface shape and inseparable essence, superficial part and inalienable whole. "Formalism" has been used to justify a retreat from history and politics and to argue for their return to critique. Our starting point is not any one definition but the minimal proposition that form makes up the world we inhabit, and that queer and trans theories at best offer tangential tools for accounting for that proposition. Expect, then, readings of both canonical and lesser known queer theory scholars matched with readings on political form, textual form, social structure, and methodological formalisms, ranging from literary studies (like Eric Savoy's "Primer on Queer Formalism") to Brinkema's work all the way back to, yes!, the New Critics and Russian formalists. These meetings open up, we hope, a different path through the central debates of contemporary theory, from issues of (anti)normativity to the antisocial and negativity, from destitution to infrastructure, in the spirit of an encounter with otherness that, in a phrase by Berlant and Edelman, "exceeds and undoes the subject's fantasmatic sovereignty."

Readings may include work by Lauren Berlant, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, José Esteban Muñoz, Helen Palmer, Sarah Ahmed, Robyn Wiegman, Judith Butler, Eva Hayward, Eliza Steinbock, Sybil Lamb, Rizvana Bradley, Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, Luce Irigaray, Catherine Malabou, John Paul Ricco, David J. Getsy, William J. Simmons, Anna Kornbluh, Carolina Levine, and early and historical formalists.

ASCA PHD DRINKS

All ASCA PhD candidates are invited to join for drinks at **Skek**, Zeedijk 4-8, 1012 AX Amsterdam. This is an informal event that will be held on **March 11 and May 13, 2025 at 18.00**. The first two drinks on ASCA. It is not necessary to reserve a spot, just drop by! Contact: Hannah Poon (h.l.poon@uva.nl) and Serra Hughes (s.j.hughes@uva.nl).

"ARCHIVES, PRACTICES, RHYTHMS,"

With Alana Osbourne, Rita Ouédraogo, and Carine Zaayman.

Literary Worlds Series | March 11, 6:15 pm – 8:30 pm | OMHP D0.08 (Oudemanhuispoort 4-6)

Each speaker will present on their own curatorial practices, and then engage in conversation. We think through how public-facing institutions such as museums hold as a value togetherness, and consider how material culture, including contemporary art, might allow us to probe our value systems, or at least how we deliberate on them. Instead of a reading list, this class/event has an assigned playlist (see below). Contact a.benedicty@uva.nl if you would like to receive it.

[Dr. Alana Osbourne](#) is Assistant Professor of Critical Studies at Radboud University. An anthropologist and filmmaker, her research interests include sensorial anthropology and affect, the anthropology of outer space, postcolonial studies, Caribbean studies, and film. She combines her academic work with film and theatre projects

[Rita Ouédraogo](#) is a curator, researcher, and writer based in Amsterdam. Her practice entails developing and theorizing through (public writing), experimental and collaborative projects and public programmes on collaboration, archival praxis, (de)colonialism, the African diaspora, institutional power, counter-culture, popular culture, with a justice-oriented agenda. She holds an MSc in Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology from the University of Amsterdam. Ouédraogo has worked on various projects aimed at broadening access to museum collections and on projects outside institutional structures. She researches questions related to cooperation and solidarity, examining modes of collaborative practices across power differentials, especially within a decolonial framework. She is the co-founding and current curator of Buro Stedelijk, the project space of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, A place to discover Amsterdam's dynamic and progressive art scene. She is also chairman at the Mondriaan Fund of the Netherlands. She worked at the Research Center for Material Culture as Research Programmer and (Community) Collaboration officer,

was curator at Framer Framed and co-curator of the Hartwig Art Foundation Special Project (2020-2021).

[Carine Zaayman](#) a researcher and research coordinator at RCMC. As an artist, curator and scholar, she is committed to critical engagement with colonial archives and collections, specifically those holding strands of Khoekhoe pasts. Her work focuses on the afterlives of slavery and colonialism, particularly in the Cape, by bringing intangible and neglected histories into view. Her research aims to contribute to a radical reconsideration of colonial archives and museum collections, especially by assisting in finding ways to release their hold over our imaginations when we narrate the past, as well as how we might shape futures from it. She is also co-author with Nancy Jouwe of [Gids Slavernijverleden van De Kaap/ Slavery Heritage Guide of the Cape](#) (2025).

This lecture takes place in the context of the course: *Literary Worlds: World Literature and Globalisation*, in Literary and Cultural Analysis undergraduate program. The course coordinator is Alessandra Benedicty-Kokken. Any questions may be sent to a.benedicty@uva.nl.

SOCIAL (IN)VISIBILITY / MEDIATED TIME

Workshop organized by the ASCA Cross-Media Research seminar | Wednesday, 12 March 2025, 15-18h | University of Amsterdam, PCH 1.14 | Guests: Olivia Poppe (University of Vienna, ASCA affiliated PhD researcher), Esther Peeren (UvA/ASCA), and Andrea Seier (University of Vienna).

This workshop aims at the conceptualization of social invisibility in relation to mediated time. Inspired by Esther Peeren's *Afterword: Running with the Metaphor of Social Invisibility* we claim "that humanities approaches to fictionality and narrative and visual form, as found across different types of art and media, provide ways of thinking through social invisibility that add something valuable to empirical and ethnographic approaches in the social sciences." (Peeren 2024, p. 81) Building on that, we will especially focus on questions of media specificity and spectrality.

Olivia Poppe's research project discusses how characteristics of recording media (such as Friedrich Kittler's "time axis manipulation") interrelate with dimensions of social invisibility/spectralization. Key examples here will be John Akomfrah's multi-channel-installation *Listening All Night to the Rain* (2024) and Philip Scheffner's experimental documentary film *Havarie* (2016). These works meditate on the manipulation of time and its relationships to disruptive events and to slow violence respectively, and thereby offer specters of social invisibilities, that are produced by hypercapitalist and postcolonial entanglements. Next to the presentation of this project the workshop will include a close reading of two texts.

Esther Peeren's text mentioned above and Jake Fraser's *Turning Back Time. Friedrich Kittler, Reversibility, and Media of Time Axis Manipulation* (2021). In their combination, these texts offer perspectives on how recording media's translation between time and space reflect on and rearrange forms of (in)visibility.

The Cross-Media Seminar is organized by Sudeep Dasgupta, Abe Geil, and Markus Stauff. To register for the workshop and to receive the readings send an email to m.stauff@uva.nl.

SYNTHETIC VISION/ALGORITHMIC VIOLENCE

Invited lecture by Rocco Bellanova & Francesco Ragazzi in the online seminar series on Critical AI. 12 March 2025, 17:30 -19:00, Online Register [here](#)

[Rocco Bellanova](#) is a Research Professor at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (interdisciplinary research group Law, Science, Technology & Society-LSTS). His work sits at the intersection of politics, law, and science and technology studies. He studies how digital data become pivotal elements in the governing of societies. His research focuses on European security practices and the role of data protection therein and he is the PI of the ERC Starting Grant project DATAUNION - The European Data Union: European Security Integration through Database Interoperability.

[Francesco Ragazzi](#) is Associate Professor in International Relations. He is currently interested in the relation between images, power and social practices, with a focus on security. His current research, supported by the ERC Consolidator Grant Security Vision, focuses on artificial intelligence and the place of algorithmic socio-technical systems in the field of security, with a focus on the treatment of images (biometric identification, emotion recognition, social media content moderation). His past themes of research include diaspora politics, radicalisation and counter-radicalisation.

In case you have questions regarding the seminar series, feel free to reach out to Anna Schjøtt Hansen (a.s.hansen@uva.nl) or Dieuwertje Luitse (d.luitse@uva.nl).

FROM CHALK TALKING TO COMIC STRIPS

Organized by Mathieu Li-Goyette and Toni Pape, *Thursday, March 13, 3-5pm, BG1, room 0.16*

The second session of our seminar "The Ludification of Vision" will explore more deeply the relationship between chalk talking, the emergence of comic strips in the United States, and how their histories become intertwined as they share practitioners and narrative devices. From Winsor McCay to Sidney Smith, we will look at the folding of one's temporality into the other, as both forms evolve and adjust themselves to an editorial gold rush of comic strips across the states, both rural

and urban. Following our past reflection on the role of the 'confidence man,' we will also discuss how the chalk talk narrator is to be found again in some early strips and how his presence can help reframe early comic practices in North America.

Readings:

Gaudreault, André. *From Plato to Lumière: Narration and Monstration in Literature and Cinema*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. 72-80.

Gordon, Ian. *Comic Strips and Consumer Culture*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998. 37-59. Ian Gordon's chapter on the institutionalization of the comic strip will serve as an historical context to better situate how the medium emerged in the newspaper's ecosystem on the turn of the 20th century. From a more theoretical point of view, André Gaudreault's approach to narration and monstration in early cinema will help us find some footing and reflect on the role of the narrator in early comic strips.

WORLDING OUR EVERYDAY

Lecture and In-Conversation with Prof. Dr. Francio Guadeloupe

Literary Worlds series | Friday, March 14, 2025, 10:15 am – 11:45 am | OMHP D0.09 (Oudemanshuispoort 4-6, 1012 CN Amsterdam)

How is the anthropological as a mode of writing itself a literary process? And, what does it mean to think *the world*, or, our *worlds*, from our own locality, such as the the city or town in which we live, while also holding present the immense impact that our imaginaries play in our processes of belonging? How do our conceptions of where we 'come' from play into how we participate in worlding practices? How might we craft ways of belonging in our everyday, but also in our close readings of these very practices?

Prof. Dr. Francio Guadeloupe, Anthropology, University of Amsterdam. Francio Guadeloupe has been a tenured faculty member in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) since 2013, where he integrates public anthropology with a passion for teaching and conducting ethnographic research. In June 2024, he was appointed Professor by Special Appointment of Public Anthropology of Kingdom Relations at the UvA.

In addition to his academic role, Guadeloupe is a senior research fellow at the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV-KNAW). He previously served as President of the University of St. Martin (USM) for four years, during which the institution secured international accreditation for its associate degree programs in Hospitality and Business. His leadership also fostered collaboration with the University of the U.S. Virgin Islands, enabling USM to offer internationally

accredited joint Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Educational Sciences and Business Administration. His tenure ended following the temporary closure of USM due to Hurricane Irma.

Guadeloupe's research focuses on how popular conceptions of national identity, ethnic diversity, cultural heritage, religious identity, and media representations of truth are shaped by colonial racism and global capitalism. His work spans several regions, including the bi-national island of Sint Maarten & Saint Martin, Curaçao, Aruba, Saba, Sint Eustatius, Brazil, and the Netherlands. He is the author of *Chanting Down the New Jerusalem: Calypso, Christianity, and Capitalism in the Caribbean* (University of California Press, 2009).

This lecture takes place in the context of the course: *Literary Worlds: World Literature and Globalisation*, in Literary and Cultural Analysis undergraduate program. The course coordinator is Alessandra Benedicty-Kokken. Any questions may be sent to a.benedicty@uva.nl

DESIRE FOR TRANS

Symposium organized by Diego Semrene | March 14 – 13:00 – 18h00 (followed by drinks), PCH (Spuistraat134 1012 VB Amsterdam): Room 104, University of Amsterdam

Desire is not mere wanting. It holds the subject together in often-contradicting ways. And although it drives us, we are rarely aware of the specificity of its coordinates. *Desire for Trans* explores the multiplicity of forms a subject's investment in trans-ness can take by asking: Who desires trans-ness and how? What are the mechanisms that keep sexual desire for trans-ness from becoming love? And what are the singular ways trans subjects are marked by desire? The symposium, organized by the Queer Analysis Research Group, aims to investigate not only trans and trans-attracted people as subjects and objects of desire but the function of trans-ness itself in the formation of subjectivity and the logic of desire:

"The body-symptom: thinking gender as an unconscious desire," Silvia Lippi

Why is it so easy to fuck us and so difficult to love us?: The talk will articulate how clinical and literary encounters with trans-ness has changed the analyst's conception of identity in psychoanalysis. Lippi will also envision how new social bonds might emerge through such encounters.

Silvia Lippi is a psychoanalyst. Trained as a philosopher, she holds a PhD in psychology (Université Paris-Diderot), she is a hospital psychologist at the Établissement Public de Santé Barthélémy Durand in Étampes, and she is a researcher associate at Université Paris-Nanterre. She is the author of *Soeurs, Pour une psychanalyse féministe*, Seuil, 2023 (with Patrice Maniglier), *Rythme et mélancolie* (Erès, 2019), *Freud. La*

passione de l'ingovernabile (Feltrinelli, Milano, 2018), *La décision du désir* (Eres, 2013), *Price Œdipe le Salon* 2014, *Transgressions. Bataille, Lacan* (Eres, 2008). She co-edited the collective work *Marx, Lacan: l'acte révolutionnaire, l'acte analytique* (Eres, 2013). Her works have been translated in Italian and English (*The decision of desire*, University of Minnesota Press, 2020). In her articles and books, she has developed a psychoanalysis that is particularly attentive to psychotic experiences and the interpellations of contemporary minority groups.

"The Last Unicorn - Trans Lesbian Hyper Pop Remix," Callaz and Luce deLire

In the 1982 movie "The Last Unicorn", a witch puts a second horn on an incarcerated unicorn's forehead. She says that without the second horn, people wouldn't recognize the unicorn - and the witch couldn't charge money from them. In this lecture performance, we explore the unicorn trick in the cases of desire, gender transitions (into cis, trans, non-binary and other genders) and epistemic violence. We will meet Freud, Spivak, Wittig and Butler on the way. We suggest trans lesbianism as a way out of the cage. Burn the witch. Become the witch. Fly.

Bio

Luce deLire is a ship with eight sails and she lies down by the quay. As a philosopher, she publishes on the metaphysics of infinity but also on art, queer and trans theory, anti-racism, postcolonialism, and political theory. In her performances, she embodies figures of the collective imaginary. For more (including booking), see IG: @Luce_deLire and getaphilosopher.com

Callaz is a fussy assemblage of tunes and signals, a voice artist. Her live acts dance against I DON'T KNOW. Her music redirects collective fantasies towards pleasure as empowerment. 'How can you fly when your wings come off? Swallow your pride. Let it flow. 'Guilty pleasures? I decided to no longer have them.'

+ Special performance by **Marco Borkent**

This event is made possible with the support of the Faculty of Humanities Diversity Office, the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA), and the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Analysis (NICA).

Students interested in receiving 1 credit via NICA: sign-up with d.semerene@uva.nl by March 10th at the latest. You are asked to read the texts below (email Diego Semerene for text access):

- Luce deLire, "Transsexuality at the Origin of Desire: Or, Schreber's Satanic Handjob"
- Silvia Lippi, "Desire— Between Alterity and Decision" (Introduction of *The Decision of Desire*)

The event is public and in-person only. It won't be recorded. There is no need to sign up. For more info contact Diego Semerene: d.semerene@uva.nl

PLAYING DOMAINS: COMPETITION IN MACHINE VISION CHALLENGES

In this session of the 2024–2025 [ASCA Cities seminar](#) on 'Playable Cities', [Sam Hind](#) (Manchester University) will give a guest lecture on "Playing Domains: Competition in Machine Vision Challenges" followed by an open discussion. The session takes place on Friday 14 March 2025, 3.00–6pm in room 0.16 (E-lab), Turfdraggsterpad 9, Amsterdam. For more information and registration, please contact Linda Kopitz (Lkopitz@uva.nl).

The history of artificial intelligence (AI) is also a history of play. The so-called 'Grand Challenges' of AI aimed to spark new interest during the late 1980s. Raj Reddy, then President of the influential Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI), proposed six such challenges in 1988 aimed at the computer science and AI community. One stated challenge was building a 'world champion chess machine'. After losing the first match in February 1996, IBM's famous 'Deep Blue' computer beat the reigning world chess champion Garry Kasparov, 3 ½ points to 2 ½ in May 1997. Another mentioned by Reddy was the 'accident avoiding car'. Reddy believed advances in machine vision and sensing at the time could deliver a fully-autonomous vehicle in the very near future. Situating it within the long history of competitions and challenges in science and technology, this talk seeks to examine the role of contemporary machine vision competitions in structuring the development of AI, building on recent work on the role of 'challenges as catalysts' (Hind et al. 2024) in the development of autonomous vehicles, and the 'competitive epistemologies of benchmarking' (Orr and Kang 2024) within AI and machine learning domains more broadly. In these cases, different kinds of collaborative play are integral to the (competitive) development practices of computer scientists and AI practitioners, as they manipulate different statistical relationships in underlying (visual, urban) datasets. The talk considers two specific aspects: firstly, drawing on work in play and game studies, the role of online environments such as Google Colab in offering a 'sandbox' for playing with machine learning models. Secondly, building on work in science and technology studies (STS), the consequences of what I call 'playing domains': when the representation of urban environments and the safety of actors within them is ultimately, arguably, threatened by the 'playful' work of machine learners.

Sam Hind is lecturer in digital media and culture at the University of Manchester, UK. His current research interests include machine vision challenges, autonomous driving, the history of computer simulation, and the platformization of automobility. He recently published *Driving Decisions: How Autonomous Vehicles Make Sense of the World* (Palgrave).

Readings

Hind, S. (2024) *Driving Decisions: How Autonomous Vehicles Make Sense of the World*. London: Palgrave. (Chapter 3, Training Decisions: Ground-Truthing the Interesting). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-1749-1_3

Hind, S., van der Vlist, F. N. and Kanderske, M. (2024). Challenges as catalysts: How Waymo's Open Dataset Challenges shape AI development. *AI & Society* 0 (0): 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-024-01927-x>

CAPITAL READING GROUP - VOLUME 3

Organized by Oscar Talbot and Veerle van Wijngaarden | Marx's Capital is one of the most influential works of the modern humanities. After Volume I and II, we will now will start the final cycle of Marx's Capital series, with Volume III. The reading group aims to be a focused place to tackle this imposing and voluminous text, from a philosophical perspective. We will meet once every two weeks on Tuesday 16.00-18.00, starting March 18th, 2025. For every session, we will read one or several chapters and one or two people will present the readings to start the discussion.

The reading group is open to all who have read Volume I before. Knowledge of Volume II is beneficial but not essential. Active participation and regular attendance (either on location or online) is required. If you wish to join please email the co-organisers v.a.vanwijngaarden@uva.nl and o.l.talbot@uva.nl.

AND SUDDENLY THERE WAS CITY POP....

The Global Dimensions of the Retrograde Formation of A Japanese Popular Music Genre
International Research Workshop, University of Amsterdam, March 19-21, 2025 | Organized by Oliver Seibt and Ken Katō (Osaka University, JP)

And suddenly there was "City Pop". The music sounded familiar, and its name also rang a bell. But even if those in the know about the history of popular music in Japan might associate the term with the late 1970s and early 1980s, the music that today goes by the name "City Pop" usually wasn't called that back then. This is also the reason why there is much debate about exactly what Japanese popular music is meant by the term "City Pop". "City Pop" only recently became a genre designation, and the coinage and filling of the term with musical content from the past appears to be a process that involves actors not only from Japan. Even if the production and reception of the music that today goes under the name of "City Pop" was completely analogue at the time it was created and was limited to Japan, the formation of the genre of "City Pop" seems to be a global process that retroactively takes place in the digital environment of the Internet and challenges existing academic genre theories which

assume that the formation of music genres can be clearly dated historically and traced geographically. The workshop will not be held in the form of a conference, but is intended as a kind of expert meeting during which scholars researching "City Pop" and/or Japanese popular music of the 1970s and 1980s will together attempt to trace this decades-spanning, global process in as much detail as possible, as an example of cultural production transitioning cultures, temporalities and technologies.

For the program see [here](#).

ASCA THEORY SEMINAR: GLOBAL HUMANITIES

ASCA Theory Seminar on New and Not So New Humanities organized by Esther Peeren and Jaap Kooijman. Contact Eloe Kingma, asca-fgw@uva.nl. 19 March 2025, 15.00 – 18.00 hrs. | OMHP, Room A 008

This session will be organized and chaired by Jingyi Wan, Ariane Gros, Abdulkerim Pusat, and Laila Bouziane.

Readings:

Pillay, Suren. "The Humanities to Come: Thinking the World from Africa." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 37.1 (2017): 121-131.

Lowe, Lisa, and Kris Manjapra. "Comparative Global Humanities After Man: Alternatives to the Coloniality of Knowledge." *Theory, Culture & Society* 36.5 (2019): 23-48.

Denecke, Wiebke. "Comparative Global Humanities Now." *Journal of World Literature* 6.4 (2021): 479-508.

VIOLENCE AND TENDERNESS; VOICES IN OUR HEARTS

Two events with Abdellah Taïa

Moroccan writer and filmmaker Abdellah Taïa will engage in a discussion with Diego Semerene | 20 – 21 March 2025

Violence and Tenderness: Abdellah Taïa in conversation with Diego Semerene

Thursday, March 20, 2025 at 17:00-19:00 | Room: TBA
Moroccan writer and filmmaker Abdellah Taïa will engage in a discussion with Diego Semerene (University of Amsterdam) about the act of writing and the motifs that anchor Taïa's literary and cinematographic works, such as queer melancholia, the sexuality of children, the impossibility of reciprocal love, racism and fetishism, sex work and the effects of colonialism on the bodies of Europe's perpetual foreigners.

Born in Rabat, Morocco, Abdellah Taïa has written many novels in French, including *Salvation Army* (2006), *An Arab Melancholia* (2008) *Le Jour du Roi* (Prix de Flore, 2021), *Infidels* (2016), and *A Country for Dying* (2020), which was awarded the PEN Translation Prize for Emma Ramadan's translation. His most recent novel, *Le Bastion des Larmes*, was shortlisted

for the Prix Goncourt 2024 and won the Prix Decembre 2024. He is the director of two award-winning feature films, "Salvation Army" (2013) and "Cabo Negro" (2025). He lives in Paris.

Diego Semerene is Assistant Professor of Queer and Transgender Media at the University of Amsterdam and co-founder, with Misha Kavka, of the Queer Analysis Research Group at the Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis (ASCA). Semerene's research is at the intersection of trans studies, queer theory, fashion theory and psychoanalysis. Most recent publication: 'The trans gender subject of fashion', *International Journal of Fashion Studies* (2024), https://intellectdiscover.com/content/journals/10.1386/ijfs_00105_1

Voices in our Hearts: a writing workshop with Abdellah Taïa

Friday, March 21: 15:00-19:00 Room: TBA

In this workshop led by Taïa, a small group of participants will experiment with various creative exercises and examples from Taïa's own literary practice.

1 Credit is offered.

Reading: pick one of the following novels by Abdellah Taïa to read before the workshop: *Living in Your Light*, *Salvation Army*, *An Arab Melancholia*, or *A Country for Dying*.

Only a few spots are available. Please send your name and academic affiliation (university and program), if any to: d.semerene@uva.nl by March 14 at the very latest. If interested in receiving credit, also include your student number.

These events are made possible with the support of ASCA and NICA.

RACE TO THE FUTURE? REIMAGINING THE

DEFAULT SETTINGS OF TECHNOLOGY & SOCIETY

AISSR Lecture by Ruha Benjamin | 21 March 2025, 15:30-17:00 hrs, REC [Roeterseilandcampus - building I \(CREA\) Theatre Hall](#). [Register here](#)

[Race to the Future? Reimagining the Default Settings of Technology & Society - AISSR - University of Amsterdam](#)

On this International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, we are honored to welcome Professor Ruha Benjamin for her AISSR Lecture at CREA.

From automated decision systems in healthcare, policing, education and more, technologies have the potential to deepen discrimination while appearing neutral and even benevolent when compared to harmful practices of a previous era.

In this AISSR Lecture, Ruha Benjamin takes us into the world of biased bots, altruistic algorithms, and their many entanglements, and provides conceptual tools to decode tech predictions with historical and sociological insight.

When it comes to AI, Ruha shifts our focus from the dystopian and utopian narratives we are sold, to a sober reckoning with the way these tools are already a part of our lives. Whereas dystopias are the stuff of nightmares, and utopias the stuff of dreams... utopias are what we create together when we are wide awake.

Aftertalk

This lecture will be followed by a conversation between Ruha Benjamin and Amade M'charek, Professor Anthropology of Science at the University of Amsterdam.

LONG COVID IN CHILDREN: A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

Long Covid Conversations organized by Eva Meijer | Vivek Bhatt (NYU) | Online | asca-fgw@uva.nl | 25 March 2025, 19:00 hrs.

This talk will explore the implications of Long Covid for children's rights as recognised in key international documents including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children's rights, including the right to education, were severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, and they have largely been deprioritized in policy responses to Long Covid. Focusing on the United Kingdom, the talk will show that Long Covid is widespread among children and has serious mental and physical implications, sometimes impairing children's ability to go about their day-to-day lives. The talk will thus explore the implications of Long Covid for children's rights including the right to education; the right to a standard of living adequate for spiritual, mental, physical, and social development; and non-discrimination. Finally, the talk will explore states' obligations to respond to Long Covid among children, which include the continuation of rigorous scientific research into the condition, availability of treatment and rehabilitation services on a non-discriminatory basis, and reasonable accommodation of the needs of school students suffering from Long Covid.

[Long Covid Conversations website](#)

THE ECOLOGY OF THE FUTURE: DEMOCRACY FOR THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW

Workshop organized by the Critical Cultural Theory group in collaboration with The Planetary Aesthetics Project. 26 March 2025, 10:00 -15:00, [University Library Belle van Zuylen Zaal](#)

Ludger Schwarte will present his recent book *Qualitäten der Freiheit. Demokratie für übermorgen [Qualities of Freedom. Democracy for the Day After Tomorrow]*. We will discuss the concluding chapter on "The Ecology of the Future" asking how it relates to the notion of the "planetary", and thus the project of a planetary aesthetics. In *Qualities of Freedom*, Schwarte sets out to develop the principles of a future-oriented way of

democratic decision-making. He seeks to rethink the very principle of democracy in terms of a theory of time which considers long-term sustainability as much as the disruptive occurrence of unforeseeable events. Schwarte holds that this orientation towards the future must not only acknowledge uncertainty but that it must treat the constitutive openness of the future and its fundamental uncertainty as core aspect of (any) political philosophy. Consequently, political judgment must not only be guided by what is given and what is to be expected, but it also ought to be by the anticipation of what is (yet) impossible. In this way, the colonisation of the future is replaced with the “reciprocity of time”.

Ludger Schwarte is Professor of Philosophy at the Art Academy in Düsseldorf.

Introduction and comments by the members of the Planetary Aesthetics project: Stefan Niklas, Nick Psomas, and Emma Ricketts.

To register and to receive the chapter (“The Ecology of the Future”), please contact: Nick Psomas: n.psomas@uva.nl Emma Ricketts: e.l.ricketts@uva.nl

This workshop is generously sponsored by the Gerda Henkel Foundation.

PEPTALKPLUS #3: TECHNOLOGIES OF HOPE

The third PEPTalkPlus event on 27 March 2025, 14:30, [Oude Turfmarkt 145-147](#)

The third PEPTalkPlus event, a collaboration between the [Platform for the Ethics and Politics of Technology \(PEPT\)](#) and the [Institute for Advanced Study of the University of Amsterdam \(IAS\)](#), will focus on “Technologies of Hope”. The event will address questions such as: How should we define hope in an age of powerful but disruptive emerging technologies? How can we interpret the emergence of technologies as hopeful, but not necessarily utopian? How can technologies communicate hope? Can technology bring hope into being? What would a hopeful future with technology look like? Speakers are Katharina Bauer and Titus Stahl

Katharina Bauer - Hope against hope against techno-optimism

In his Techno-Optimist Manifesto published in October 2023, Silicon Valley entrepreneur Marc Andreessen claims that “it is time again to raise the technology flag” and turn ourselves into technological supermen, instead of blocking progress through a pessimist “mass demoralization campaign – against technology and against life”. This manifesto expresses an extreme and reactionary position of a techno-optimist belief in salvation through technological progress, which can also be read as an appeal to the tech lords to take on power. Is techno-pessimism the adequate reaction? In my talk I will explore if and how ‘technologies of hope’ – unfolding a constitutive tension between

powerlessness and empowerment – can offer an alternative to discourses of techno-optimism and techno-pessimism.

Titus Stahl - Ideological Hope

The hope for a better future can, and frequently does, motivate political action. Political hope is therefore often considered a positive force. However, not all forms of political hope are beneficial. Some scholars and activists claim that some kinds of hope also function as an ideology. I argue that we can give a precise meaning to the notion of ‘ideological hope,’ and I argue that to say of a given instance of hope that it is ‘ideological’ means more than that it is irrational or immoral. I distinguish two forms of ideological hope: forms where the ideological nature of hope derives from underlying ideological beliefs and judgments, and structural forms. The case of structurally ideological hope shows that even the rational hopes of political agents can undermine their purposes by binding them to distorted political self-understandings.

Bio’s

[Katharina Bauer](#) is Associate Professor of Practical Philosophy at Erasmus University Rotterdam. She was an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow at Rijksuniversiteit Groningen and Goethe Universität Frankfurt a.M. and Visiting Professor at Freie Universität Berlin. Against the background of her research on fundamental ethical ideals (such as dignity; authenticity; autonomy; hope), she investigates the impact of current societal, technological, and ecological challenges on the self-constitution of moral agents.

[Titus Stahl](#) is Associate Professor in Social and Political Philosophy at the University of Groningen. He received his PhD from the University of Frankfurt and the University of Macquarie for his thesis that was published as *Immanent Critique* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2022). He works at the intersection of critical social theory, political philosophy of technology and the philosophy of hope.

REPRODUCTIVE HORIZONS OF ABOLITION: FAMILY POLICING IS REPRODUCTIVE OPPRESSION

A keynote lecture by Professor Alan J. Dettlaff, 27 March 2025, 16:00 -18:00, [Doelenzaal, University Library | Singel 425, Amsterdam](#)

Using a reproductive justice lens, this lecture examines how historical practices of criminalizing pregnancy and restricting reproductive rights continue today through surveillance and family policing systems.

From slavery to the present day, the United States has used institutions and policies to control reproduction – especially in Black and poor communities.

In the era of chattel slavery, the state used institutionalized violence and abuse as a tool. Today, public institutions and social services have been

established by the state to police and surveil the behavior of poor communities and parents, perpetuating the reproductive violence and oppression that began centuries ago.

[Please register to attend the lecture here](#)

Alan J. Dettlaff is a professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work, where he also served as Dean from 2015 to 2022. Alan is the author of *Confronting the Racist Legacy of the American Child Welfare System: The Case for Abolition*, published by Oxford University Press in 2023. He is also co-founding editor of *Abolitionist Perspectives in Social Work*, a peer-reviewed scholarly journal dedicated to developing and disseminating an abolitionist praxis in social work. In 2020, he helped to create and launch the upEND movement, a collaborative effort dedicated to abolishing the family policing system and building alternatives that focus on healing and liberation.

Reproductive Horizons of Abolition

This project, funded by a Decolonial Futures Seed Grant, aims to create an interdisciplinary dialogue on whether ‘abolition’ can be used as a decolonial tool to analyze reproductive injustice in contemporary practices of family formation, aiming to promote fair and emancipatory reproductive practices and technologies. This will be done by organizing an international workshop with keynote lectures by Alan Dettlaff, Layal Ftouni (in conversation with Hala Shoman), a network day, and a podcast series with key scholars and organizers in the field.

[Learn more about the Reproductive Horizons of Abolition Seed Grant Project here](#)

PATTERN AS A FIGURE OF KNOWLEDGE

International Workshop at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) organized by Stephan Besser (IAS/University of Amsterdam) and Flora Lysen (Maastricht University) | 28 March 2025, University of Amsterdam | Institute for Advanced Study, Oude Turfmarkt 147, Amsterdam (Sweelinck room)

This workshop aims to stimulate the interdisciplinary discussion about the notion of pattern and the fascination with this concept across different fields of knowledge. It brings together researchers and scholars from various disciplines to explore the epistemic, aesthetic and ideological affordances of this term in current knowledge production and (post)digital culture at large.

The term pattern is ubiquitous and undertheorized: it can suggest regularity as well as change, surface phenomena as well as deep structural connections. Observations about the alluring ambiguity of “patterns” have been made in the social sciences, media studies, cognitive science, digital humanities, the history of science and knowledge and other fields. The

purpose of this workshop is not to narrow this semantic diversity but to explore the conceptual and aesthetic affordances of pattern as a figure of knowledge. How does pattern function as a symbolic form, (proto)concept or meta-disciplinary shifter within and across disciplines, and what kinds of knowledge does it generate? How does the current fascination with patterns reflect (post)digital culture, and how can the conceptual history of the term in the natural and human sciences since the late 19th century illuminate its current impact and transformations in the contexts of digital pattern recognition and AI?

The organizers and speakers warmly welcome participation of all researchers, scholars and artists with an interest in patterns and aim to explore possibilities for further collaboration on topics related to the allure of patterns.

Program and registration: see [ASCA Website](#).

INAUGURAL MAX NÄNNY LECTURE BY CATHERINE GANDER

IAWIS Panel

28 March 2025, 13.30 -15.30, BG2, UvA: Turfdraagsterpad 15-17, room 012

The co-conveners of the 2026 IAWIS conference will host the day, welcome all and introduce the speakers. They are: Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes, Emilie Sitzia, Erin La Cour, Louis Hartnoll, Matthijs Engelberts, Mia You, Rik Spanjers, and Alice Twemlow. For the program please visit the ASCA events list.

Extending the Document: Contemporary Transmedial Poetics

Inaugural Max Nanny Lecture by Catherine Gander

16.00-18.00 UvA, Oudemanshuispoort, room C 2.17, and online: <https://uva-live.zoom.us/j/89880783769>

For the inaugural Max Nanny lecture, I'd like to offer some thoughts from the project I'm working on, which is called 'Extending the Document: Contemporary Transmedial Poetics'. Thinking about the turn in documentary poetry toward formal and medial hybridity on and beyond the page, the book takes as its starting point Muriel Rukeyser's lifelong advocacy of the aesthetic and political potentiality of contact between models of knowledge and creativity, encapsulated in her repeated dictum that “poetry can extend the document”.

I consider contemporary poetry that works in a documentary vein to materialise (and dematerialise) language in various ways, often via visual, installation, and conceptual art. I'd like to theorise how practitioners of transmedial poetics – Layli Long Soldier, Cecilia Vicuña, Bhanu Kapil, and Claudia Rankine among them – adapt docpo techniques (e.g. parataxis, quotation, collage, found material, etc.), and adhere to its ideological investment in social justice in order to

open new, shared, embodied spaces between verbal and visual textualities.

It is no coincidence that the majority of these poetic experiments at the intersections of word and image are by BIPOC or BAME poets, and by female and non-binary poets in particular. So the lecture will explore how the transgressive, transformative, and resistive capacities of transmedial poetics create new ways to respond to social realities and injustices that include racism, femicide, displacement, migration, exile, and extractive, settler colonialism.

GLOBAL AFRICA/GLOBAL CHINA

Global Africa (Putting Africa, China and interactions within the 'multiple South(s)' into focus). Organizers: Fairuzah Atchulo (UvA) and Dr. Johanna von Pezold (UvA). This reading group is an initiative of the ERC project China Africa Fashion Power (<https://www.chinaafricafashionpower.org/>) 28 March 2025, 15:00 -16:30, BG1, 016.

Contact: f.m.m.atchulo@uva.nl and j.e.vonpezold@uva.nl

Speakers in this session of the Global Africa Research Group are Dr. Miriam Driessen and Dr. Nicholas Loubere. The session will be moderated by Dr. Johanna von Pezold (UvA).

Miriam Driessen will give a talk titled 'Ethiopian lawyers as brokers of global capital'. She is a Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Oxford. Her research explores Chinese-led development in Ethiopia and beyond through the lens of labour, migration, language, and, more recently, law. She is author of *Tales of Hope, Tastes of Bitterness: Chinese Road Builders in Ethiopia* (2019) and the essay *The Restless Earth: Rural China in Transition* (2018).

Nicholas Loubere will give a talk titled 'Unequal Accumulations: Tracing Migration and Resource Flows from the Chinese Gold Rush in Ghana'. He is an Associate Professor at the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University. His current research project, entitled 'After the Gold Rush: Informal Resource Extraction in the Shadows of Global China' (funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond), examines the movement of Chinese people, capital, and technology as part of extractive resource booms from past to present

REPRODUCTIVE HORIZONS OF ABOLITION: THE LABOUR OF LIFE IN PALESTINE

A keynote lecture on reproduction against genocide, by Layal Ftouni (in conversation with Hala Shoman) 28 March 2025, 16:00 -18:00, Doelenzaal, University Library | Singel 425, Amsterdam

In Palestine, Israel's control over reproduction is part of a broader strategy of genocide and settler colonialism. This includes both biopolitical measures — policies and systems that regulate whose lives are supported and

whose are restricted — and necropolitical strategies, where state power is used to expose certain populations to death and suffering.

Today, this violence has intensified to an unprecedented level, directly targeting the ability of Palestinians to sustain future generations. The labour of reproduction in Palestine, both biological and social, is an insistence on life against all odds.

How is life reproduced under conditions intent on eradicating the very capacity to live on?

This lecture attends to this question by addressing forms of reproductive practices that attest to Palestinian labour of life as, first and foremost, a labour of liberation. The lecture is followed by a conversation between Layal Ftouni and Hala Shoman on reproductive justice and liberation in Palestine.

[Please register to attend the lecture here](#)

Layal Ftouni is an Assistant Professor of Gender Studies and Critical Theory at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. She is currently working on research project on the 'reproduction of life' in conditions of proximity to death and debilitation, both human and environmental, in the settler colonial context of Palestine. She received the Dutch Research Council VENI grant to support this project. Apart from her teaching and research work, Layal is a founding member of Dutch Scholars for Palestine, a network of educational workers across Dutch Universities committed to the Palestinian struggle for liberation and self-determination.

Hala Shoman is a PhD researcher in Geography, Politics and Sociology from Newcastle University in the United Kingdom. She originally practiced dentistry, but driven by a deep commitment to social and political justice, made a career shift due to the political situation in Palestine. Hala's PhD work focuses on *Palestinian Women at the Intersection of Colonial and Patriarchal Violence: Cultural Negotiations of Religion and Tradition in Gaza*.

PHD POSITION: HOW AI IS RESHAPING KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

Deadline for applications: 23 March 2025.

ASCA currently has a vacant PhD position as part of the Starting Grant project Interface of Intelligence: How Generative AI Reshapes Knowledge, Media, and Interpretation, led by principal investigator Dr. Erik Borra, Dr. Alex Gekker and Dr. Bernhard Rieder. Details:

<https://werkenbij.uva.nl/en/vacancies/phd-on-interfaces-of-intelligence-how-generative-ai-reshapes-knowledge-media-and-interpretation-netherlands-13848>

CALL FOR SEED GRANTS DECOLONIAL FUTURES

[Funding Opportunities from Decolonial Futures - Decolonial Futures - University of Amsterdam](#)

The RPA Decolonial Futures is looking for innovative and collaborative research projects, particularly those that align with the RPA's main themes: Museums, archives & cultural practices; Migrations, mobility & borders; and Ecology, sustainability & climate change. Early career scholars and those working in historically colonised regions and contexts are particularly encouraged to submit proposals. We are particularly keen to fund research collaborations which involve [equitable](#) research partnerships with colleagues based in formerly colonised regions. The deadline for submissions is 31 March 2025.

What research collaborations will the RPA support?

The RPA aims to support innovative and collaborative research endeavours through annual seed funding calls of up to 15,000 euros. The funds may be used to support original empirical research, research meetings and events, guest visits, extra research time and a variety of other endeavours which lead to more lasting and substantive research collaborations.

If you are unsure of whether your planned activities may be funded, we encourage you to first consult the project controllers in your Faculty and then get in touch with us at decolonialfutures@uva.nl.

LAURA BASSI SCHOLARSHIP

The Laura Bassi Scholarship was established in 2018 with the aim of providing editorial assistance to postgraduates and junior academics whose research focuses on neglected topics of study, broadly construed. The scholarships are open to every discipline and the next round of funding will be awarded in Spring 2025: Application deadline: 31 March 2025. Results: 11 April 2025

All currently enrolled master's and doctoral candidates are eligible to apply, as are academics in the first five years of full-time employment. Applicants are required to submit a completed application form along with their CV through the application portal by the relevant deadline. Further details, including previous winners, and the application portal can be found at: <https://editing.press/bassi>

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