

## Nieuwsbrief 291

January 2026

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### DISSERTATION DEFENSE YONATHAN LISTIK

**Political Stupidity. Toward ontological anarchism against the intelligence regime** | 12 January 2026, Agnietenkapel, 13.00 hrs | Supervisors: Daniel Loick, Yolande Jansen, Aukje van Rooden

My project challenges conventional accounts of democracy by investigating the administrative presumptions that engender these conceptualizations. Its aim is to demonstrate that what is portrayed as democratic is to a large extent undemocratic. And, moreover, the project attempts to provide an account of what could be democratic by exploring the way stupidity's disruptive power of intelligence is a form of democratic intervention.

### GUEST RESEARCHER: AYLIN YILDIRIM



Aylin Yildirim is a Research Associate and PhD Candidate at the Chair of the History of philosophy at the University of Oldenburg.

She works at the intersection of German Idealism, phenomenology, philosophy of history, and post-/decolonial theory. In her dissertation, she examines how Hegel's concept of freedom is received, critiqued, and further developed within post-/decolonial thought. Her research explores how the encounter between idealist philosophy and decolonial perspectives gives rise to new understandings of freedom, history, and subjectivity. In addition, her interests include critical theory, the ethics of alterity, and twentieth- and twenty-first-century French philosophy. She will be at ASCA from the beginning of February 2026 to the end of July 2026.

### NEW ASCA PHD CANDIDATES

Recently the following new PhD candidates joined ASCA. We are happy to welcome them to our community!

**Dominik Vrabčič Dežman, *Stuck on Smooth: Generative AI, Interfaces, Visibility, Labour***

Supervisors: Bernhard Rieder, Alex Gekker

*Stuck on Smooth: Generative AI, Interfaces, Visibility, Labour* investigates the digital interface as a contested site where embodiment, aesthetics, and political economy meet. I examine how generative AI reconfigures the times and spaces of creative labour by transforming interfaces from mediating tools into anticipatory environments. Engaging a range of case studies at the vanguard of GenAI integration into digital design practices, the project investigates how this new frontier of increasing frictionlessness and abstraction obscures infrastructures of control and redraws the boundaries between public and private, in terms of spaces, knowledge, access, and division of labour. Methodologically, the research commences by combines auto-ethnography with genealogical analysis, tracing the arc from the graphical user interface to contemporary "vibe designing." The project draws on post-phenomenology, interface critique, critical theory, aesthetics, politics, philosophy of technology, design studies, and feminist STS, to explore how embodied agency is affected by the new regime of GenAI-inflected interaction, fundamentally altering the lived experience of cultural production. The central question asks: *How*

*is the interface – understood as a site of mediation where embodied perception, aesthetics, labour, and political economy meet – being reconfigured by generative AI?*

**Matteo Bard, *Governing Security through Interoperability: Biometric Data and Citizen Sovereignty***

*Supervisor: Stefania Milan*

This PhD investigates how biometric data infrastructures reshape governance and citizen sovereignty in the European Union. The EU's interoperability agenda seeks to link databases such as SIS, VIS, and Eurodac, framed as enhancing efficiency and security. Yet these systems rely on "digital people," datafied representations that are partial and biased. Using interviews, follow-the-data ethnography, and focus groups, the project explores two dynamics: how interoperability consolidates security governance around digital identities, and how it diminishes citizens' ability to control their representation. The study contributes to critical debates on surveillance, digital infrastructures, and democratic accountability in European security governance.

**Sruthi Vanguri, *Governing Digital Identity: Power, Participation, and the Politics of Infrastructural Design in India and the European Union***

*Supervisor: Stefania Milan*

This project studies how digital identity infrastructures in India, particularly Aadhaar and associated sectoral systems, reshape democratic participation and public service delivery. It critically examines how power asymmetries are embedded in the infrastructural design and governance, and how public-private partnerships influence the citizen-state relationship. Grounded in social informatics, critical data studies and feminist technoscience, the research employs mixed methods and participatory tools to explore governance by data infrastructures and its policy framings. A comparative analysis with digital identity systems in the European Union will highlight how different infrastructural designs and governance models yield varying outcomes for equality and state power, and how they can be reimagined to foster trust, inclusion, and digital justice.

**Carina Nasser, *Identification Infrastructures in Brazil***  
*Supervisors: Stefania Milan, Steven J. Jackson (Cornell University)*

I wish to study how Brazil's push towards federal, centralized, and digitized state identification impacts two groups of actors involved in identification change: a) state and municipal authorities (until recently, the main purveyors of individual identification); b) individual and collective residents seeking to change

their identification data and options. More specifically, how do different groups and individuals build, embrace, or deny responsibility for identification change when fewer, higher-up, and private actors are in control of the digital infrastructures on which state identification relies?

**Qi Yang, *Crush as World-Making: Affective Politics and the Reimagining of Romantic Desire in Neoliberal Cinema***

*Supervisors: Murat Aydemir, Aylin Kuryel*

This project explores the affect of the crush through a post-critical lens to rethink romantic cinema under neoliberalism. Defined by ambivalence and ephemerality, the crush disrupts teleological structures of desire disciplined by neoliberal normativity, which Berlant theorises as *cruel optimism*. Through close readings of heteronormative and queer melodramas—including *The Notebook*, *La La Land*, *Before Sunrise*, *Call Me by Your Name*, and *All of Us Strangers*—the study examines how the crush's melancholic-nostalgic undertows resist heteronormative futurism. Reframing Barthes's "not-wanting-to-seize" alongside Berlant's "crisis ordinariness," it reimagines the crush as a minor world-making force attuned to ongoing precarity beyond neoliberal promise.

**Su Sakarya, *Translating Boys Love Manga: Turkish Scanlation Communities***

*Supervisors: Rik Spanjers, Misha Kavka*

The project explores how Turkish fan communities create spaces for socialization, identity formation, and expression under restrictive socio-political conditions, through the translation and circulation of Boys' Love (BL) media material online. Through digital and ethnographic research, it examines the participatory practices, norms, and power relations that shape these communities. The study also analyzes translated media alongside the broader Turkish media context — particularly state censorship, moral regulation, and youth's subcultural and resistant uses of networked media — to contextualize these dynamics. Ultimately, it aims to advance understanding of how queer fan practices in non-Western contexts mobilize digital media to foster solidarity and agency.

**Karen van Minnen, *The Coventry Paradox: Zoë and the Curing Silence of the Oubliette***

*Supervisors: Gaston Franssen, Joost de Bloois*

This dissertation engages the figure of *The Dying Body* to explore how precarious human and more-than-human lives persist amid political, social, legal, and ecological exclusion. It investigates two concurrent case studies: Proeftuin, where individuals assert self-determination to broaden legalised assisted dying, and

SCAT!, where researchers trace wolf GW3273m through territorial markers and mediated history as it moves from protection to elimination and ultimately to taxidermic display in a museum. The project demonstrates how life, politically suspended within the silence of the Oubliette, enacts agency through traces, absences, and affective residues.

#### CLIMATE IMAGINARIES: PERFORMING THINKING WITH LAND AND WEATHER

*You are warmly invited to the second season of the Climate Imaginaries seminar series co-curated by AHK artist-in-residence Agat Sharma together with Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca (ASCA) | Climate Imaginaries seminar III: Monday 12th January, 4-6pm | With Timoteus Anggawan Kusno on imagination, territory and colonialism | OMHP room C 023*

The series is informed by and runs alongside the theatre-based research project *Staging Extreme Weather* which Agat is leading at the Academy of Theatre & Dance (ATD) from October-January 2026 in which several UvA students are also involved. The seminars are an ongoing initiative of Laura's special chair which aims to strengthen connections and exchange between AHK and UvA particularly on the topic of arts and climate justice. Participants in the seminars are also invited to join a public sharing of the practical research in January (see details below).

**Timoteus Anggawan Kusno** (UvA) is a multi-disciplinary artist, researcher, and filmmaker whose practice encompasses installations, drawings, moving images, and institutional projects. His work critically examines the intersections of fiction and history, imagination and memory, as well as the enduring legacies of colonialism and authoritarian power. By employing a meta-fictional approach, Kusno interrogates the mechanisms of historical narrative construction, reflecting on the role of media, the significance of editing, and the underlying structures of production. Through this lens, he investigates how historical narratives are shaped by power, ideology, and systems of ignorance. Beyond his artistic and cinematic practice, Kusno has been developing the *Centre for Tanah Runcuk Studies* since 2013—an experimental art project structured as a fictional institution that examines the imaginary reconstruction of a lost territory in the Dutch East Indies. This project exemplifies his broader intellectual engagement with historiographical critique and the intersections of art, fiction, and power. He currently lives and works between Amsterdam (Netherlands) and Yogyakarta (Indonesia).

#### CAPITAL II

*Reading group organized by Safae El Khannoussi and Nick Psomas | The group will meet every two weeks on Tuesdays, from 4:00–6:00 p.m., starting January 13, 2026. Meetings are hybrid: in-person participation is preferred, but you're welcome to join online if that works better for you. [Oudemanshuispoort](#) OMHP room C 2.23*

More than 150 years after the publication of *Capital*, Karl Marx's critique of capitalist political economy still resonates powerfully today. In this reading group, we will read and discuss the second volume of *Capital*. *Capital* can be a demanding text, but we will tackle it together. To get started, the first three sessions will be devoted to revisiting key concepts from the first volume. After that, we will work our way through Volume 2.

The group will meet every two weeks on Tuesdays, from 4:00–6:00 p.m., starting January 13, 2026. Meetings are hybrid: in-person participation is preferred, but you're welcome to join online if that works better for you.

If you're interested in joining, please email Nick Psomas ([n.psomas@uva.nl](mailto:n.psomas@uva.nl)) and/or Safae el Khannoussi ([s.elkhannoussielboudrin@uva.nl](mailto:s.elkhannoussielboudrin@uva.nl)).

Dates: 13 January 2026 (4:00–6:00 p.m.); 27 January 2026; 10 February 2026; 24 February 2026; 10 March 2026; 24 March 2026; 7 April 2026; 21 April 2026; 19 May 2026; 2 June 2026; 16 June 2026.

#### MARXIST PHILOSOPHY READING GROUP: MARX - GRUNDRISSE

*Amsterdam - University of Amsterdam / hybrid January - February 2026: reading Proudhon 'System of Economic Contradictions, or The Philosophy of Poverty'; March 2026 onwards: Marx's 'Grundrisse'. We will meet once every two weeks on Tuesday 17.00-19.00, starting in January. Fortnightly sessions, Tuesday 5-7. Starting date: 13th January*

We will read Marx's unfinished text **Grundrisse**. This is a group focused on understanding Marx from a philosophical perspective, and our reading is primarily interested in thinking about Marxist philosophy and its implications.

This group is open to all who are interested in a philosophical approach to Marxist theory and practice, but is intended for those who have completed **Capital Volume 1** as a minimum requirement. Please send an email introducing yourself with a brief overview of your experience, or you can ask if you are unsure. You are welcome to join either in January (reading Proudhon), or in March (Marx - Grundrisse). Discussion will take place in English using the Penguin version.

For every session, we will read one or several chapters and one or two people will present the readings to start

the discussion, typically 40 pages. We expect members to participate in all sessions, and regularly present. We aim to create a friendly and convivial environment where we can disagree respectfully and explore a challenging theoretical contribution together.

Organised by Oscar Talbot and Veerle van Wijngaarden  
For more information contact [o.l.talbot@uva.nl](mailto:o.l.talbot@uva.nl) or [v.a.vanwijngaarden@uva.nl](mailto:v.a.vanwijngaarden@uva.nl)

### CRITICAL AI SEMINAR SERIES: VECTOR MEDIA

*The Critical AI Seminar series, organized by Anna Schjøtt Hansen, Tobias Blanke, and Dieuwertje Luitse | Invited talk by Fabian Offert on 'Vector Media' | January 13, 5:30-7 PM (CEST), online*

The Critical AI Seminar series continues in 2025 and 2026 with another four lectures that critically address Artificial Intelligence (AI) from various perspectives – across different contexts of application and through different lenses of critique. With these lectures we hope to once again bring together scholars from around the world in engaging discussions and further contribute to Critical AI Studies as a continuing 'field in formation' (Raley and Rhee, 2023).

The seminars are online, open to everyone. For each seminar, one or two prominent invited speaker(s) are invited to give a talk that engages theoretically or empirically with AI.

[January 13, 5:30-7 PM \(CEST\): Invited talk by Fabian Offert on 'Vector Media'](#)

Registration [here](#)

This talk presents a new history and theory of the vector space in contemporary artificial intelligence systems. I will argue that the inevitable bias of such systems lies not only in what they represent, but in the logic of representation itself. Their internal ideologies are often not directly visible in their generated outputs or even their training data, the focus of almost all existing work. Instead, they emerge from how the model organizes and transforms information within itself. While previous media technologies created new formats or imitated existing ones, deep neural networks instead seek to dissolve prior media into a universal space of commensurability: the vector space. Cultural objects, once specific to a medium, are rendered fungible; commodities in a new neural economy, expressed only in terms of their neural exchange value.

[Fabian Offert](#) is Assistant Professor for the History and Theory of the Digital Humanities and Director of the Center for the Humanities and Machine Learning (HUML) at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His research focuses on the epistemology, aesthetics, and politics of artificial intelligence. His most recent book project, *Vector Media* (Meson Press/University of Minnesota Press) writes a new historical epistemology of artificial intelligence, asking how machine learning

models represent culture and what is at stake when they do. Before joining the faculty at UCSB, Fabian was Postdoctoral Researcher in the German Research Foundation's Priority Program 'The Digital Image' and Assistant Curator at ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe.

### WHY STEREOTYPES PERSIST: CAUSAL GENERALIZATIONS AND THEIR RESISTANCE TO COUNTEREXAMPLES

*Philosophy and Public Affairs | Speaker: Giulia Napolitano (EUR) (Paper co-authored with Olivier Lemeire) | Commentator: Tom Schoonen (UvA) | Chair: Tijn Smits (UvA) | 14 January, 15:30 - 17:00, Faculteitskamer II (Oude Turfmarkt 145) & Zoom*

People often maintain stereotypes despite obvious counterexamples. Several philosophers have recently argued that this persistence is due to stereotypes being statistical rather than universal generalizations and therefore compatible with counterexamples. In this paper, we argue that this is not the only reason why stereotypes are so persistent. Many stereotypes also involve causal-explanatory beliefs of the following type: 'There is a causal property P entangled with social category K that causes F when it operates without interference'. Such causal-explanatory beliefs allow for counterexamples because they entail generalizations that are limited in scope; they purport to describe only those members of a social group K in which the presumed causal property P operates without interference. Our analysis provides a more complete account of why stereotypes are so persistent, why they are morally objectionable, and why addressing them effectively requires more than simply pointing out exceptions.

### BONNIE HONIG: A FEMINIST THEORY OF REFUSAL

*Critical Cultural Theory Colloquium: Discussion of Bonnie Honig: A Feminist Theory of Refusal (2021) | To prepare for Honig's stay with us as the Spinoza Chair 2026, we discuss her book on the politics of refusal as transformation. | 15 January 2026, 14-16h | Faculteitskamer 2 (Philosophy Department, Oude Turfmarkt 141-145) All welcome, no registration needed. Contact: Stefan Niklas, [s.niklas@uva.nl](mailto:s.niklas@uva.nl) | The electronic version of the book is accessible through the University Library.*

Bonnie Honig (Professor of Modern Culture and Media as well as Political Science at Brown University) will be the Spinoza Chair 2026. Her many publications on questions of democracy, feminism, law, and art include books like *Antigone*, *Interrupted*, the widely received *Public Things: Democracy in Despair*, or *A Feminist Theory of Refusal*. To prepare for Honig's stay with us as the Spinoza Chair in April and May 2026, we



will discuss her latter book on the politics of refusal as transformation.

Links to the Spinoza lectures:

[The Accidental Ordinary: Language Politics, Metamorphosis I](#)

[The Accidental Ordinary: Language Politics, Metamorphosis II](#)

### NEW WAYS OF ENGAGING WITH COLONIAL PASTS

*The Graphic History of a French Explorer's Search for the "Lost" Maya* | 16 January 2026, 17:00 | Location [SPUI25](#)

This programme brings together the authors of the 'graphic history' In the land of the Lacandón with scholars from the Universities of Amsterdam and Leiden to discuss this immersive new spin on studying the colonial past. How can experiments like this enable a wider audience to critically engage with narratives that have shaped and legitimated the European colonial project?

Postcolonial and decolonial scholarship has challenged many previously dominant interpretations of the European colonial endeavours and their complex and painful legacies. How can these academic insights be shared with a wider audience in new and powerful ways, to open up conversations on these topics?

The starting point of this discussion is a new graphic history on the amateur French ethnographer and filmmaker Bernard de Colmont's journey into the mountainous state of Chiapas to study the Lacandón people and broadcast their way of life to a curious European public. Considered a "lost tribe," the Lacandón were thought to be the closest living relatives of the ancient Maya. De Colmont became a celebrity explorer whose adventures generated considerable attention. The Lacandón themselves, however, were silenced in his tale.

Nearly a century later, Richard Ivan Jobs and Steven Van Wolputte have taken up this story in all its complexity, creating a graphic history from de Colmont's narratives and images in the form of a heroic adventure comic – with a decidedly critical, contemporary twist.

How can indigenous perspectives and critical takes on metropolitan colonial cultures be brought together? Which possible pitfalls and blind spots are common and how can they be addressed?

[Register at SPUI25](#)

### TORONTO'S 1960S TV CAMPUS: CRISIS PLANNING FOR 20TH CENTURY NEW MEDIA EDUCATION

*Michael Darroch is guest in the Useful Television Standing Seminar (organized by Anne-Katrin Weber, University of Lausanne, and Markus Stauff, University of Amsterdam) on 21 January 2026, 17h CET*

Since spring 2023, *The Useful Television Standing Seminar* (organized by Anne-Katrin Weber, University of Lausanne, and Markus Stauff, University of Amsterdam) aims to facilitate the exchange between scholars interested in television's application as a useful tool, rather than a mass medium. The examples range from military and industrial applications of television technology to its operational use in medicine, science, or sports. We partly build on older debates in film studies (e.g. non-theatrical cinema; useful film) and want to bring television into this debate. Looking at useful television requires to broaden and to complicate our understanding of what media do and how they do it. Additionally, it contributes to an alternative genealogy of "digital media". The seminar organizes two or three meetings per semester for which we invite guest speakers, discuss the participants' work in progress or new and old publications that seem of relevance.

*The Useful Television Standing Seminar, Autumn 2025*

For online participation, please register here: <https://forms.office.com/e/wiRndwb1eQ>

21 January 2026, 17h CET

### **Michael Darroch: Toronto's 1960s TV Campus: Crisis Planning for 20th Century New Media Education**

Michael Darroch is Associate Professor of Cinema and Media Arts in the School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design at York University. He co-edited *Cartographies of Place: Navigating the Urban* with Janine Marchessault (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), an interdisciplinary collection that situates different historical and methodological currents in urban media studies. Funded research projects through the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council have included archival explorations of neglected members of the Toronto School, and more recently (2019) *Edgy Media: On Borders, Migrations, Media Studies and Media Arts* which facilitated the 4th iteration of the international touring exhibition *Feedback: Marshall McLuhan and the Arts; Sensing Borders: Mapping, Media and Migration* (2020-2025); and *Distributed Networks: Media Archaeologies of Educational TV and Communication Studies in Canada, 1945-1975* (2021-26).

## CONCEPTUAL BORROWING, GROUP POSITIONING AND THE MAKING OF A NEW HUMAN BEING

*Philosophy Department Opening-of-the-Semester Lecture, Spring 2026 by Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach, VU Amsterdam*  
 | Date: January 22, 17:00–18:30 | Room: A0.02 (Vondelzaal), UB. | Followed by a reception in OMHP Atrium. | Chair: Monique Roelofs

For attendance, please register at: [secr.wijs-fgw@uva.nl](mailto:secr.wijs-fgw@uva.nl).  
[secr.wijs-fgw@uva.nl](mailto:secr.wijs-fgw@uva.nl).

Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach, VU Amsterdam

Methodological work on cross-cultural philosophical inquiry has witnessed stark shifts in the last few decades. What until recently was considered to be a disinterested philosophical study of the ‘non-western other,’ faces the charge today that it reproduces both, patterns of epistemic injustice and resource extractivism that have been in play since European imperialism and colonialism. My talk will revisit the transnational work of WEB Du Bois to bring into the conversation one pathway to avoid those pitfalls. I will in this regard sketch Du Bois’s borrowing of concepts from Indic sources, his vision of an interracial solidarity and an understanding of an alternative humanity.

**Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach** currently holds the chair ‘Diversifying Philosophy’ at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. She is the founding co-editor and current chief editor of the *Journal of World Philosophies*, the *Bloomsbury Introductions to World Philosophies*, as also the *Bloomsbury Studies in World Philosophies*. Her current work focuses on critical social epistemology and diversifying Indic philosophies. In the past, she has worked on the ethics of immigration and multiculturalism.

## PLATFORMS AS EPISTEMIC INFRASTRUCTURES: EMERGING REGIMES OF KNOWLEDGE. PART I

*The workshops result from a cooperation of Utrecht University (Donya Alinejad and Judith Keilbach) and the University of Amsterdam (Markus Stauff) with a research project co-organized by three Brazilian universities – Federal University of Minas Gerais/UFGM (Carlos d’Andréa), Universidade do Estado da Bahia/UNEB (Elias Bitencourt), Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais/Puc Minas (Verônica Soares da Costa) – and funded by the Brazilian research fund MCTI/CNPq.*

**Part 1: Monday, 26 January 2026: 14-18:30 University Utrecht, Wittevrouwenstraat 7bis, room 0.03**

Over the course of two afternoons, these workshops will discuss the ongoing impact of platformization on practices, materialities, and normativities of knowledge. We will explore how the production, circulation, use, and cultural status of knowledge are evolving in response to the reconfiguration of data-oriented epistemic infrastructures. Most prominently, social media platforms re-arrange computational

resources and user engagement, data and interfaces, social organizations, and machine learning. This results in new modes and regimes of knowledge production across different social and cultural sectors. Starting from the assumption that epistemic infrastructures always emerge from the interplay between materialities and communities of practice, we aim to compare a diverse array of knowledge practices and their transformations: from journalism and science, to influencers and fans, from climate crisis to popular culture.

While all of them undergo similar transformation, the resulting knowledge practices are heterogeneous: they each arrange images and data, organizational, and technical resources, authority and accountability in unique ways; and they all create particular forms of authorizing, debating and (de-)legitimizing expertise and other knowledge hierarchies. Often, epistemic communities have paradoxical relationships with platformization: on the one hand, innovative knowledge emerges through their affordances; on the other hand, the growing dependence on Big Techs triggers resistance and the quest for alternative infrastructures. Next to conceptual and empirical questions, the workshops will also raise methodological issues: What is the role of digital methods, of computer vision models and data visualization, of (online) ethnography, of textual and discourse analysis for a critical analysis of the epistemic infrastructures’ sociotechnical and cross-platform dynamics?

The workshops results from a cooperation of Utrecht University (Donya Alinejad and Judith Keilbach) and the University of Amsterdam (Markus Stauff) with a research project co-organized by three Brazilian universities – Federal University of Minas Gerais/UFGM (Carlos d’Andréa), Universidade do Estado da Bahia/UNEB (Elias Bitencourt), Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais/Puc Minas (Verônica Soares da Costa) – and funded by the Brazilian research fund MCTI/CNPq.

**Part 1: Monday, 26 January 2026: 14-18:30 University Utrecht, [Wittevrouwenstraat 7bis, room 0.03](#)**

14:15-15:30

1. Rianne Riemens (Utrecht University): Big Tech’s Climate Futures: How Green AI, Energy and Carbon Myths Shape Climate Debates

2. Donya Alinejad (Utrecht University): Mediated Science: Expanding How We Study Social Media’s Influence on Climate Disinformation

15:45-17:00

1. Verônica Costa (PUC Minas) and Luana Cruz (INCT-CPCT): Science as a Speculative Asset: Platforms, Influence, and Informational Knowledge in the Petrobras case

2. Brogan Latil (UvA): Build It and They Will Come: Community Notes and "the wisdom of the crowd" on X

17:15-18:30

1. Carlos d'Andréa (UFMG): Articulating an Epistemic Infrastructure for Journalism: Google News Initiative's Startups Lab in Brazil

2. Agustin Ferrari Braun / Corinne Cath (UvA): Clouded Judgements. Problematizing Cloud Infrastructures for News Media Companies

**Part 2: Thursday, 29 January 2026, 14-18:00 (Amsterdam)**

**University of Amsterdam, [Turfdraagsterpad 9, Building BG1, Room 0.16](#)**

14:15-15:30

1. Bernhard Rieder (UvA): From Ranking to Rendering. General-Purpose AI and the Rise of Synthetic Epistemic Infrastructures

2. Elias Bitencourt (UNEB): When Images Become Method: Datafication of Visuality as an Epistemic Infrastructure in Social Media Platforms

15:45-17:00

1. Natália Dias (UFMG/UvA): Visualizing Epistemic Infrastructures: Visual Methodologies for Platformized Fan Communities

2. Jan Teurlings (UvA): The Dashboard: Between Online Positivism and Informed Speculation

17:15-18:00

1. Justus Uitermark (UvA): Presentation and Discussion of "Seeing Like a Platform"

For online participation [please register here](#).

For offline participation at Utrecht (26 January 2026) please register with: [d.alinejad@uu.nl](mailto:d.alinejad@uu.nl) For offline participation at Amsterdam (29 January), please register with: [m.stauff@uva.nl](mailto:m.stauff@uva.nl)

## CINEMAS OF BISEXUAL TRANSGRESSION

*Launch of the book Cinemas of Bisexual Transgression by Jacob Engelberg, followed by a screening of the iconoclastic She Must Be Seeing Things (1987), about the revenge fantasies of a woman who thinks her girlfriend is cheating on her with a man | 26 January 2026, 18:30-21:00 hrs., Eye Filmmuseum*

Launch of the book Cinemas of Bisexual Transgression by Jacob Engelberg, followed by a screening of the iconoclastic She Must Be Seeing Things (1987), about the revenge fantasies of a woman who thinks her girlfriend is cheating on her with a man.

In his book *Cinemas of Bisexual Transgression*, Jacob Engelberg calls for a bisexual reimagining of queer film studies, using transgressive cinematic figures who exceed gay/straight categorisation to challenge binary thinking – from 1970s vampire films to 1990s erotic thrillers; from lesbian imaginings of female bisexuality to European art cinema's reckonings with HIV/AIDS.

Revivifying the underexploited contributions of bisexual theory, he proposes a new mode of film theorisation and analysis that examines the rich space between and beyond dominant categories of sexual organisation, where sexual unpredictability, the allure of the forbidden, and the precarity of sexual signification are illuminated.

"The most comprehensive, considered, and thoughtful analysis of bisexuality in visual culture I have encountered." – Maria Pramaggiore, co-editor of *Film: A Critical Introduction*.

**Jacob Engelberg** is Assistant Professor of Film, Media, and Culture at the University of Amsterdam. He will give an introduction ahead of the screening of *She Must Be Seeing Things* (30'). Afterwards, he will be interviewed by **Misha Kavka**, Professor of Cross-Media Culture at the University of Amsterdam.

**She Must Be Seeing Things (Sheila McLaughlin, US 1987, 95')**

Lawyer Agatha is taking care of her girlfriend Jo's apartment in the heart of Manhattan in the 1980s, while Jo is away shooting a film. While Agatha is clearing out the dusty bookshelves, she finds Jo's old diaries, full of candid details about her many (male) former lovers. Agatha is drawn into a downward spiral of jealousy and sexual obsession. She starts to spy on Jo and imagines her having erotic encounters with male members of her film crew. John Zorn's jazzy, driving music will also keep you on the edge of your seat.

Sheila McLaughlin drew on her own life for this seldom-screened, iconoclastic classic. Together with Lizzie Borden and Bette Gordon, McLaughlin was part of a small school of independent, queer filmmakers from New York. Her film caused controversy in lesbian and feminist circles for its provocative presentations of the protagonists' fantasies, full of voyeurism, bondage, cross-dressing, heterosexual sex and fetishism.

Screens on 16mm from the Eye collection.

The book, published by Duke University Press, will be available to buy after the screening. In the summer of 2026, Eye will also be presenting a programme on Queer Joy and Queer Power.

[Read more](#)

## WORKSHOP: ARCHIVES OF SEX

*Workshop by prof. Anjali Arondekar. Following Anjali Arondekar's recent work, this workshop centers on the tension between proof and imagination in histories of sexuality | 27 January 2026, 09:00 -14:00 | Location [Roeterseilandcampus - building B/C/D \(entrance B/C\) Room B9.22](#)*

What can't evidence show? We will discuss how to write about lives that appear only through fragments, gossip, or so-called absence, and how such moments invite new forms of scholarly attention.

The workshop is open to all interested participants, who can register for the plenary and group discussions via the online registration form below. Master's, Research Master's, PhD students, and early career scholars who wish to present are invited to submit a 100-word abstract by email to [w.g.s.j.isenia@uva.nl](mailto:w.g.s.j.isenia@uva.nl). Four speakers will be selected to give 30-minute presentations. [Register here](#)

## OCEANIC SEX: ARCHIVES OF CASTE AND INDENTURE

*Postcolonial Island Intimacies Lecture by prof. Anjali Arondekar | 28 January 2026, 15:00 -16:30 | Location [University Library](#) Room Chirurgisch Theater (UB A1.01)*

As the inaugural lecture in the lecture series *Postcolonial Island Intimacies*, Professor Anjali Arondekar examines archival records of gender and sexuality within indentured labour, a contract system of coerced work.

In this talk, prof. Arondekar considers the question: if archives of indenture are flooded with records of identification that suture presence to labour, what happens to the labour of gender and sexuality that lives unaccounted within economies of such enumeration? How do we think histories of indenture outside settled archival forms, outside technologies of historical recuperation, where we historicize not to materialize absence, but to speak to the weight of our historical anchors?

Gender and sexuality here are not tracked through acts/practices that might return us to identitarian forms; rather, prof. Arondekar reads archival records of gender and sexuality against the settlement and lure of reproductive futurities (be they of capital, race, caste) offered or mediated through indenture.

[Register here](#)

### About the speaker

Anjali Arondekar is Peggy and Jack Baskin Foundation Presidential Professor of Feminist Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz. She was the founding Director, Center for South Asian Studies, 2020-24. Her research engages the comparative poetics and politics of sexuality, caste, and historiography, with a focus on South Asia and the broader Indian Ocean world. She is the author of *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India* (Duke University Press, 2009, Orient Blackswan, India, 2010), winner of the Alan Bray Memorial Book Award for best book in lesbian, gay, or queer studies in literature and cultural studies, Modern Language Association (MLA), 2010. Her second book, *Abundance: Sexuality's History* (Duke University Press, 2023, Orient Blackswan, 2023), grows out of her interest in the archival figurations of sexuality, caste and historiography in British and Portuguese colonial

India. Arondekar is currently working on a third project, *Oceanic Sex: Archives of Caste and Indenture*.

## THE GLORIOUS RETURN OF BARTER: INSIDE DIGITAL VIDEO ADVERTISING

*The RPA Global Digital Cultures & CUS (Centre for Urban Studies, UvA) are pleased to announce a talk by Prof. Koray Çalışkan on 'The Glorious Return of Barter: Inside Digital Video Advertising' that will take place on the 29th of January, 16:30-20:00 in Kapitein Zeppos (Gebed Zonder End 5, 1012 HS Amsterdam)*

This talk examines how digital video advertising economies are produced and maintained across platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Meta, and Netflix. Drawing on a four-year, multi-method research carried out with Donald MacKenzie, it analyzes how impressions are assembled, stabilized, and monetized within a computational supply chain. The talk shows that video platforms are not simply multi-sided markets but stacked economization processes. At the base lies barter, where viewers exchange attention, behavioral data, and cognitive labor for access and entertainment. To name the objects exchanged in these asymmetric relations, the paper introduces dyads—paired valuables (such as data vs entertainment) that supply the raw materials for advertising markets. Built on this foundation, marketization transforms fleeting attention into measurable, comparable, and tradable impressions through technical rules, visibility thresholds, and device-level constraints. The talk concludes that digital video advertising is best understood as a set of stacked-economization platforms organizing contemporary visibility, with significant regulatory and environmental consequences.

The talk will be followed by a buffet reception, please RSVP using the link below or send an email to [gdc@uva.nl](mailto:gdc@uva.nl)

[RSVP here](#)

### About the speaker

Koray Çalışkan is a tenured professor teaching economic sociology and design at Parsons School of Design, The New School. His research focuses on markets, AI economies, digital platforms, and online advertising. He is the author of *Market Threads: How Cotton Farmers and Traders Create a Global Commodity* (Princeton UP) and *Data Money: Inside Cryptocurrencies, Their Communities, Markets, and Blockchains* (Columbia UP); co-author (with Donald MacKenzie) of *Inside Digital Advertising: Platforms, Power, and Material Politics* (Polity); and (with Michel Callon and Donald MacKenzie) of *Economization: Markets, Platforms and Ecologies* (forthcoming from Columbia UP).



## IMAGES AND OBJECTS OF RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE

*Book Launch "Images and Objects of Russia's War against Ukraine" (Natasha Klimenko, Miglè Bareikytė, Viktoriya Sereda, eds.) – Discussion, Screening, and Performance organized by Lesia Kulchynska | 30 January 2026, 16:00–19:00, Vox-Pop. Discussion participants: Miglè Bareikytė, Mykola Homanyuk, Natasha Klimenko, Lesia Kulchynska, Viktoriya Sereda | Screening of: Images and Objects: Russia's War against Ukraine (video essay by Miglè Bareikytė and Natasha Klimenko, in collaboration with Mykola Homanyuk, Soitlana Matviyenko, Gintautas Mažeikis, Denys Shatalov, and Bohdan Shumylovych) | Performance by: Borys Kashapov | Moderated by Daniel de Zeeuw with an introduction by Oleksandra Moskalenko*

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has destroyed lives, communities, and cities. From the beginning of this stage of the war, images of this destruction spread across various media platforms. Paintings, photographs, drone footage, TikTok videos, and Instagram posts have shaped how the war is experienced, represented, and archived. In this multidisciplinary volume, artists, scholars, and writers explore how art, media, infrastructures, and material culture respond to and contest the Russia-Ukraine War. The book launch will feature a presentation of the volume, followed by a conversation with the editors (Miglè Bareikytė, Natasha Klimenko, and Viktoriya Sereda) and two of the book's authors (Mykola Homanyuk and Lesia Kulchynska) on how different cultural and spatial forms—including social media, visual art, billboards, and infrastructure—interpret and shape the war and the narratives that envelop it.

Alongside the discussion, the event will include a screening of an experimental video essay directed by Bareikytė and Klimenko and made in collaboration with five contributors to the volume. The video essay functions as an extension of the book, allowing scholarly work to take on an alternate form, and presents the voices and materials of the authors in a visual and time-based medium. The event will be introduced by economist Oleksandra Moskalenko and moderated by media studies scholar Daniel de Zeeuw. The book presentation will be followed by the reception and performance by the Ukrainian artist Borys Kashapov, *Only for Men*. In the performance, Kashapov reflects on his experience of displacement and nomadic existence caused by the war in his country by creating his paintings not on the canvas that should be exhibited, transported, and stored, but directly on the nails of the people he meets, turning them into live nomadic art institutions that tour the nail exhibition wherever they go, discussing it with their friends or random interlocutors.

The title refers to the practices of gender exclusion and codification inherent to patriarchal society, dramatized by war. With the discrimination stated by the title, the artist invites everyone who doesn't consider themselves a man to ignore it, just like any other discriminatory prohibition.

### Participants:

**Miglè Bareikytė** holds the Chair of Digital Studies at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder), where she is a dual member of the Faculty of Social and Cultural Sciences and the European New School of Digital Studies (ENS). For many years she has been researching digitalisation processes, digital war sensing and civilian archiving, media and data practices, media geopolitics and algorithmic accountability with a special focus on Central and Eastern Europe. Since 2022, she has been researching media and data practices during Russia's war against Ukraine in cooperation with colleagues from the University of Siegen and the Centre for Urban History in Lviv. Since 2024, she has been the principal investigator of the War Sensing project, which is part of the CRC 1187 Media of Cooperation.

**Mykola Homanyuk**, sociologist, geographer and theatermaker, is an associate professor at Kherson State University. He has held a Lane Kirkland Fellowship at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, a fellowship at the Indiana University-Ukraine Nonresidential Scholars Program, and a fellowship at the Petro Jacyk Non-Resident Scholars Program at the University of Toronto. Since 2022, he has been a Prisma Ukraina: War, Migration, and Memory research group member at Forum Transregionale Studien. Mykola is the author of numerous articles on ethnic studies, mental mapping and toponymy, as well as memory and commemoration. He recently finished his book *Monuments and Territory: War Memorials in Russian-Occupied Ukraine* (with Mischa Gabowitsch), published by CEU Press. He runs the Kherson Theatre Lab as a theatermaker and directs documentary theatre productions. In 2018, he was awarded the ADAMI Media Prize for Cultural Diversity in Eastern Europe, and the Journalism Excellence Award by the Council of Europe in 2025.

**Natasha Klimenko** is a doctoral candidate at the Graduate School of Global Intellectual History held at Freie Universität Berlin and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Her PhD project looks at the entangled art histories of Soviet Uzbekistan in the interwar period, with a focus on modernist art, conceptual transfers, identity formation, and the role of institutions. She also researches historical and contemporary art, culture, and media in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

**Borys Kashapov** is a Kyiv-born, Amsterdam-based artist, a graduate of the Rodchenko School of

Photography and Multimedia. Kashapov was a member of the REP Group, the Penoplast dream-band, The Gay Carousel collective. Initiator of many self-organising projects and alter-institutional artistic practices. Works with video, performance. Through his works he explores power relations in art, and political aspects of the form.

**Lesia Kulchynska** is a curator and researcher in media and visual studies, currently based in Amsterdam. Her work examines visual cultures of violence, media infrastructures, and the politics of art, with a particular focus on Ukraine and the Russo-Ukrainian War. She has been teaching courses on Media and Communication Studies at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Kyiv Academy of Media Arts, and John Cabot University (Rome). Her recent research investigates networked visibility, violent responses to art, and the convergence of media infrastructures and infrastructures of violence in contexts of war and occupation. She is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam.

**Oleksandra Moskalenko** - Doctor of Sciences (Economics), Professor of the Department of Economic Theory at the Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman. Currently Duisenberg Fellow, 2025-2026 (NIAS, the Netherlands). She was also a Visiting Professor at the Centre for Macroeconomics, CARA Fellow, the Department of Economics at the London School of Economics and Political Science (the UK)

**Viktoriya Sereda** serves as Head Coordinator of the Virtual Ukraine Institute for Advanced Study (VUIAS) at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin and is a Professor of Sociology at the Kyiv School of Economics. She is also a Senior Advisor to the "War, Migration, and Memory" project at Forum Transregionale Studien and an Associate with the Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard University. Previously, Dr. Sereda was a visiting lecturer at the University of Basel and taught at Central European University's Invisible University for Ukraine program. Her research centers on migration, memory, and identity in Ukraine. She has held faculty positions at the Ukrainian Catholic University and Ivan Franko Lviv National University, where she taught sociology.

#### **CALL FOR PAPERS: EPISTEMIC EQUITY – WHAT COUNTS AS KNOWLEDGE AND WHAT KNOWLEDGE COUNTS?**

*ESSCS 2026 organized by PASS – Center for Practice-based Art Studies on behalf of the European Summer School for Cultural Studies (ESSCS) University of Copenhagen 24-28 August 2026*

Epistemic injustice haunts so much of history, especially in its progressivist and modernist forms. What knowledge is valued, and whose knowledge is discarded or discounted across the *longue durée* of what we now call 'knowledge producing practices'? In what ways can this lost and repressed knowledge be surfaced and explored, articulated and legitimated – even deployed? To explore epistemic equity is to invite just thoughts, and to imagine new forms of collaboration, knowledge production, and care. What kinds of worlds would be made if the western canon began to meaningfully accommodate traditional and indigenous environmental knowledge-ways? Or if the findings and assertions of artists were taken to be as significant as those of art historians?

As we reckon with the legacies of epistemic injustice across disciplines, cultures, and institutions, this conference invites critical reflection, speculative thinking, and practice-led research on the persistent asymmetries that structure knowledge production. We explore the concept of epistemic equity as both a critical framework and a hopeful method for reimagining what could and should count as knowledge, whose voices are heard, and how alternative forms of knowing can take root within – and transform – our fields.

This conference seeks to elucidate and amplify research that pushes at the edges of disciplinary norms, artistic hierarchies, and institutional authority. The field of Cultural Studies has long been at the forefront of these inquiries, not only diagnosing the colonial, racial, gendered, and disciplinary exclusions embedded in institutions of knowledge, but also modeling new methods for intellectual and artistic production. From feminist theory and Black radical thought to decolonial praxis and indigenous epistemologies, to the experimental, creative and embodied forms of knowing often associated with practice-based research.

Fundamental questions in the understanding of humanity, of culture, and of history are tied up in epistemic asymmetries, many of which are now wide open to correction. Feminist theory for 250 years has grappled not only with achieving gender equality, but with asserting the validity of thought that emanates from worldly experiences of women. Black studies as a field attends meticulously to the recursive nature of slavery in undereducation and incarceration, and also to the fundamental interdisciplinarity and radicality of Black thought and aesthetics. Literary studies and art history are productively decentered by sustained problematisations of Western notions of genre, convention, periodisations and the genealogies of aesthetics. Decolonial theory and methods addressing the colonality of knowledge itself are now operative in almost all fields of cultural studies, from anthropology through archives and collections, from geography to

literary studies, from artistic practices to curatorial thinking. This too is ultimately a project attempting the complete recalibration of what we understand to be knowledge, and of knowledge institutions such as universities, museums, art schools, publishers and the press. The concept of 'epistemic equity', and blueprints for achieving its promise of repair, are clearly among the most significant fruits of cultural studies over the past fifty years.

**Core questions include:**

- How does this project, these methods, and this aim of 'total recalibration' manifest in the kinds of cultural productions that are the objects and subjects of cultural studies?
- Above, beyond and alongside this, how do these questions also manifest in our own ways of making and doing knowledge as critical thinkers? How does epistemic asymmetry, and its hopeful counterpart epistemic equity, infuse our thinking, our working lives and our contexts of practice – and ultimately our very sense of purpose?
- What does epistemic equity look like across diverse contexts and disciplines?
- How do artistic, embodied, and/or non-Western epistemologies contest dominant academic paradigms?
- What are the risks and potentials of de-centering the Western canon within cultural studies?
- How do our practices of research, curation, and pedagogy reflect or resist epistemic asymmetry?
- What might a museum, a syllabus, a research project, or a community archive look like if epistemic equity were its foundation?
- How might cultural formulations of epistemic equity inform urgent debates around Artificial Intelligence and digital hegemonies?

**Suggested topics:**

- Practice-based approaches to decoloniality, feminist theory, or radical pedagogy
- Artistic research that challenges disciplinary boundaries
- Intersectional critiques of institutional knowledge (museums, universities, media)
- Transdisciplinary and/or situated knowledge practices
- Articulations of representations that either foreground epistemic asymmetries or model epistemic equity (literary, dramatic, artistic, filmic, photographic, philosophical, etc.)
- Curatorial strategies as epistemic intervention
- Reimagining archives, collections, or historiography
- Cultural work and environmental knowledge (including indigenous and traditional)
- The politics of citation, authorship, and intellectual property

- Reflections on epistemic justice and precarity in academic labor

**Formats encouraged:**

- We welcome a broad range of formats and cross-format collaborations, including:
- Academic papers
- Practice-led presentations
- Curatorial case studies
- Visual or performative talks
- Collaborative panels
- Workshops
- Audio-visual submissions
- Experimental or dialogic formats

We especially encourage participation from those working across practice and theory, and from scholars, artists, and curators engaging with or deploying underrepresented knowledge traditions.

**Key thinkers: Historicity & lineages**

This conference draws inspiration from the intellectual and artistic legacies of figures including (but not limited to): Sara Ahmed, Gloria Anzaldúa, Pia Arke, Hans Belting, Pierre Bourdieu, Rachel Carson, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Natalie Davis, Michel Foucault, Carlo Ginzburg, Stuart Hall, Donna Haraway, bell hooks, Luce Irigaray, Audre Lorde, Walter Mignolo, Fred Moten, Helio Oiticica, Mary Louise Pratt, Carolee Schneemann, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Mary Wollstonecraft and Sylvia Wynter.

**Submission details:**

- Abstract Deadline: 15 February 2026
- Notification of Acceptance: 1 April 2026
- Conference Dates: 24-28 August 2026
- Location: The University of Copenhagen + other venues in the city

Submit a single-page proposal of 300–400 words, along with a short biographical statement (100–150 words) by email to [pass@hum.ku.dk](mailto:pass@hum.ku.dk) using the subject line 'ESSCS 2026 Proposal'. Please include [asca-fgw@uva.nl](mailto:asca-fgw@uva.nl) in the cc. if you are an ASCA member. If accepted we will reimburse your travel costs.

If submitting a non-conventional format, please also include a brief description of any technical or spatial needs on a separate page.

Researchers wishing to participate and who may require financial assistance to do so are invited to outline their needs as part of their proposal. Limited funds can be made available to support participation in special circumstances.

**About ESSCS & PASS**

The European Summer School for Cultural Studies (ESSCS) is a collaborative consortium of institutions dedicated to the advancement of cultural theory, transdisciplinary methodologies, and inclusive intellectual exchange. The 2026 conference is hosted by PASS – Center for Practice-based Art Studies, a hub for

critical and artistic exploration of how knowledge is made, shared, and transformed across disciplinary and institutional borders.