

Nieuwsbrief 294

April 2026

ASCA Spring Event: The Importance of Interest	1
New ASCA Member: Maral Mohsenin.....	1
Guest Researcher: Felipe Figueiredo.....	2
The Perfect Enemy	2
ASCA Writing Café.....	3
Images, Power, and the Ownership of Narrative	3
What is the meaning of hijran: an event featuring Iranian Poetry and Cinema	3
Marx on Abstract Domination: A Reconstruction and Critique.....	4
The Importance of Being Earnest: Generative AI, Creative Writing, and the Role of Authorial Intention.....	4
Spinoza Lecture I by Bonnie Honig.....	4
The State of the Internet 2026 with Fieke Jansen.....	5
Days and Nights of Demetra K.	5
Farewell Events Kati Röttger.....	6
Connecting Trans and Critical Animal Studies in an Age of Authoritarianism	6
Rahel Jaeggi: Progress and Regression	7
The 'Elite' As Delicate Beast	7
The Great Frost of 1708/09.....	8
Toronto's 1960s TV Campus: Crisis Planning for 20th Century New Media Education	8
Thinking About Place In A Digitally Connected World	8
Surplus People of the World	9
ASCA PhD Supervision Workshop.....	9
Swampland Futures: Undraining the Delta (Field visit with Anna Kooi)....	10
Lacan's Seminar VI: Desire and Its Interpretation	10
Beyond Sanctuary (with special guest Veronika Zablotsky).....	10
'Beyond Sanctuary' with Ananya Roy and Veronika Zablotsky	10
Modding Game Jams: Co-Creation and Critical Play.....	11
Agente Filmico	11
Artistic Research with Anna Raimondo and Melissa Van Drie	12
Cultures of In/Visibility and In/Audibility Conference	12
ASCA PhD Skills Seminar: The Academic Job Market and Publishing	13
Digitisation, Activist Archives and Communities.....	13
Radio-Activities: Architecture and Broadcasting in Cold War Berlin - With Alfredo Thiermann Riesco	13
New Book: Looking Through Theatre	14
Capital in Question.....	14
ASCA Finishing Fellowships	15
Individual Talent Fund.....	16
Consortium Fund.....	16

ASCA SPRING EVENT: THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEREST

On Thursday 9 April from 15:00 to 17:30, the first ASCA Spring Event will take place, followed by drinks. Location: Droog, Staalstraat 7B, Amsterdam

The event will start with a conversation panel on the Importance of Interest, led by Sudeep Dasgupta, with Fieke Jansen, MARRIGJE PAIJMANS, and Sanjukta Sunderason. Curiosity often starts off ideas for research. Yet the interest in a field or question might provoke both disorienting and productively insightful perspectives not envisaged from the angle one began with. How does interest develop, deflect, direct and redirect us as we re-orient ourselves during research?

Answers to this question can also provoke questions which ask of us why we are interested in, and what is at stake, in wanting to wander into a field of research. What interests, however contingent, situate us in relate to our objects? Answering this last question inevitably requires, these days, what interest can be earned and value circulated through this research? How can the labour of research-work be made valuable, to whom, and to what effect – institutionally, politically, historically?

The second part of the event will consist of short presentations by ASCA members, including Alex Gekker, Esther Peeren and Tjalling Valdés Olmos, Boris Noorderbos and Marc Tuters, and Laura Vermeeren. The aim of this ASCA showcase is to present the variety of research by ASCA members, while simultaneously informing each other what we are all working on. There will be room for questions and conversation, and drinks afterwards. Please join!

NEW ASCA MEMBER: MARAL MOHSENIN

UvA Honorary Fellow of Film Heritage and Digital Film Culture

Maral Mohsenin, Director of Collection & Knowledge Sharing at Eye Filmmuseum, has recently started as UvA Honorary Fellow at the Faculty of Humanities. She will focus on new approaches to the study of film archives, particularly how new technologies and shifting socio-political and cultural contexts are reshaping archival practices.



Maral Mohsenin (Photo: Lisa Frisco)

As guardians of audiovisual history, film archives have the responsibility to conserve, catalogue, restore, present, and make accessible film heritage for the new audiences in contemporary societies. This fellowship

aims to critically assess their role within the socio-political, cultural and technological spheres.

Film archives' collections acquire new meanings in light of current cultural frameworks, and through digital infrastructures and new technologies such as virtual reality and AI. As a result, the very notion of national film heritage is called into question, and new ethical and theoretical concerns arise.

Interdisciplinary dialogue and innovation

In her fellowship, Mohsenin will examine the importance of film heritage in today's world through technological, historical, theoretical, cultural and socio-political lenses. In addition to her research, she will be teaching in the Department of Media Studies, in particular to students of the MA Preservation and Presentation of the Moving Image.

The fellowship draws on research in the fields of Film Studies, Media Archaeology, Archival Studies, Digital Humanities, Science and Technology Studies, and Cultural Studies. It provides an impetus for research and education in the area of Film Heritage and Digital Film Culture, fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and innovation across these fields.

About Maral Mohsenin

Maral Mohsenin (Tehran, 1988) is Director of Collection & Knowledge Sharing at Eye Filmmuseum. In that role she is responsible for the preservation and management of the collections, acquisitions, conservation and restoration, academic activities, education, and international positioning of Eye's heritage activities and collection.

Mohsenin has a wide-ranging background in film, with experience in film heritage restoration and conservation, as well as in film programming. She was Head of Programs for the Geneva International Film Festival from 2022, and worked as a film restorer and curator for the Cinémathèque Suisse in Lausanne, among others. Since 2022, she has also lectured in Film at the University of Lausanne. Mohsenin earned her PhD at ASCA in 2022, focusing on the preservation of digital images in film archives.

GUEST RESEARCHER: FELIPE FIGUEIREDO



My name is Felipe Figueiredo, I am based in Copenhagen, Denmark. With background in Anthropology (both MSc and BSc from the Federal University of São Paulo, Brazil), I am doing a PhD at the IT University of Copenhagen, under the [Technologies in Practice](#) section – an interdisciplinary group with shared interest in qualitative studies of tech-mediated practices. At ITU I am also member of the [Center for Climate IT](#). My research is part of the ERC project “Decoupling IT?”, where we ethnographically investigate the relationship between digitalization and climate change in five different countries. In my study case, I focus on the tensions between the development of data centres and energy infrastructures in Iceland. More specifically, I problematize how the data centre industry shapes perceptions and practices around nature and sustainability. For quite a long time I've been interested on the relationship between crisis and infrastructural change – my master thesis was about how the Pandemic affected the Brazilian Electric Grid Operator's decision-making processes, and my bachelor thesis about the cultural perception of dams as part of 'policy against droughts' in the northeast of Brazil. The last one also resulted in an [ethnographic movie](#) (only available in Portuguese). Part of my research interests lies on the study of infrastructures as means of studying power in contemporary capitalism, and its responses to climate change. I am into discussions around anti-colonialism, critique of capitalism and feminist technoscience.

During his research stay (April-June 2026)), Felipe will join the critical infrastructure lab and participate in our activities, including the reading group. Felipe and Fieke Jansen will co-organize an event on data centres and electricity networks at the UvA that will be open to ASCA colleagues. Felipe will also present his research and share experiences with various qualitative methods and working creatively in the intersection of science, technology and arts. In general, he hopes to benefit from working directly in the same environment of people with similar or related interests.

THE PERFECT ENEMY

Public Talk with Jana Cattien & Sruti Bala in Frascati, Nes 63, 1 April 19:00 hrs.

<https://www.frascatitheater.nl/nl/agenda/the-perfect-enemy-m9yp>

Scholars Jana Cattien and Sruti Bala will offer critical theoretical insights and questions relating to some of the explosive debates on culture and the arts.

Jana takes ideological attacks on gender and critical race theory as a starting point to look at fascist and right-wing mobilisations of 'culture'. She looks at the psychic and political drivers of these mobilisations and suggests that the concept of the 'perfect enemy' might allow us

to both make sense of them, as well as to think about effective strategies of resistance.

Sruti questions the common assumption that art and culture are benign and either contribute to societal cohesion and understanding, or in the worst case, are useless and elitist. The talk argues that under the present conditions of unprecedented militarisation, art and culture can also do harm and serve as tools of inciting violence and manufacturing consent.

ASCA WRITING CAFÉ

You are warmly invited to join the ASCA Writing Café, held every Wednesday from 10:00–17:00 hrs. The Writing Café offers an informal and supportive space dedicated to advancing your dissertation or research writing. Work alongside fellow PhD and post-doctoral researchers, share insights, and pursue your writing goals in a focused and friendly environment. Every other week, in collaboration with ARIAS - platform for research through the arts and sciences - we welcome researchers from across both academia and the arts, fostering a broader interdisciplinary exchange. | Organized by Shekoufeh Behbehani, Luc Marraffa, and Joe van der Eerden.

The Writing Café continues to welcome you every Wednesday in P.C. Hoofthuis. Please find the upcoming dates below:

Wed Apr 1 — 10:00–17:00 -- PCH 6.20

Wed Apr 8 — 10:00–17:00 -- PCH 6.31

Wed Apr 15 — 10:00–17:00 -- PCH 6.31

Wed Apr 22 — 10:00–17:00 -- PCH 6.31

Wed Apr 29 — 10:00–17:00 -- PCH 6.31

For any questions, please feel free to contact the organizers at ascawritingcafe@gmail.com.

IMAGES, POWER, AND THE OWNERSHIP OF NARRATIVE

Workshop with Gustav Bengtsson | April 1, 2026 | 3:30 - 5 PM | VU ART SCIENCE gallery.

<https://www.artsciencegallery.nl/event/260401-workshop-with-gustav-bengtsson/>

Images, Power, and the Ownership of Narrative, examines how images represent systems of power historically and today—across photography, film, archives, surveillance, and AI-based image technologies. Drawing on perspectives from visual anthropology, it focuses on questions of authorship, participation, and shared knowledge.

The workshop combines critical theory with artistic practice. It emphasises ethics as a shared and situated practice rather than a fixed position. Through simple, guided video exercises, participants will be encouraged to use the mobile phone as an artistic device to explore questions of identity, embodiment, and artistic

research. The focus is on process and reflection rather than production.

Gustav Bengtsson is a Swedish video artist, filmmaker, curator, and educator based in Amsterdam. Working across experimental film, video art, and research, his practice explores the body, memory, gaze, and alternative ways of storytelling. He regularly gives workshops and lectures on video art, video essays, and experimental filmmaking, and curates the festival Video (H)our(s), dedicated to underground and artist-driven moving image practices.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF HIJRAN: AN EVENT FEATURING IRANIAN POETRY AND CINEMA

Event organized by Jingyi Wan, Mehrshad Golkarian and, Hemen Heidari | Guest: Tara Asgarilaleh | 2 April 2026, 14:00-16:30, OMHP A008. [Oudemanshuispoort](#)

It is a long way from one life to another, as Yiyun Li writes in *Dear Friend, from My Life I Write to You in Your Life*, but, she also asks, if not for that distance for what do we write? We constantly find ourselves not able to get access to (the full intensity of) someone else's pain that seems to have a life of its own, sometimes stronger than our capacities for understanding. But if not for reaching that pain, indeed, what do we write poetry or make films for in the darkest moments of our grievance?

Therefore in this event we are featuring Iranian poetry and cinema in an attempt to attend to these. Given the geopolitical time like the one we are living in, we constantly bump into our own pain and other's pain, caught between traumas, massacres, wars, ideologies, and regimes, shell-shocked by horrible events unfolding in other places or other times. Against the backdrop of the recent violence and war in Iran and the wider West Asia, the event turns to poetry and cinema as ways of confronting grief, witnessing and longing.

During this event, we are reading Iranian Feminist poet and film-director Forough Farrokhzad's poems "Let us Believe in the Dawn of the Cold Season" and "Another Birth" and screening Iranian filmmaker Mehrshad Golkarian's short film *Birthmarked*. In the film, the 14-year-old girl Fatemeh read a poem she wrote to her younger brother. Among all the words she used, the boy was particularly interested in the word *hijran*, loosely translated into English as *yearning*. Where does *hijran* lead "my sister"? Or generally anyone who dares or longs to yearn? In the roundtable discussion following the film-screening, we discuss three scenes in the movie: "what does yearning mean," "plant hands in the garden," and "my sister's hiding spot".

MARX ON ABSTRACT DOMINATION: A RECONSTRUCTION AND CRITIQUE

Philosophy and Public Affairs colloquium on 8th April from 3.30 to 5pm in Faculteitskamer II, as well as on Zoom | We will be discussing a paper by Katherina Kinzel from Utrecht University | Response by Daniel Loick | 8 April 2026, 15:30 -17:00, [Oude Turfmarkt 145-147](#). Contact: Aron van Os a.c.vanos@uva.nl | The full paper will be circulated to all PPA members and registered participants around Wednesday April 1st.

In this paper, I revisit Karl Marx' account of the covert character of capitalist domination. I distinguish between two concepts in Marx' economic writings that I refer to as *abstract domination* and *impersonal class domination*, respectively. Abstract domination arises when social relations become autonomous from the individuals that stand in these relations. Impersonal domination, in contrast, arises from wage-dependency which constitutes and mediates the domination of capitalists over workers in impersonal ways. I raise some critical objections to Marx' account. In particular, I argue that it remains unclear as to why abstract domination should be considered a form of social domination at all, rather than as mere structural constraint on agency. I also show that Marx account of how abstract and impersonal domination are related falls short of his own goal of "de-fetishizing" capitalist social relations. I conclude by sketching an alternative that mobilizes the explanatory potential of Marx' own concept of impersonal domination, and that retains Marx' commitment to de-fetishization.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST: GENERATIVE AI, CREATIVE WRITING, AND THE ROLE OF AUTHORIAL INTENTION

English Department Lecture by James S. Pearson organized by Michael Miller | Thursday, 09 April—17:00-18.30, PCH 1.04.

The rapid advancement of generative AI compels us to reconsider how such technologies might be integrated into a flourishing human life. In this presentation, I address this question in the context of literature and creative writing. Many researchers studying creativity—primarily in psychology and philosophy—argue that generative AI systems cannot be independently creative because they lack intentional agency. According to this view, genuinely creative agents intend their artworks in a particular way. By contrast, an opposing group of theorists rejects this requirement, insisting that considerations about intentional agency are irrelevant to judgments of creativity. On this view, creativity should be assessed solely in terms of whether an agent's outputs are both novel and valuable. My first aim is to show that this contemporary dispute has an unexpected

precedent in twentieth-century literary theory: the debate between intentionalists and anti-intentionalists concerning the role of authorial intention in interpreting literary works. I begin by highlighting several key analogies between this earlier debate and current disagreements among philosophers and psychologists about the possibility of AI creativity. My second objective is to demonstrate how this earlier discussion in literary theory can clarify what large language models (LLMs) can and cannot do in the domain of creative writing. In particular, I argue that insights from literary intentionalism can help us identify certain genres in which LLMs are unlikely to make genuine creative contributions—namely, forms of writing in which embodied and expressive authenticity is constitutive of a text's value. To illustrate this point, I assay a handful of examples, including autobiographies, eulogies and elegies, and love letters. Although there are good reasons to think that LLMs cannot independently produce works of this kind, I also consider several ways in which they may nevertheless encroach upon these genres. I conclude by suggesting that the earlier debate surrounding literary intentionalism provides conceptual resources for recognizing and safeguarding these AI-inapt domains of creative writing as generative technologies increasingly permeate our creative lives.

Dr. James S. Pearson is a postdoctoral researcher in the Centre of Philosophy at the University of Lisbon (CFUL). He is also a guest researcher in the Department of Political Science at the University of Amsterdam. His current research project examines the social value of creativity. In addition to his project on creativity, he also works in Nietzsche studies and contemporary political theory. He is the author of *Nietzsche on Conflict, Struggle and War* (Cambridge University Press, 2022).

SPINOZA LECTURE I BY BONNIE HONIG

The Last Laugh: Sovereignty and (Media) Architecture in Hannah Arendt's Eichmann in Jerusalem

9 April 2026, 18:00 -21:30, [Aula - Lutherse kerk](#)

This lecture returns to Hannah Arendt's book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, and reconsiders it by way of questions of context, design, and media architecture. Although Arendt's book has been read as one of her "Jewish" texts, I argue it as a Second Red Scare text and that it should be read in the American context of McCarthyism, the 1940's and 50's political moment in which (then, as now) diversity, assimilation, dissent, and humor were put on trial. Specifically, former, ex-, or current communists (many of them Jewish), were accused of being dangerous subversives disloyal to America.

Many who had nothing to do with communism were also pinioned by investigations and inquiries that

ruined lives and livelihoods. The Lavendar purges would add queer people to the targeted risks to U.S. security. Arendt addresses none of this directly in her Eichmann book, but her objections to the Eichmann trial – heavily litigated for decades in the massive scholarship/criticism on her 1963 book -- were all objections that had been made at mid-century to the hearings and actions of the anti-communist House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), which were enabled, empowered, then finally undone, by the newest medium -- television.

Bonnie Honig is Nancy Duke Lewis Professor Professor of Modern Culture and Media and Political Science at Brown University. Her work draws on political theory, literature, law, and film to recast questions of immigration, emergency, democracy, and gender in more agonistic and egalitarian terms. She is author of several books, including: *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (Cornell, 1993), *Democracy and the Foreigner* (Princeton, 2001), *Emergency Politics: Paradox, Law, Democracy* (Princeton, 2009), *Antigone, Interrupted* (Cambridge, 2013), *Public Things: Democracy in Disrepair* (Fordham, 2017), *A Feminist Theory of Refusal* (Harvard, 2021) and *Shell Shocked: Feminist Criticism After Trump* (Fordham, 2021: a collection of revised versions of her public writing since 2016).

Co-Founder of Brown University's Democracy Project, leading the work on "Varieties of Democratic Experience," Honig has written on the cultural politics of misogyny and has argued since 2013 for a politics of "public things" to orient democracy now. Author of 70 articles and 11 single-authored books and (co)edited collections, she is now writing *The Accidental Ordinary: Language, Politics, Metamorphosis*, the topic of her 2026 lectures as Spinoza Chair of Philosophy at the University of Amsterdam.

THE STATE OF THE INTERNET 2026 WITH FIEKE JANSEN

<https://www.waag.org/en/event/de-staat-van-het-internet-2026-met-fieke-jansen/> | Brakke Grond 10 April 2026, 16:00 hrs.

During the State of the Internet, Waag Futurelab takes the annual temperature of the internet. This edition focuses on AI and the limits of our planet. The lecture will be given by Fieke Jansen, co-founder of the Critical Infrastructure Lab.

Generative AI and other AI applications are currently being added to our technology everywhere. From search engines and social media to office software and urban infrastructure: AI is everywhere, whether we like it or not. Our digital landscape is changing significantly, but our physical landscape is perhaps changing even more dramatically. The arrival of large data centres, known as hyperscalers, is putting considerable pressure

on our power grid and water supply. Local residents are seeing their energy bills rise and their water supply become less reliable.

This year, we are looking at what lies behind our screens: what impact does the growing appetite for data centres and AI computing power have on our living environment, and what are the consequences for the world outside our screens? The possibilities of AI seem limitless, but our planet's natural resources are finite.

About Fieke Jansen

This year the keynote lecture will be given by Fieke Jansen, co-principal researcher at the Critical Infrastructure Lab at the University of Amsterdam and co-lead of the Green Screen Coalition. Jansen investigates how the infrastructure of our digital world, data centres and AI influence the environment, raw material use and climate.

About Waag Futurelab

Waag Futurelab is engaged in regenerative technology by developing research and design methods that detach technology from purely extractive models and instead make it restorative and circular. In collaboration with the Critical Infrastructure Lab, Waag investigates how technical systems can be designed in such a way that they not only extract value from natural and social resources, but also give back: think of the use of biomaterials, a focus on repair and extending lifespan, and public values that strengthen local ecosystems and social initiatives. Through practice-oriented research and participatory design processes, Waag brings together knowledge from science, art and citizen initiatives to realise technologies that contribute to long-term regeneration rather than depletion.

DAYS AND NIGHTS OF DEMETRA K.

Film title: *Days and Nights of Demetra K.* | Director: Eva Stefani | April 10, 16:30–18:00 (with short intro by Georgios Evgenios Douliakas, PhD ASCA and Lecturer Cultural Analysis, University of Leiden) | Location: UvA, Building/Room: UvA, Building/Room: PC Hooftuis, room 1.04, Spuistraat Amsterdam | Language: Greek (with English subtitles)

Demetra is a sex worker, activist and owner of one of the oldest brothels in Athens. By following her everyday life for twelve years, the camera chronicles the way Demetra's professional and personal life has changed due to the financial crisis. Getting to know Demetra, we are confronted with stereotypes about sex and personal choice. However, the film is not a issue driven documentary. Rather, it is an attempt to draw a portrait of an independent woman whose life has been marked by loss but who still remains passionate and lovable.

Eva Stefani is a film director and visual artist (*The Box, What time is it, Acropolis, Athene, Days and Nights*

with *Demetra K.*) Her films have been screened and awarded in international festivals (Cinema du Reel, Oberhausen, Idfa, Europe autour de l' Europe etc) and she has participated in international exhibitions, such as Documenta14 and the Venice Biennale 2019. She is a professor in the Department of Communication and Media at the School of Communication and Media at the University of Athens. She has published two books on documentary *10 Texts for Documentary, Documentary, The Game of Observation*) and a book of poetic prose, *Finn's Hair*. She studied Political Science in Athens and film in Paris (Ateliers Varan), New York (New York University) and London (National Film School). Her Ph.D. dissertation is on ethnographic cinema. She has just completed her last feature film *Bull's heart*.

FAREWELL EVENTS KATI RÖTTGER

10-11 April 2026, Amsterdam

Herewith, I would like to invite you to my farewell-celebrations on the occasion of my retirement on April 10 and 11, 2026. It consists of two events. On Friday 10 April, 4.30pm -6pm, I will present my public farewell lecture in the Aula of the University of Amsterdam on the topic 'Eat the Rich. A Menu for Theatre Lovers'. On Saturday 11 April, 2pm-6pm, you are welcome to take a seat at the Anthropophagic Banquet which will take place in the Theatre of the University of Amsterdam. During the Banquet, a cook will prepare a meal that we will enjoy after the banquet, ending in a party. For the banquet, registration is needed (see below). All guests of the Banquet will become cannibals, united by the motto: Digest the evil to create a greater good. Cannibalism will serve as a critical concept, an organic metaphor to imagine social redistribution and repair. Contributors to the menu will bring short cannibalistic scenes to the table, be it from literature, film, fine arts, theatre, performance, politics, philosophy and poetry. As a guest, the Chef welcomes you to find 'tangible ingredients' that inhabit your fridge, pantry or garden, especially if they are beyond your imagination how to cook with them. Do not hesitate to bring them.

Locations and Registration

The Farewell Lecture is publically accessible and will take place at the Aula of the University of Amsterdam (Oude Lutherse Kerk, Singel 411, 1012 WN Amsterdam), 4.30pm-6pm.

The Anthropophagic Banquet will take place at the University Theatre (Nieuwe Doelenstraat 16, 1012 CP Amsterdam). Please RSVP:

<https://forms.gle/jyrYxhMRkxN1s2Dy9>

Contributors to the Banquet Pablo Alvez Artinprocess (Performance and Installation Artist and Economist, UK/PT/BE), Maya Arad (Theatre Studies and playwright, Tel Aviv), Chris Balme (Theatre Studies, L.-

M. Univ. München), Martijn Boven (Philosophy, Univ. Leiden), Rachel Esner (Art Studies, UvA), Martina Flores Mendeveille (PhD Theatre and Performance Studies, UvA), Marieke de Goede (Political Sciences, UvA), Peter Greenaway / Saskia Boddeke (Filmmaker), Lonneke van Heugten (Poet), Julian Isenia (Anthropology, UvA), Alexander Jakob (Theatre Studies, UvA), Gabriele Klein (Dance Studies, UvA), Bram van Oostveldt (Theatre Studies, Gent), Sanjukta Sunderason (Art Studies, UvA), meLê Yamomo (Theatre and Performance Studies, UvA), Suzanne Kooloos (Theatre Studies, UvA) ... en Erwin van Altena, the cook.

CONNECTING TRANS AND CRITICAL ANIMAL STUDIES IN AN AGE OF AUTHORITARIANISM

Organized by Valerie Sofie Tollhopf and Eva Meijer | 13 April, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam | This symposium aims to investigate connections, overlaps and tensions between critical animal studies and trans studies. |

[BG 2](#), BG2 room 008 | Fully booked

Currently, there is some engagement with animal studies and posthumanism from a trans studies perspective, and there is some acknowledgement of trans studies from a critical animal studies perspective. However, critical animal studies' engagement with trans studies remains scarce and at times theoretically shallow, in that it draws on trans studies discourses in a tendentially superficial way. Trans studies' discussion of nonhuman animals does not always conceptualize their position in critical (political) terms.

With this symposium we aim to foster a dialogue between trans studies and critical animal studies. This is beneficial for both fields: CAS can gain important perspectives on a so far under-theorised axis of domination (one that plays an important role in current processes of fascisation and must thus be part of comprehensive political analyses). Trans studies can expand on its current involvement with animal studies, adding a more critical stance towards human-animal relationships and an all too peaceful notion of 'entanglement', which considers the material conditions of animal struggles.

We also aim to conceptualize and foster political solidarity. In the current age of authoritarianism, both trans studies and critical animal studies are under threat. Furthermore, under the rise of right-wing extremism trans people worldwide are increasingly met with hostility and violence. While not obscuring the differences, better understanding processes of othering and objectification can help shed light and fight the oppression of both groups.

RAHEL JAEGGI: PROGRESS AND REGRESSION

Workshop with Rahel Jaeggi | Organizers: Merel Raats, Oscar Talbot, Daniel Loick, Yolande Jansen | Co-organising: ASCA and Duitsland Instituut UvA. | 13-14 April 2026

Despite widespread technological innovation, scientific and medical breakthroughs, and strides toward gender and racial equity, few believe that humanity is on the road of progress. Indeed, many are increasingly skeptical of the very notion of progress, seeing it as the stuff of hollow political speeches. Nevertheless, in her new book *Progress and Regression* (Harvard UP 2025), Rahel Jaeggi argues that we are lost without a shared idea of progress. In the tradition of critical theory, she defends a vision of progress that avoids Eurocentric and teleological distortions. Progress here is not an inevitable developmental trend but a kind of compass directing society's never-ending journey toward emancipation. A nimble practitioner of dialectical reasoning, Jaeggi revitalizes progress by confronting its opposite: regression. Her analysis reckons with the myriad signs of regression today, including growing inequality, ecological destruction, and above all the assault on educational institutions, critical thinking, and reason itself.

Rahel Jaeggi is Professor of Practical Philosophy with an emphasis on Social and Political Philosophy and Director of the Center for Humanities and Social Change at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. She is the author of *Critique of Forms of Life, Alienation*, and, with Nancy Fraser, *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory*.

THE 'ELITE' AS DELICATE BEAST

Vexed conversations about what we mean when we invoke the so-called 'elite'

Talk at Spui25 | Monday, April 13, 17 – 18.30 & Seminar Tuesday April 14, 12:00-15:00 | Organizing Partners: ASCA, NICA, RPA Decolonial Futures. To sign-up check: <https://www.spui25.nl/programma/the-elite-as-delicate-beast>

Tuesday, April 14, 12 – 3 pm | NICA 1-credit seminar: PCH zaal 1.04

Like many terminologies, the 'elite' offers a point of critical contact, especially for justice-oriented, left-leaning, and/or democratic cosmopolitan ethical stances, regardless of religious or secular leanings (e.g. as varied as Christian Democrat or Marxist). Yet, what do we really mean when we invoke 'the elite'? How to theorize the great chasms between and among the so-called intellectual elite, the "morally repugnant elite" (Kenneth Freed, 1994, *LA Times*), the colonial elite, the *nouveau riche*, the post-colonial elite, and even so-called 'Mercedes Marxists'? Can we continue to ignore what it means to think of 'the' elite as a single category

of analysis? See longer description and bios of conversants below.

This three-hour NICA seminar is meant as a conversational space. Each speaker will offer just a five minute intervention, and from there we will go into Q&A, with the speakers.

NICA 1-credit:

1. To sign-up for the NICA Seminar, please fill [this form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1pq3LbX XgqxiB T GU--ORBbi3sxn-aCzcrqSki AFA/edit) out: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1pq3LbX XgqxiB T GU--ORBbi3sxn-aCzcrqSki AFA/edit>
2. The three readings will be sent to you by April 1. Pick 2 quotes from two of the readings that interest you, or compel you. Explain why they interest you; why you agree or disagree with them. Send to a.benedicty@uva.nl

Like many terminologies, the 'elite' offers a point of critical contact, especially for justice-oriented, left-leaning, and/or democratic cosmopolitan ethical stances, regardless of religious or secular leanings (e.g. as varied as Christian Democrat or Marxist). Yet, what do we really mean when we invoke 'the elite'? How to theorize the great chasms between and among the so-called intellectual elite, the "morally repugnant elite" (Kenneth Freed, 1994, *LA Times*), the colonial elite, the *nouveau riche*, and even so-called "Mercedes Marxists"? Among the most vexed patterns that scholars have noted in the decades since the mid-twentieth century independences that ensued from anti-colonialism across the globe are the following:

- The intellectual elite in the early and mid-twentieth centuries, often Marxist-leaning had the financial means to seek exile in Europe and North America. Often unable to return to their home country, they have contributed to a "brain drain," in their country of birth and/or affective affinity (for those who reside (with or without official citizenship) in their host country.
- From the perspective of those who did not belong to this 'original' elite (favored by the colonial power in question), national identity has often taken on a primary role in articulating the new state. In turn this national identity has often taken expression through ethnicized and/or racialized terms. The tension then between *class* and *race* has led to what some name fratricide, and even genocide, and without a doubt gender-based violence. And, these themselves often obscure the role of major world powers in supporting a given dictatorial or totalitarian regime over another system of governance.
- As we think through Marxism, decolonial thought, and the legacies of the colonial, how and why is the question of 'the' elite still a taboo conversation, the proverbial elephant in the room?
- What does it mean to focus-in on the hopeful moments of Marxist solidarity across the globe that

took place in many of the decades of the twentieth century, but whose circumstances of possibility are shaped by the pragmatic (and tragic) realities of late capitalism? How does re-thinking the elite as a critical category of analysis reshape how we might address these tragedies?

- Can we continue to ignore what it means to think of “the” elite as a single category of analysis?

We take our cue from from Roger Célestin’s recent novel, *The Delicate Beast* (2025, Bellevue Literary Press, just named among the [PopMatters](#) Best Books of the Year). We are honored that Célestin has accepted our invitation, so as to converse and think together through the complex relationships between and among cosmopolitanism(s), intellectualism(s), proletarianism(s), post-colonialism(s) and neocolonialism(s).

This event is part of the [Research Priority Area, Decolonial Futures](#). We engage a line of conversation that is quite central to postcoloniality, the very idea of subaltern studies that lay at the heart of that historiography. We interrogate what we see today as the proliferation of decolonial studies and the figure of the intellectual/the historian/the artist/the critic in these complex conversations. Along with ASCA, NICA, and Spui25, we contribute to the Decolonial Futures RPA’s ongoing roundtables and publication efforts to think through the foundational social histories and critical-theory lines of analysis on who speaks, and how.

THE GREAT FROST OF 1708/09

Enlightenment Thermometers and Representations of Climate Disruption

English Department Lecture by Tita Chico organized by Michael Miller | Monday, 13 April—17:00-18.30, PCH 3.01.

The “Great Frost,” to the French, “Le Grand Hiver,” of 1708/09 brought three months of unbearable cold. Lakes and rivers froze, animals died. Agriculture was wiped out—the wheat harvest devastated—and trees exploded. Travelers were found frozen to death on roads. In homes, many awoke to find their nightcaps frozen to their beds or to find family members frozen to death, impossible to move because they were frozen into their bedsheets. Frozen bread required an axe to break it. Climatologists today confirm that the Great Frost, which occurred during the Little Ice Age, was in fact the coldest winter in Europe in the last 500 years, with temperatures hitting lows of -12 C and -15 C. But how were these temperatures experienced and understood in the eighteenth century? In this talk, the Great Frost presents an occasion to think about climate disruption and its representation. Drawing upon the philosopher Sylvia Wynter’s model of biocentrism, I argue that William Derham’s accounts in *Philosophical*

Transactions, among the earliest meteorological observations in England, and the newly developing scientific instrument of the thermometer, particularly the fictions of measurement, mastery, and scale advanced by Daniel Gabriel Fahrenheit’s mercury-in-glass thermometer, teach us new questions about how knowledge is produced, and also about new forms of social relations across space and time. How we record the weather says as much about the weather as it does about who and what we imagine ourselves to be.

Dr. Tita Chico is Professor of English at the University of Maryland and Fellow at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study. Chico is the author of *On Wonder* (Cambridge UP, 2025), *The Experimental Imagination: Literary Knowledge and Science in the British Enlightenment* (Stanford UP, 2018; paperback, 2020), and *Designing Women: The Dressing Room in Eighteenth-Century English Literature and Culture* (Bucknell UP, Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture Series, 2005; reissued, 2023). Her current book is *Devices of Enlightenment: A Literary History of Technology*, from which this talk is drawn.

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

Talk by Michael Darrock | 14 April 2026, 17h CET | For the link please contact Markus Stauff M.Stauff@uva.nl.

Michael Darrock 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).

THINKING ABOUT PLACE IN A DIGITALLY CONNECTED WORLD

Master Class by Prof. Janaki Srinivasan (University of Oxford) | 15 April 2026, 13:00 -15:00, [University Theatre UT 1.01A](#)

How does one “locate” digital technology design and use in an interconnected world? In this Masterclass, we will explore the methodological challenges that come

up when studying digital technologies as though their location in a place, a history and within power relations mattered. The narrative around these technologies has so persistently emphasised their universality, neutrality and disruptive qualities that even foregrounding place, historical continuities, or power asymmetries has presented challenges over the years. Additionally, not all understandings of place may be equally productive - for instance, treating a site as isolated or bounded might not be very helpful, especially in the "connected" world of today. This class will draw on the work of geographers and sociologists who have long thought about the methodological implications of using a "progressive sense of place" - i.e., an understanding of place as power-laden and as relational - in a globalised world. It will then examine how and to what extent these methodological forays and their forms of emplacing might be useful for studying digital technology design and use.

This Masterclass is open to bachelor/ master students and PhD researchers. For more information and to apply please send an email stating your name, contact details and study programme/ affiliation to gdc@uva.nl.

Required Readings

- Burawoy, M. (2000). Introduction. In M Burawoy et al. (eds.) *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections and Imaginations in a Postmodern World*. University of California Press, pp. 1-6, 24-35.
- Hart, G. (2004). Geography and development: critical ethnographies. *Progress in Human Geography*, 28(1), 91-100.
- Massey D (1994). A Global Sense of Place. In D Massey (ed) *Space, Place and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Srinivasan, J (2022). Politics Denied: Constructing Efficient Markets with Mobile phones and Price Information. In *The Political Lives of Information: Information and the Making of Development in India*. Information Society Series. MIT Press, 61-86.

Janaki Srinivasan is Associate Professor in Digital South Asian Studies at the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies and the Oxford Internet Institute, and a Governing Body Fellow at St Antony's College.

Janaki's research examines the political economy of information technology-based development initiatives. She uses ethnographic research to examine how gender, caste and class shape the use of such technologies. Her work has explored these interests in the context of Indian digital inclusion initiatives focused on community computer centres, mobile phones, identity systems and open information systems. Some of this work appeared in her recent monograph, *The Political Lives of Information* published by MIT Press. Janaki's work on the politics of informational and digital

exclusion is currently focussed on privacy and the algorithmic control of labour. For the past several years, as co-investigator on the [Fairwork India](#) team, she has been involved in researching and advocating for change in the precarious working conditions of gig workers in India.

Janaki was previously on the faculty at the International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore and convenor of its Centre for Information Technology and Public Policy. She has a PhD in Information Management and Systems from UC Berkeley and Master's degrees in Physics and in Information Technology from IIT Delhi and IIIT Bangalore respectively.

SURPLUS PEOPLE OF THE WORLD

ASCA Theory Seminar with Daniel Loick on April 15, 15:00-17:30 hrs | OMHP C.123

This session will be organized by Ding Zhang, Merel Raats, and Emmeline de Mooij.

Readings:

- Ian Shaw, Marv Waterstone, „A Planet of Surplus Life: Building Worlds Beyond Capitalism“, in: *Antipode* Vol. 53, No. 6 (2021), pp. 1787-1806
- Vanessa E. Thompson, "Surplus People of the World, Unite!", in Sara Campbell et al (eds), *Border Abolition Now*, London: Pluto, pp. 36-53
- Daniel Loick, "Surplus, Struggle, and the Mystery of Political Subjectivation", (unpublished English translation, from Daniel Loick's recent book "*Die Überlegenheit der Unterlegenen*").

ASCA PhD SUPERVISION WORKSHOP

Organized by Carolyn Birdsall and Jaap Kooijman, OMHP room C1.23, 16 April, 15:00-17:00 hrs. | ASCA invites all current and prospective PhD supervisors to join!

ASCA invites all current and prospective PhD supervisors to a workshop on PhD supervision, organized by Carolyn Birdsall and Jaap Kooijman. We will address how to become involved in PhD supervision, discuss common problems and share best practices. Specific issues that will be addressed include how to respond to requests for PhD supervision; how to effectively organize co-supervision; the different challenges of supervising funded versus non-funded PhD candidates and individual PhD candidates versus PhD candidates in a large research project; how to prepare PhD candidates for the (academic) job market; and how to support PhD candidates struggling with illness or mental health problems. If you would like to attend the workshop, please send an email to asca-fgw@uva.nl.

SWAMPLAND FUTURES: UNDRAINING THE DELTA (FIELD VISIT WITH ANNA KOOI)

Critical Animal Studies Group, organized by Divya Nadkarni and Rochelle Villani | April 16, 2026, All day. Het Voedselmoeras, Den Haag. Exact start time TBC. Closer to the day, if there are people interested in travelling together, we are happy to arrange a group ticket to save on train costs.

This field-based workshop invites participants to reimagine the Netherlands as swamp rather than "reclaimed land." Through a visit to an experimental Food Swamp in The Hague, we examine the violence of drainage: displacement of marsh communities, peatland destruction, and ongoing subsidence. We explore how colonial and capitalist logics transformed wetlands into "productive" territory, making the Netherlands a global agricultural leader. After walking through the swamp, participants engage in a fermentation activity that reflects on cooking as a cross-species collaboration and explores more-than-human agency, slow processes and western ideas of purity and hygiene. The session considers decolonial food systems suited to amphibious living—water plants, marsh crops, aquaculture—and how more-than-human cohabitation might reshape urban ecologies. *Anna Kooi is an Amsterdam-based rural sociologist, food artist and chef. Her work interconnects food theory with food practices by integrating gastronomy with academia and the arts, focusing on the manifestation and potential transformation of intersectional identities through food. As an ethnographer, Anna studies the potential of artistic practices to incubate food networks that can strengthen rather than undermine socio-environmental justice. She investigates the choreography of future foodscapes as a doctoral researcher at the Rurban Futures Collective at the University of Twente.*

Readings:

- Kelley, Lindsay. "Digesting Wetlands: Cooking and Eating Across Species." In *Leonardo Electronic Almanac* 22, no. 1, edited by Lanfranco Aceti, Paul Thomas, and Edward Colless. Cambridge, MA: LEA / MIT Press, 2017.
- Proulx, Annie. "Discursive Thoughts on Wetlands" (Chapter 1) in *Fen, Bog & Swamp: A Short History of Peatland Destruction and Its Role in the Climate Crisis*, 2022.

LACAN'S SEMINAR VI: DESIRE AND ITS INTERPRETATION

Sex Negativity + Queer Analysis collab | April 16, 17:30-19:30, OMHP C 2.17

Lacan's Seminar VI: Desire and Its Interpretation

Readings to prepare: Lessons 3-5 from the seminar (Bruce Fink's translation)

3. The Dream about the Dead Father: "He did not know he was dead"

4. Little Anna's Dream

5. The Dream about the Dead Father: "As he wished"

Email Samuel-Ludmila to receive the reading: s.dyrborg@uva.nl before April 13.

BEYOND SANCTUARY (WITH SPECIAL GUEST VERONIKA ZABLOTSKY)

Abolition Democracies Seminar organized by Safae El Khannoussi el Boudrin, Daniel Loick and Oscar Talbot | If you want to participate in the seminar or present your own work, please get in touch with Daniel (d.loick@uva.nl). | 16 April 2026, 17:00

The contributors to the new volume [Beyond Sanctuary](#) examine how the liberal democracies of the West recognize and include racial others through technologies of state power that promise but rarely grant sanctuary and refuge. Conceptualized at a time of resurgent white nationalism, this volume critically interrogates not only right-wing xenophobia but also the liberal ruse of asylum and its place in Western humanism. Drawing on the liberatory histories and countercartographies of migrant movements and the intellectual traditions of the Black radical tradition, Indigenous studies, postcolonial thought, and critical refugee studies, the contributors analyze the colonial-racial logics of humanitarian reason and its carceral geographies of camps and crossings. Whether analyzing guerrilla art projects that memorialize female migrants who died crossing the US-Mexico border, schools for undocumented students, housing solidarity movements in state-run camps in Greece, or transnational struggles for abolition, this collection foregrounds ideas and practices of fugitivity and freedom that refuse and reworld the West. We will read selected chapters and discuss them. The co-editor Veronika Zablotsky will be present.

Veronika Zablotsky is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Philosophy at Freie Universität Berlin.

'BEYOND SANCTUARY' WITH ANANYA ROY AND VERONIKA ZABLOTSKY

17 April 2026, 17:00 at SPUI25 | [Register at SPUI25](#)

At a time of resurgent white nationalism, *Beyond Sanctuary: The Humanism of a World in Motion* foregrounds migrant movements and their abolitionist and decolonial imaginations and practices. Ananya Roy and Veronika Zablotsky will present their book and have a dialogue with the audience.

Roy and Zablotsky remark that "this book is not a blueprint for radical sanctuary but rather an accompaniment to global revolt toward liberated life-ways." Working through diverse radical positions, they

challenge readers to ask: “What is sanctuary on stolen land?” They understand the present as shaped by the enduring aftermaths of settler colonialism and white supremacy, and argue that this condition demands a critical rethinking of justice, freedom, and reparatory justice. This edited volume is a significant contribution to the Black radical tradition, Indigenous studies, postcolonial thought, and critical refugee studies, in its effort to “think (from the West) otherwise.” It is also an urgent read, as uncertainties accumulate and we struggle to see beyond the shocking scenes that flood our daily lives. Most importantly, it is a call to continue our engagement with migrant communities in our cities, even when there is no guarantee of the outcomes.

MODDING GAME JAMS: CO-CREATION AND CRITICAL PLAY

Friday, April 17, 1-3pm | BG1 (Turfdraagsterpad 9), room 0.16

This presentation offers a behind-the-scenes look at the [Mzansi Climate Justice! Game Jam](#), a hybrid collaborative game co-creation project that connected participants across the Netherlands and South Africa to collectively envision climate futures grounded on local realities. While game jams are best known for their short-sprint, competitive format, often gatekept by the expectation of a game design or development background, the project deliberately “modded” that structure. This game jam reimaged them as open platforms for challenging dominant narratives through games. Unfolding over one month across four sessions, each framed through game studies scholarship, critical play methodologies, and climate justice frameworks, the project equipped participants with a shared language and toolset to co-create their own stories. Drawing on this experience, the presentation reflects on what game jams can be and how their bounded, constraint-driven format can offer a productive setting for interdisciplinary exchange. This includes bringing together scholars, activists, industry professionals, and broader publics in ways that subvert conventional expectations of game-making.

AGENTE FÍLMICO

An LLM-Powered Interface for Curating Independent Archives | Presentation by Pablo Núñez, PhD candidate at the University of Amsterdam. Organized by Giovanna Fossati and Floris Paalman (coordinators of the Research Group ‘Moving Images: Preservation, Curation, Exhibition’). | Friday, April 17, 2:30-5:00 PM CEST. | Eye Filmmuseum Collection Centre, Asterweg 26 | Entrance = free; RSVP: f.j.j.w.paalman@uva.nl

How might generative AI transform access to independent archives and small audiovisual collections? In this session, Pablo Núñez

introduces *Agente Fílmico*, an open-source prototype of a conversational interface that curates and retrieves short films from the MAFI collection—a Chilean documentary archive spanning over a decade of private and public events that constitute a human landscape of Chilean society seen through the eyes of a collective of filmmakers, with the 2019 Estallido Social as a pivotal moment in Chile's recent history.

As the MAFI collective concludes its operations, this project explores whether LLM-based tools can offer new pathways into audiovisual archives while also serving as the foundation for a media artwork reflecting on collective memory in the age of AI.

The presentation unfolds in two parts. First, Núñez will introduce the MAFI collective, its motivations and trajectory. Second, a live demonstration of *Agente 1.5* opens space for discussion and feedback, exploring how LLM-powered interfaces might serve archival and cultural institutions (technical feedback will be secondary). The research centres on innovating presentation and curation methods—how we encounter collections—rather than on archival science methodology, making it particularly relevant for smaller, independent archives.

Project website: <https://agente.mafi.tv/>

Suggested Readings

Trautenberg, E. (2022). A Cinematographic Atlas: Portraits of a Diverse Chile in Mapa Fílmico de un País. *Hispanic Studies Review*, 6(1). <https://hispanicstudiesreview.cofc.edu/article/32677>

This text introduces the MAFI collective, its collection and core concepts, contextualised within other historiographic projects in Chile's history.

Ortúzar Madrid, P. (2026). Carnival and Revolt: The Political Ambivalence of the 2019 Chilean Estallido. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 45(1). <https://doi.org/10.1111/blar.70056>

A brief, well-informed introduction to Chile's political context and historical period captured by the MAFI collective, offered from a critical perspective aligned with Chile's right.

Pablo Núñez is a Chilean-Dutch researcher working at the intersection of digital heritage and emerging technologies. He is a PhD candidate at the University of [Amsterdam's School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture](#) (AHM) and research fellow at the [AI Greenhouse project](#) at the Amsterdam University of the Arts (AHK). An alumnus of the UvA Artistic Research and Netherlands Film Academy master's programmes, his current work investigates how generative AI can mediate access to audiovisual archives.

ARTISTIC RESEARCH WITH ANNA RAIMONDO AND MELISSA VAN DRIE

On April 17 from 13:00 to 16:00, the Artistic Research Research Group (ARRG), with support from ASCA and AHM, hosts a seminar of presentations and participatory exploration at the University of Amsterdam's Kartinizaal.

Bringing together sound artist, performer, and researcher Anna Raimondo and artist-researcher Melissa Van Drie, the event focuses on experimental approaches to listening as both an artistic and critical practice.

Anna Raimondo's masterclass introduces her concept of "gendered listening," developed through her ongoing PhD research. Situated at the intersection of feminist theory, sonic studies, and artistic practice, the session examines how listening is shaped by social structures and how it can be re-learned as a more inclusive, accountable act. Participants are invited into a collective laboratory that blends reflection and experimentation, engaging listening as an embodied, relational, and transformative practice. Through questioning how voices, silences, and hesitations are coded, Raimondo encourages attendees to reconsider their roles and responsibilities as listeners.

Melissa Van Drie's contribution presents her "Sounds Delicious Project," which explores the overlooked role of sound in food histories and practices. Her research traces how listening, technology, and cultural norms have shaped sensory experiences of food from the nineteenth century to today. By foregrounding sound as a vital component of food-making and storytelling, she opens new perspectives on human and more-than-human relationships. The session includes interactive listening experiments that challenge habitual perceptions and invite participants to engage with decolonial and plural ways of knowing.

To register, please reach out to: inez.vierdag@student.uva.nl

Please note: Participants are asked to bring a sound, image, recording, song or any other material of their choice to analyse through a gendered listening perspective during the session.

SPINOZA LECTURE II FORGIVING: RELEASE AND METAMORPHOSIS IN EURIPIDES' HIPPOLYTUS, WITH J.L. AUSTIN AND HANNAH ARENDT

Second of two lectures by the current Spinoza Chair holder, Bonnie Honig, Professor of Modern Culture and Media (MCM) and Political Science at Brown University. | 21 April 2026, 18:00 -21:30 | [Aula - Lutherse kerk](#)

The focus of this lecture is the ancient Greek tragedy, the Hippolytus, which I read as a drama of forgiveness, one instance of which is metamorphosis, a transformational release from what was. In the current

political moment, aspirational fascism takes pride in being "unapologetic," and demands that we are all tethered to the M/F binary of sex/gender assigned at birth.

In response, I note the co-implication of forgiveness and metamorphosis in Euripides' tragedy, drawing on the work of the ordinary language philosopher, J.L. Austin (who mentions the Hippolytus in *How To Do Things with Words*), and the political theorist Hannah Arendt, who centers forgiveness in her account politics. Arendt argued for justice too, but she understood that where justice settles accounts, forgiving releases us from them. Austin, writing in the same period, did not give an account of forgiveness. But, the lecture argues, his many jokes and pratfalls serve as their own kind of release and help highlight the role of laughter in Arendt's thinking, too. [For bio Bonnie Honig see above]

CULTURES OF IN/VISIBILITY AND IN/AUDIBILITY CONFERENCE

Conference Amsterdam, 23-24 April 2026 | 23 April 9:00-18:00 & 24 April 9:00-15:30 | Location: University of Amsterdam, REC JKB.11 (Valckenierstraat 65-67) | Organizers: Esther Peeren (ASCA/NICA), Alice Borrego (EMMA Research Unit), Gero Guttzeit (LMU Munich), Héloïse Lecomte (Sorbonne Université) | Keynote speakers: Kristin Veel (University of Copenhagen) & Claire Davison (Sorbonne Université) | Contact & Registration: e.peeren@uva.nl

Invisibility and inaudibility, and their corollaries, visibility and audibility, have become impactful concepts and metaphors across media and disciplines in recent years. This conference aims to take stock of the role they play in shaping and understanding culture in different contexts and historical periods, including, perhaps most urgently, in our current conditions of political polarization and surveillance capitalism.

With regard to invisibility we take up both ideas of invisibility as marginalisation or social invisibility (LeBlanc 2009, Král 2014), comprising, for example, lesbian invisibility (Lecomte 2024, 23) or "subaltern invisibility" (Chemmachery 2019), and ideas of invisibility as a site of power or hegemonic invisibility (Guttzeit 2025), comprising, for example, billionaires' invisibility (Peeren 2024, 86–88) and the power of "decorporation" (Borrego 2024, 37). In this field of tension, a key issue we want to explore is how social, political, cultural, literary, filmic, televisual and online texts can explore the potentials and limitations of an "agency of invisibility" (Peeren 2014).

Inaudibility - as silence - has predominantly been explored as resulting from marginalization. Far from a "passive state of understanding" (Santos), silence can be part of a potent mechanism to create a monopoly of narrative (Le Blanc) that erases cultural, social, and

political dissonances. In this regard, inaudibility not only raises the question of how one can make oneself heard, but of how the multiplicity of narratives, of stories, of shared experiences, is muffled by imbalances of power. Silence, the “currency of power” (Achino-Loeb), partakes in the construction of the spectral. Much like being seen requires one to be actually perceived by the other, being heard entails being actively listened to. Inaudibility, however, can also be recuperated as a form of agency: choosing to refrain from speaking, like claiming the right to opacity (Glissant), can be a form of empowerment.

What constellations of the in/visible and in/audible can be distinguished and what perspectives and social groups do these constellations privilege and ignore? How are in/visibility and in/audibility culturally, socially, politically and economically mobilized? How do in/visibility and in/audibility impact attention and circulate within attention economies? What are the affective dimensions of in/visibility and in/audibility? How do they link to other logics of marginalisation and power dynamics? The conference sets out from the assumption that our understanding of political and social in/visibility and in/audibility needs to be sufficiently complex to answer these questions and related ones.

ASCA PhD SKILLS SEMINAR: THE ACADEMIC JOB MARKET AND PUBLISHING

Organized by Carolyn Birdsall and Jaap Kooijman | 23 April 2026, 10:00 -12:00 | [BG 2](#), Room BG2-008

All ASCA PhD candidates are invited to join!

What should (and shouldn't) I do at academic conferences? How do I go about organizing a conference, seminar or masterclass? Where should (and shouldn't) I publish my research? How long does it take for a publication to come out? How do I write a book proposal? How do I get an academic job or postdoc position in the Netherlands or abroad? What other careers are open to me with a PhD? The annual ASCA PhD skills seminar, organized by Carolyn Birdsall and Jaap Kooijman, and featuring two ASCA alumni who will share their experiences on the job market, is designed to supplement the training offered by the Graduate School of Humanities by providing answers to these questions and more, specifically tailored to ASCA PhD candidates. To register, send an email to asca-fgw@uva.nl.

DIGITISATION, ACTIVIST ARCHIVES AND COMMUNITIES

2nd Workshop Critical Audiovisual Heritage on 24 April 2026 (09:30–17:00) at the International Institute of Social History (IISH), Amsterdam. Organised within the AHM/ASCA research initiative “Critical Audiovisual

Heritage” (2024–29), this one-day event uses the IISH's audiovisual collections as a case study to examine how large-scale digitisation is reshaping archival work, access, reuse and collaboration around political and social-movement-related audiovisual materials.

The workshop focus is on "Digitisation, Activist Archives & Communities". Building on a previous workshop on AV archives and anti-colonial film material, this second edition links questions of **activist heritage and memory** to ongoing digitisation initiatives at IISH. We will discuss, among others:

- How digitisation strategies affect the work of AV archivists and other stakeholders
- How communities whose histories and struggles are represented in collections could engage with digitisation practices
- What responsibilities follow from creative reuse of politically charged content.

Location: International Institute of Social History (IISH), Cruquiusweg 31, Amsterdam.

[More information, program and registration](#)

RADIO-ACTIVITIES: ARCHITECTURE AND BROADCASTING IN COLD WAR BERLIN - WITH ALFREDO THIERMANN RIESCO

Co-organized by Carolyn Birdsall, Linda Kopitz and Alex Gekker. For more information and registration, please contact Linda Kopitz (l.kopitz@uva.nl) | 24 April 2026, 15.00-17.00 in room 0.16 (E-lab), Turfdragerpad 9, Amsterdam

On Friday **24 April**, Alfredo Thiermann will join us for the 2025-2026 ASCA Cities Seminar to present his research in a talk titled “**Radio-Activities: Architecture and Broadcasting in Cold War Berlin**”. In his research, Alfredo Thiermann Riesco interrogates the political, technological, and environmental dimensions of architecture at a time when buildings began to interact with the remote transmission of information. By its very nature, the medium of radio promised to evaporate the intrinsic material aspect of architecture; in fact, it did no such thing. By way of transscalar analyses, Thiermann Riesco pays particular attention to Berlin's buildings, walls, transmission towers, factories, research institutions, and territorial organizations during the Cold War period, which enabled the production, reproduction, and transmission of sonic-based content across the divide of the Iron Curtain. In doing so he reveals underresearched continuities between politics, technology, media, and architecture, in the process reframing notions of national and transnational boundaries.

Alfredo Thiermann is an architect and Assistant Professor for History and Theory of Architecture at the école polytechnique fédérale in Lausanne. Through his practice and theoretical research, he explores the

intersection between architecture and different media, from sound installations and film scenography to single-family houses, public buildings, and large-scale infrastructures. He has taught and lectured at Harvard University, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, and other institutions. Alfredo's work has been published in *Harvard Design Magazine*, *A U*, *Revista ARQ*, *TRACE magazine*, *Revue matières*, *Potlatch*, *Real Review*, *Thresholds*, *Archithese*, *GTA Papers*, and *BauNetz*, and has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Santiago, the Istanbul Design Biennial, gta exhibitions in Zurich, HKW in Berlin, and the Venice Art Biennale among other institutions. For more information and registration, please contact **Linda Kopitz** (l.kopitz@vu.nl).

Readings

- Thiermann, Alfredo Riesco. *Radio-Activities: Architecture and Broadcasting in Cold-War Berlin* (MIT Press, 2024), 1-33, 255-303.

All readings can be accessed via [this shared Surfdrive folder](#) as well.

NEW BOOK: LOOKING THROUGH THEATRE

Phenomenologies and Intermedial Performance By Kati Röttger

<https://www.transcript-publishing.com/978-3-8376-8006-5/looking-through-theatre/>

How do the visible and the invisible interact in aesthetic experience? Kati Röttger connects phenomenology and intermediality to engage with orders of looking in theatrical events, and thus offers a multifaceted methodological approach to performance analysis. The study balances theory and methodology in combination with extensive case studies encompassing different histories, cultures and media from dance, to postdramatic theatre, film and theatre texts. The reader gains a deep insight into the relevance of theatrical performances as poison and cure in (hyper)industrial societies, because of theatre's capability to theorize critically the not least violent interrelationship of seeing and being seen.

CAPITAL IN QUESTION

Call for Applications Deadline: 19 April 2026 | Inter- and Transdisciplinary International Summer School 2026 within the framework of TransHumanities, 31 August–4 September 2026, Hotel Seaside, Spiez, <https://www.hotel-seaside.ch/>
Costs: CHF 600 (travel, food and accommodation [double room] covered by organizer; single room: CHF 750).

Imagining Work, Value, and Futures Beyond Growth

For some time now, scholars in the humanities and social sciences have been rethinking capital and work beyond purely economic terms. Ideas such as Pierre

Bourdieu's mapping of social, cultural, and symbolic capital, James Coleman's concept of "social capital," and John Guillory's use of cultural capital in debates about canon formation have shown that "capital" operates across many dimensions of life and multiple disciplines. More recently, concepts such as "genetic capital," "biovalue," and "biocapital" have foregrounded the growing intertwining of biotechnology and capitalism (Donna Haraway, Michel Foucault a.o.).

In parallel, since the 1990s, attention has turned to processes of financialization that extend speculative logics far beyond traditional markets. After the 2008 financial crisis, the volatility of global finance became visible; shadow banking and high-frequency trading have undermined faith in self-regulating markets and the rational *homo oeconomicus*. Contemporary instability now extends to new actors and infrastructures: from speculative cryptocurrencies to social media monetization, from algorithmic management or data mining to the extraction of value from user activity. "Platform capitalism" (Nick Srnicek) reshapes what counts as capital, creating precarious gig work, intensified surveillance, and contested autonomy. Some argue these shifts may signal a new "data feudalism" (Shoshana Zuboff) where power lies with those who control data rather than industrial capital.

At the same time, intersectional, feminist, and queer approaches have drawn attention to forms of labour often overlooked in classical economics: care work, unwaged work, and other gendered and racialized forms of precarity. They have shown how contemporary transformations rely on the invisibilization of reproductive and affective labour, the appropriation of (digital) commons, and the erosion of social reproduction. Global labour history has broadened our understanding of the many entangled forms of labour, from slavery and domestic service to casualized and migrant work. Other strands of scholarship examine the ecological limits of accumulation, the enduring legacies of colonialism and racial capitalism, and the cultural imaginaries through which capitalism and precarity are represented and contested. These debates unfold against the backdrop of growing economic tensions, financial nationalism, and renewed state intervention.

Together, these developments show that capital and work can no longer be grasped solely through familiar frameworks of productivity and growth. They emerge instead as unstable, contested, and deeply cultural categories—haunted by past crises yet reshaped by the urgencies of the present. Addressing capital demands interdisciplinary dialogue, critical imagination, and a readiness to think beyond inherited paradigms.

This Summer School is organized by the Graduate School of the Arts and Humanities (GSAH) of the University of Bern within the framework of TransHumanities. We invite PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers in the humanities and social sciences to critically engage with the transforming dynamics of capital and labour. We aim to create an interdisciplinary platform to interrogate both historical genealogies and contemporary rearticulations, combining theoretical inquiry with methodological reflection and cross-disciplinary exchange. We welcome proposals that explore, but are not limited to, the following themes and questions:

- How do literary, artistic, cultural practices reflect and critique contemporary capitalism(s) while imagining alternatives? What futures beyond growth emerge in past and contemporary social movements and in the life-making practices of collectivities marked for extraction or disposal?
- How do intersectional, feminist, queer, postcolonial, and decolonial perspectives reframe concepts such as capital, labour, value, and social reproduction? How do ecological imperatives, Indigenous interventions, and degrowth discourses contribute to rethinking capital and labour beyond accumulation?
- What is capital without the state? How do legal and institutional frameworks—such as labour law and migration regimes—structure inequalities historically? What capacities and coercions do states and the world system of states provide for capital?
- As accumulation increasingly transits through war and militarism, border and security regimes, and technologies of population control—often themselves financialized—how are dynamics of capital, social reproduction, and labour transformed?
- What insights emerge from global and historical genealogies of work—from coerced and enslaved labour to digital gig economies—when read in light of today's inequalities?
- How do digital and “immaterial” forms of labour, such as platform work and algorithmic management, unsettle established boundaries between production, reproduction, and consumption, and reshape value creation?
- Is “capital” still an indispensable critical tool for interdisciplinary research, or might alternative concepts such as “value”, “profit” etc. open new avenues for analysis and critique?
- What methodological innovations—archival, ethnographic, digital, comparative—help us study capital and labour across disciplines and geographies?

Invited keynote speakers:

Prof. Dr. Prathama Banerjee (Professor of History and Political Theory, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi)

Prof. Dr. Jodi Melamed (Professor of English and Race, Ethnic, and Indigenous Studies, Marquette University, Milwaukee)

Prof. Dr. Tiziana Terranova (Professor of Culture, Digital Media and Politics, Università di Napoli “L'Orientale”, Naples)

How to apply?

The Summer School offers doctoral and postdoctoral scholars a unique opportunity to contribute to a broader discussion with their own research and ideas. We encourage applications from researchers from the humanities and the social sciences with a strong interest in theoretical debates within an interdisciplinary setting.

Please submit the following application materials:

- a letter of motivation, indicating how you expect to benefit from participating in this Summer School and how you can contribute, in turn, to the discussions (please mention your specific interest in the topic)
- a curriculum vitae (maximum two pages)
- an abstract (500 words) of your current research project, including few keywords

What do we offer?

The GSAH will cover your travel expenses, accommodation (except single room upgrade 150 CHF) and meals at the Hotel Seaside in Spiez.

You will receive an e-reader containing preparatory material and have the opportunity to present your research on the Summer School homepage.

Most importantly, the Summer School offers an intellectually stimulating, lively and friendly atmosphere conducive to fruitful exchange.

Contact:

Please apply electronically by submitting a single PDF until 19 April 2026 to Melanie Sampayo Vidal, who is happy to answer questions regarding the application: melanie.sampayo@unibe.ch. For all further inquiries, please contact Dr Mike Toggweiler at michael.toggweiler@unibe.ch.

ASCA FINISHING FELLOWSHIPS

The UvA Faculty of Humanities offers the Finishing Fellowship, which aims to enable self-funded PhD candidates to concentrate more exclusively on the completion of their thesis in their last year. Through the Finishing Fellowship, final-stage PhD candidates who have succeeded in writing an advanced draft of their thesis without the support of structural funding, can apply for a temporary paid position to support the final stage of their PhD trajectory.

The deadline for applications in the 2026-1 round is June 4th 2026. Candidates will be notified of the result no later than 6 weeks after the deadline. The starting date of the fellowship will be determined in consultation

with the candidate but ideally will start no later than September 2026.

PhD candidates can apply for the Finishing Fellowship, which will consist of a temporary contract as a PhD, for 0,5 fte for a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 12 months. They are required to deliver a completed dissertation (defined as "dissertation submitted to the examination committee") by the end of the fellowship period. The fellow is expected to reside and holds the right to work in the Netherlands during the period of the fellowship. Exceptions to this rule depend on the possibility of cross-border employment regulations.

Only PhD candidates who are currently registered as self-funded PhD candidate (UNL type 4) at one of the AIHR Research Schools and have been registered as such for the past two years are eligible to apply.

Applications by PhD candidates who have previously received a PhD fellowship or any multi-year scholarship aimed at obtaining a PhD from a university, funding body or other institution, in the Netherlands or abroad, will not be considered.

If you have any doubts or questions regarding your eligibility, please contact Anne van Dam (aihr-fgw@uva.nl).

Application requirements

To apply, the selection committee requests a PDF file with the following components, in this order:

- a description of the PhD project (max. 500 words);
- a full academic CV;
- a detailed overview of the chapters that have been written to date (including a word count for each chapter);
- a month-by-month schedule of the work to be carried out during the fellowship, based on the fte's and number of months you are applying for;
- a letter of recommendation from both supervisors, which needs to comment on the current status of the candidate's project and the viability of completing the project by the end of the fellowship period;
- a PDF containing the complete text of all chapters written to date.

Please make sure to include the name of your research school in the file name.

Applications assessment

Applications will be selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- the current status of the project and the viability of finishing the dissertation within the requested time;
- the capacity of the supervisory team to support the timely finishing of their PhD candidates;
- the scientific and/or societal impact potential of the candidate, as evidenced by the CV of the candidate, and the letters of recommendation.

A committee of experienced supervisors will evaluate the applications and draft a prioritized list of eligible

candidates that convincingly meet the above criteria. Due to the popularity of the Finishing Fellowships in earlier years, there might be more eligible candidates that convincingly meet the criteria than there are fellowships. In this case, the Research School Director will discuss a suitable mechanism for selection with its selection committee.

To apply for this round of Finishing Fellowships, please send your application in one pdf document to the secretary of the committee, Anne van Dam (email: aihr-fgw@uva.nl) by noon (12:00 CET) on the 4th of June 2026. Please make sure to include the name of your research school in the file name. Applications will be assessed by a review committee. Candidates will be notified of the result no later than 6 weeks after the deadline. The starting date of the fellowship will be determined in consultation with the candidate but ideally will start no later than September 2026.

Submitting an application

Applications are submitted by e-mail to Anne van Dam via aihr-fgw@uva.nl as one file in PDF format.

INDIVIDUAL TALENT FUND

The UvA Faculty of Humanities offers the Individual Talent Fund, which aims at supporting staff with research time in their career development and expanding their opportunities to conduct research. Through the Individual Talent Fund research staff can apply for a temporary increase of research time in order to have more time to write grant applications, or to finish one or more (substantial, strategic) publications so as to strengthen their track record for an upcoming grant application.

The deadline for applications in the 2026-1 round is 7 May 2026. Read the information on: <https://aihr.uva.nl/about-aihr/funding/individual-talent-fund/individual-talent-fund.html>.

CONSORTIUM FUND

The FGW Consortium Fund supports research staff in networking activities in the preparation of consortium applications with (inter)national, academic and/or societal partners, under EU programmes such as Horizon Europe Global Challenges, and national funding instruments, for example in the context of the Dutch National Research Agenda (NWA) and Knowledge and Innovation Covenant (KIC), and any such relevant programme or instrument.

In 2026 of the Consortium Fund the proposals are collected on set moments, which are: **7 May 2026** and **1 October 2026**. Candidates will be notified of the result no later than 6 weeks after the deadline. Details: <https://aihr.uva.nl/about-aihr/funding/fgw-consortium-fund/consortium-fund.html>.