

Nieuwsbrief 297

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2026 ASCA AWARDS

The 2026 ASCA Awards Committee, consisting of Fairuzah Atchulo, Selin Gerlek, and Ben Moore, has given awards to the following researchers: Yvette Lok Yee Wong, Laura Vermeeren, and Joost de Bloois.

ASCA Dissertation Award: Yvette (Lok Yee) Wong, *Wenyi and Its Discontents: A Study of Creative Practices and Politics in Hong Kong*



"Time will pass while our voice will last"

This is the opening quote from the abstract of this year's Best ASCA Dissertation award. As someone still on my own painstaking journey of completing my dissertation, I was awed and equally motivated to not

only read this year's winning dissertation, but also the numerous dissertations produced by our illustrious PhD candidates – slash recent awarded Doctors. The competition was very tough and this award is certainly not given lightly. In that regard, I would personally like to thank and congratulate all of the candidates who defended their dissertations with integrity, grit and dedication and the various research they poured their whole hearts into complete. The dissertations from this year covered various theories, philosophies and empirics. Including old age and growing older; the ways writers create texts; the cultural policy and frameworks of producer-distributor relationships; theorising tonal jazz; dramaturgies and the Anthropocene; an examination of composers persecuted by the Nazis; clowning as an embodied performance, how openness, criticism and transparency can strengthen our public spheres; the role of prophecy and its influence on politics, culture, and national identity; how the culture of silence recreated in the aftermath of a disaster can stunt the revitalization of commemorative practices; how cybersecurity knowledge is produced and the ways this knowledge shapes political and social realities; the vibrancy of imagined futures of the Sinophone spheres; the interplay of environmental, technological, and socio-political factors that threaten the long-term survival of film collections; the distinct potentials of archiving a heterotopic space; challenging hegemonic negations of nature and culture; the ways journalists can strengthen their autonomy by reflecting on their work; the derailment of BRI within the cinematic sector; and last but not least, reconceptualizing art as a mode of social critique.

These dissertations are socially, politically, economically and academically poignant and rewarding on their own. But this year's winning dissertation confronts us as academics, researchers, journalists, practitioners and policy analysts to see ourselves as this – as creatives tasked with the ability and the burden to create, transform and trans-mutate the overlooked, the mundane, the interesting, the tedious, and even the obvious into works that speak with agency, urgency, the conviction to change, and the will to last. This winning dissertation does so by providing a distinguished lens through which to view the entanglements between creative practices, politics, culture and creative practitioners. And while we here in

this room in the minutiae of our work may not always consider ourselves as creative practitioners, this winning dissertation challenges us all to think of ourselves as creative practitioners faced with confronting our futures, convictions, struggles, failures and even our discontents.

In this political, social, cultural and economic climate that we currently find ourselves, these confrontations are as especially timely. For they remind us that indeed, while time will surely pass, our voices and most certainly the work we dedicate ourselves to will last. Thus, it is with tremendous joy that I present this year's Best Dissertation Award to Yvette Wong Lok Yee for the dissertation of "Wenyi and Its Discontents: A study of Creative Practices and Politics in Hong Kong."

ASCA Article Award: Joost de Bloois, 'Forest passages': Narratives of withdrawal and ecological thought. *Social Science Information*.



We live under the sign of climate crisis: rising temperatures, mass extinction, burning forests, flooded cities. Land, sea and air are threatened on all scales. And at the center of this crisis are we, humans – destructive, extractive, and increasingly exhausted.

With this comes a relentless imperative: to "act now," to save what can still be saved. But what if we ask a more unsettling question: what if this very call for action is itself part of the problem?

We also live in a time of overload and fatigue: climate reports, rolling crises, endless streams of information,

alongside a growing sense that our modern political scripts have somehow "run out of steam" (Latour). This resonates with Latour's claim that "we have never been modern", and perhaps also with Bartleby's quietly subversive response "I would prefer not to".

This year's winning article takes this ambivalence seriously. Rather than searching for yet another politics of acceleration or solutionism, it explores what it calls a "politics of withdrawal": gestures of retreat, refusal, shelter, and recalibration that unfold around figures such as the hut or the forest. Withdrawal here is not escapism or quietism, but a risky attempt to loosen our attachment to the technocratic and extractivist logics that produced the crisis itself. In this sense, the article asks whether ecological thought may require not simply new solutions, but different ways of inhabiting the world beyond the exhausted political scripts of modernity – while remaining attentive to the dangers of nostalgia and reactionary regression.

Precisely because this article captures these tensions with such conceptual richness and offers such a provocative language for our ambiguous present, we are delighted to present this year's Best Article Award of our research school to Joost de Bloois, for the article "Forest passages: Narratives of withdrawal and ecological thought."

ASCA Book Award: Laura Vermeeren, *Ink Studies: practices of everyday calligraphy in contemporary China*. NUS Press, 2025



This year's winner of the ASCA Book Award brings together ancient tradition and modern media in an innovative and deeply engaged way. It asks us to think about how writing and art interact through a practice

with deep roots, which is being transformed and reinvented in the context of a changing society and the growth of digital culture. It is a study with broad societal implications but also, in the best traditions of ASCA, is deeply personal, tracing an experiential journey of its author as much as a line of conceptual development.

I am delighted to present this year's award to Laura Vermeeren for the book *Ink Studies: Everyday Practices of Calligraphy in Contemporary China*, published by the National University of Singapore Press. During on her own experiences of learning calligraphy, Vermeeren takes us through five different ways of 'doing calligraphy' in modern China. What was once an elite and exclusive practice of a relatively small group of men, she shows us is now opening up to new people and new artistic and creative modes, but nonetheless remains shaped by its long history.

Ink Studies takes us from the process of learning calligraphy, with its links to discipline and imitation of respected traditional styles, to the everyday and playful art of 'water calligraphy', practised in parks across China each morning. She shows us ways that calligraphy seems to be loosening its connection to the characters on which it is based, and how it is being remediated via apps and the ubiquitous digital infrastructure of modern China. She also asks shows some of the ways in which calligraphy crosses over between art and advertising, shaping the modern urban environments of China today.

The committee were deeply impressed with the depth, diligence and inventiveness of Vermeeren's work, which is itself a work of mediation between past and present, art and writing, social structures and individual experiences. We are very pleased to present the award to *Ink Studies*.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE: JASMIJN LEEUWENKAMP
Rethinking Human and Nonhuman Rights in the Anthropocene. Toward an ethics and cosmopolitics of ecological responsibility | Supervisors: Yolande Jansen, Huub Dijstelbloem en Daniel Loick | 1 July 2026, 13:00, Agnietenkapel



This dissertation examines a fundamental tension between legal environmentalist strategies modeled on human rights and the anthropocentric framework underlying those rights. The dissertation asks whether non-anthropocentric approaches to rights can be reconciled with perspectives that reject the Nature/Culture divide in favor of a situated account of more-than-human relationality. Drawing on critical legal theory, posthumanism, philosophy, and anthropology, I argue that liberal rights ultimately cannot accommodate a relational understanding of humans as co-constitutive parts of more-than-human worlds. I critically examine three legal cases: Urgenda, rights of nature cases in Ecuador and New Zealand, and Ecocide. I show how these legal approaches, albeit in different ways, largely remain within a liberal rights framework and therefore leave intact the Modern mode of organizing the world which is incompatible with posthumanist and nonmodern accounts centered on more-than-human relationality and responsibility. The premise that I elaborate in this dissertation is that such a relational account can only be conceptualized and enacted upon by interrogating the philosophical limits of a property- and rights-centered framework that is fundamentally grounded in the Nature/Culture divide. In contrast to the certainty of rights, a relational perspective acknowledges the evitable and inevitable harm that comes with living and dying with more-than-human others and attunes us to accountability for those messy relations. (210 woorden).

DISSERTATION DEFENSE: SHAO

(Un)Dreaming Rural China: Gender in Wanghong Cultures as Digital Contact Zones | Supervisors: Esther Peeren, Jeroen de Kloet | 6 July 2026, 10:00 hrs. Agnietenkapel



Since the mid-2010s, rural content creators (wanghongs) have attracted hundreds of millions of viewers on Chinese digital platforms, transforming countryside life into a site of intense affective investment and cultural contestation. At the center of this study are four prominent creators (Li Ziqi, Dianxi Xiaoge, the Huanong Brothers, and Ling) and the audiences who watch, comment on, and emotionally invest in their content. I argue that these platforms function as digital contact zones where rural masculinities and femininities are co-produced and contested. Li Ziqi and Dianxi Xiaoge invite visions of rural womanhood that viewers alternately embrace and resist; the Huanong Brothers' rural masculinity is rhythmically recalibrated through the danmu (video-overlaid comments), from parody to pandemic-era solidarity; Ling's Douyin counseling livestreams render rural women's voices at once intimate and structurally entangled. Taking an intermedial approach, I foreground the relational, sonic, and temporal-rhythmic dimensions of digital engagement comparatively underexplored in rural wanghong studies.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE: SKINNER MYERS

Blackstar: Race, Resistance, & the Politics of Black Cinema | Supervisors: Patricia Pisters, Pei-Sze Chow | 10 July 2026, 11:00 hrs., Aula.



In the current era of Black Hollywood, commercial success pressures Black filmmakers to assimilate into a cinematic framework shaped by Western imperialism, resulting in what this dissertation terms "White Cinema in Blackface": films that reinforce the very systems that marginalize Black communities. This dissertation argues for a revolutionary alternative through Antagonistic Cinema Theory, a new framework for liberated Black cinema. This research traces the historical antagonism between Hollywood and radical movements such as the L.A. Rebellion and the Black Audio Film Collective, then grounds this history through dialogues with filmmakers Merawi Gerima and Mtume Gant. The theory is demonstrated through an autoethnographic analysis of my first three feature films, drawing its aesthetic genealogy from avant-garde jazz, Afro-Surrealism, and Africana existential philosophy. The dissertation culminates in a manifesto arguing that Black cinema must reject its role as an audition for Hollywood and become an unapologetic weapon for liberation, accountable only to the poor and working-class communities it represents.

**EXPLORING THE FUTURE OF LISTENING: MEË
YAMOMO JOINS INTERNATIONAL ARTISTIC
RESEARCH CONSORTIUM**

meË yamomo has joined *Futures of Listening*, a major international research and development consortium exploring new approaches to immersive listening, spatial sound, and sensory storytelling. Led by FIBER and supported through the Dutch Creative Industries Fund's Artistic & Design Research for Immersive

Experiences programme, the initiative brings together artists, researchers, technologists, and cultural institutions from across Europe to investigate how listening can deepen our understanding of social, environmental, and more-than-human worlds.

The programme combines artistic research, technological innovation, and public engagement through residencies, workshops, symposia, open-source tool development, and international collaborations. UvA is among the collaborating institutions contributing to the project, alongside partners including 4DSOUND, the Royal Conservatoire The Hague, Leiden University, iii, MONOM, and CTM Festival. Dr. Yamomo joins a network of researchers and artists working across questions of inclusivity, accessibility, spatial audio, and new forms of immersive experience. More information about the project can be found at [Futures of Listening](#).

NEW ASCA PHD CANDIDATES

In the first six months of the year we welcomed 7 new ASCA PhD candidates:

Ali Tal As'ad, *Museum-nation/ State*

Supervisors: Yolande Jansen, Sudeep Dasgupta

Drawing on Beshara Doumani's conception of Palestine as a "Museum-nation," this project examines how Palestinian NGOs and cultural actors (re)produce infrastructures and narratives typically associated with the state. It argues that the Palestinian "Museum-nation" is not a compensatory form for absent statehood, but an apparatus that generates cultural citizenry, institutional legitimacy, and political possibility under occupation and fragmented sovereignty. Through a twentieth-century genealogy of exhibition practices and contemporary case studies from the Palestinian context, the project shows how curatorial work functions as counter-governmentality (producing state-effects without mimicking the state); and where sovereignty is rehearsed, deferred, and contested through material and administrative cultural practice.

Andrew Burgess, *Modelling Realities: Exploring Algorithmic Bias and Decolonial Speculation in AI-Generated Fashion Imagery*

Supervisors: Misha Kavka, Özge Baykan Calafato

This research will investigate the effects of algorithmic bias on the generation of AI-driven fashion imagery. It consists of a comparative analysis between AI modelling platforms, which are used to create AI-driven marketing material for clothing brands, and the decolonial speculative fashion design of artists from African and African diasporic backgrounds.

The purpose of this analysis is to gain a deeper understanding of the ways increasingly realistic AI-generated imagery automates and alters existing

patterns of biased visual aesthetics. It also examines the subversive potential of generative AI when used to imagine speculative realities outside of fully Eurocentric worldviews.

Pierre Gramond, *Communicating visually about subordination in social relations: the place of framing scales and causality in selected visual representations, starting from Isotype images*

Supervisors: Emilie Sitzia, Slava Greenberg

This project aims to draw out a set of criteria to assess the 'social' quality of the graphic depiction of relations between multiple social groups. From the comparative and semiotic analysis of the selected visualisations (incl. Isotypes and contemporary sources), this research sets out to clarify which means of depicting subordination relations can contribute to obscure and naturalise the causes and modalities of the contemporary forms of subordination. This analysis will focus on comparing the different framing scales, the visual coupling of the subordinated group with the subordinating group, and the visualisation of some of the causes and modalities of these social relations.

Camille Brijer, *Performing Terror: Art, Violence, and Affective Strategy in Postwar Europe*

Supervisors: Noa Roei, Boris Noordenbos

This PhD project investigates how terror and abjection function as shared affective-performative strategies across radical artistic and militant collectives in postwar Europe (1960s–1980s). Through three paired case studies – COUM Transmissions/Angry Brigade (UK), Situationist International/Action Directe (France), and the Viennese Actionists/Red Army Faction (Austria/Germany) – it examines how these groups, operating in overlapping cultural spaces, used spectacle, bodily transgression, and communicative violence to institute alternative political sensibilities under specific postwar conjunctures. Drawing on affect theory, political philosophy, and conjunctural analysis, the project reconceptualises radicalism as a struggle over affective registers rather than visibility or rational discourse.

Rani Fitriana, *Decolonizing Sonic Heritage: Methodology for Contemporary Music Creation Based on Jaap Kunst's Archives in Sumatra*

Supervisors: Barbara Titus, meLê Yamomo

This project focuses on the Jaap Kunst archive from Sumatra, which includes audio recordings, photographs, silent film, and colonial documents. While it has contributed to the development of ethnomusicology, the archive remains laden with Eurocentric bias and the erasure of local agency. The project aims to reinterpret sonic heritage through decolonial, philosophical, and participatory approaches, positioning source communities as central subjects. Through digitization and collaborative work,

it develops a methodology for creating contemporary music based on archival materials, restoring the spiritual, social, and cultural meanings of local sound traditions, and opening space for reflective and transformative postcolonial narratives.

Joost van der Hoeven, *True Confessions: Sincerity in 19th-Century- and Contemporary Painting*

Supervisors: Emilie Sitzia, Rachel Esner

This dissertation examines the role of sincerity in the practice and discourse of painting in nineteenth-century France and the present. It approaches sincerity as both a conceptual force in artistic creation and evaluation and as a strategic device in processes of position-taking and value attribution. Focusing on key figures such as Manet, Zola, Van Gogh, and Aurier, it analyses how sincerity functioned within debates on painting and how its meanings evolved. Rather than treating sincerity as fixed, it is considered alongside related terms across artistic and critical discourse. The study also explores how these historical understandings resonate in contemporary figurative painting.

Jochem Kootstra, *From Resistance to Evidence: Digital Counter-Mapping in Conflict Zones*

Supervisors: Stefania Milan, Martijn de Waal, Naomi Bueno de Mesquita

Counter-mapping has long served as a community-driven practice of resistance grounded in participation, empowerment, and alternative spatial storytelling. Yet the rise of digital technologies, open-source intelligence, and remote sensing has profoundly reconfigured how spatial data and local knowledge are produced and translated into maps, especially in conflict zones where field access is restricted. This shift remains critically undertheorized. Drawing on case studies, action research, and ethnographic inquiry, this dissertation examines how digitally mediated counter-mapping reshapes evidentiary practices, participation, and trust. It contributes a critical framework for understanding digital counter-mapping as a socio-technical practice, revealing how technological and human actors interact to reconfigure empowerment and socio-spatial justice for marginalized communities.

CALAMITY AS DEFACEMENT

A lecture by Jean-Thomas Tremblay, with formal response by Jeff Diamanti and moderation by Eugenie Brinkema, organized by Queer Formalism | July 1, 16:00-18:00 | P.C. Hoofthuis, room 0.05 | Organizers: Jakob Henselmans, Samuel Ludmila Feline Constantin, and Imogen Grigorovich (Queer Formalism). To register, send an e-mail to queerformalism@gmail.com, with your name, student number, and institutional affiliation. If you want the ECT, please explicate this in your email.

Prosopopoeia defines legal and discursive efforts to cognize, and to exempt ourselves from, extinction. The figure of the Anthropocene, for instance, fits a human mask onto the late liberal modulation of life and nonlife down to geological substrata; it personifies destructive ideologies (such as nuclear colonialism and imperialism) and their remediation and redemption (such as a present consciousness and a present conscience born backward from the future apocalypse). The foremost of three case studies, Albert Serra's film *Pacification* (2022), set in Mā'ohi Nui (French Polynesia) amid rumors about the resumption of France's nuclear tests, denaturalizes the brutal mechanisms through which combinations of particularities and differences—including the native-informant figure of the racialized and transfeminine sex worker—are made to signify global destitution. To deface late liberalism, as Jean-Thomas Tremblay argues in this lecture, is to treat the reproduction of its regime as a set of foundationless discursive and aesthetic maneuvers.

After Jean-Thomas Tremblay's lecture (±45min), Jeff Diamanti will offer a formal response (±15min), after which we will have time for questions and a discussion of the material, moderated by Eugenie Brinkema.

Jean-Thomas Tremblay is an associate professor of English at York University and a Visiting Scholar at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society. He is the author of *Breathing Aesthetics* (Duke University Press, 2022) and a co-author, with Steven Swarbrick, of *Negative Life: The Cinema of Extinction* ("Superimpositions: Philosophy and the Moving Image" series, Northwestern University Press, 2024), which earned the Honourable Mention for the 2025 Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present Book Prize and was shortlisted for the 2025 Ecocritical Book Award of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment.

Jeff Diamanti is Professor of Global History of Sustainable Development at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and teaches Philosophy and Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam.

Eugenie Brinkema is Professor of Contemporary Literature and Media at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, status-only Professor of Cinema Studies at the University of Toronto, and affiliated faculty at the University of Amsterdam. Her articles have appeared in numerous journals and her books include *The Forms of the Affects* (2014) and *Life-Destroying Diagrams* (2022), both published with Duke University Press.

Queer Formalism convenes each spring for public and accredited sessions on queer theory and aesthetic inquiry. Keep an eye out on this website and social media for more upcoming events.

FEMINIST SOLIDARITY AND RESISTANCE IN A MORE-THAN-HUMAN WORLD.

New Ethical, Political, and Legal Concepts

Thursday 2 July 2026, 17:00 at Spui25. Organized by Jasmijn Leeuwenkamp.

Why is the current ecological and climate crisis a feminist issue? In what ways can feminist methodologies and concepts be mobilised to understand and act upon pressing more-than-human problems? During this event, Jasmijn Leeuwenkamp discusses these questions with four voices working in the environmental humanities and law: Astrida Neimanis, Rosi Braidotti, Emily Jones, and Jetske Brouwer. Nele Buyst will provide a poetic intermezzo. Despite the tendency to objectify and quantify ecological and climatic disruptions, these do not happen in an abstract and external realm with respect to human bodies. As embodied beings, posthumanist and ecological feminists argue, we are materially entangled with various life forms for survival. Those relations are currently under threat from extreme weather events, pollution, loss in biodiversity, ocean acidification, and rising sea levels. How to reorient these vulnerable relations ethically, politically, and legally? How can we foster practices of solidarity and resistance?

In their new book *How to Weather Together*, Astrida Neimanis and Jennifer Mae Hamilton propose “weathering” as both an ecological feminist framework and a set of practical tools for responding to environmental catastrophe. In SPUI25, Neimanis will lay out their ideas, and is joined in conversation by Rosi Braidotti, Emily Jones, and Jetske Brouwer. They, too, will share conceptual tools for posthuman and feminist ethics, politics, and law. Nele Buyst, additionally, will read poetry. Following the public defence of her dissertation “Rethinking Human and Nonhuman Rights in the Anthropocene,” Jasmijn Leeuwenkamp will moderate the discussion.

Astrida Neimanis is Canada Research Chair in Feminist Environmental Humanities at the University of British Columbia, Canada on unceded syilx territory. She is the (co-)author of various publications including *Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology* and *How to Weather Together: Feminist Practice for Climate Change* (with Jennifer Mae Hamilton).

Rosi Braidotti is a continental and feminist philosopher and an emeritus professor of Utrecht University. Her many publications include *The Posthuman*, *Posthuman Knowledge*, *Posthuman Feminism*, *Nomadic Subjects*, and *Nomadic Theory*.

Nele Buyst publishes poetry and essays. Her second collection *CORPS*, *poreus* (het balanseer, 2024) was shortlisted for de Grote Poëzieprijs. She is working on a PhD thesis on the potential of aesthetic practices for

repair and is affiliated with the Centre for Ethics at the University of Antwerp. She is an editor at the magazine for culture and criticism *rekto:verso*.

Emily Jones is a Senior Research Fellow at Newcastle Law School, United Kingdom. Dr Jones’ interdisciplinary research applies critical theory including feminist, queer, posthuman, postcolonial and critical disability studies, to analyse and re-imagine international law.

Jetske Brouwer is a PhD candidate in Philosophy at the University of Amsterdam, affiliated with the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA). Working at the intersection of feminist theory and ecological thought, she writes about earthly care, embodiment, and coalition-building.

Jasmijn Leeuwenkamp (moderator) is a philosopher and lecturer at the University of Amsterdam. She recently finished a PhD project on anthropocentrism in human and nonhuman rights discourse. Her work focuses on the interrelations between political philosophy, legal theory, posthumanism, and ecology. Registration: <https://spui25.nl/programma/feminist-solidarity-and-resistance-in-a-more-than-human-world>.

RESONANCE IN ACTION: EXPLORING CREATIVE-BASED PRACTICES

Seminar and workshop with Erasmus Plus Fellow Alice Scavarda, organized by Rik Spanjers and Erin La Cour | 2 July, 13:00-15:00 | BG1 0.03, Turfdraggsterpad 9, 1012 XT Amsterdam

The use of creative methods in social science and humanities research is becoming more and more common. However, this approach poses numerous challenges from theoretical, methodological, and practical standpoints. What does it mean to collaborate with artists to produce research outcomes? How can we engage communities and vulnerable individuals in an ethical and respectful manner? How can we reach diverse audiences and conduct research that has a social and theoretical impact?

Drawing on the experience of conducting comics-based and applied theatre research, this participatory lecture will address critical issues in creative practice, focusing on the concept of resonance, and propose strategies for overcoming them. Following the lecture, we’ll engage in a practice-based workshop around these topics.

Alice Scavarda is Assistant Professor in Sociology at University of Torino, where she teaches Sociology of Health and Illness and Creative Methods. Her research interests lie at the intersection of Disability Studies, Mad Studies and Qualitative Methodology, specifically Ethnography, Comics and Applied Theatre. She is co-chair of [Graphic Medicine Europe](#) and co-founder of [Graphic Medicine Italia](#).

Registration:

Please let us know if you plan on attending by emailing Erin La Cour at e.l.lacour@vu.nl. *If you can only attend online, please let us know when you register.

TRANSASIA PICNIC

Annual Picnick organized by the TransAsia Cultural Studies Group | 2 July 2026, 16:30 | Oosterpark.

Our annual picnic is around the corner! And what's a better way to embrace the summer (at a much more bearable temperature) than a barbeque?

We will have a barbeque set, so please bring any food (for BBQ or not) and drinks you'd like to have. In order to keep our options diverse, kindly let us know what you plan to bring in [this link](#). Other things to bring: your own container and cutlery, and picnic mat.

EXAMINING THE GOVERNANCE OF EUROPEAN DATAFIED BORDERS

PhD & Early Career Researcher Workshop

This will be an interactive workshop, and participants are invited to briefly share their research and reflections on their experience working on these topics | 7 July 2026, 09:45 - 13:00 | [Roeterseilandcampus - building A](#) Amsterdam Law School (3rd floor, room A3.01) | Contact: Charis Papaevangelou at c.papaevangelou@uva.nl

Europe's border regime is being reorganised around a political project that exposes people on the move to increased state violence and racialisation, rendering them increasingly searchable, easier to sort, confine, and be removed. The EU Pact on Migration and Asylum which officially entered into full effect on June 12th, establishes technologically mediated border screening, strengthens its biometric registration (with additional biometric data collected from minors of 6 years of age), expands Eurodac records with data retention periods of 10 years for asylum applicants, and accelerates its border and return procedures into core features of the EU's migration governance. Meanwhile, the European Parliament recently approved its position on the new Return Regulation, with the support of Frontex throughout the process, further strengthening the legal and administrative machinery of detention, cooperation obligations, deportation, and offshore return hubs.

Following recent civil society warnings about the risk of ICE-style enforcement in Europe, our research workshop seeks to address these developments from a critical and reflexive perspective. We, particularly, seek to understand how European institutions, member states, agencies, and private actors build systems that erode asylum rights and risk violating the principles of non-refoulement. Ultimately, these developments expose people on the move to intensified forms of monitoring, racialisation, confinement, and removal.

The workshop takes place within a wider authoritarian security turn, including the ReArm Europe / Readiness 2030 agenda that reflects the growing fusion of migration control, policing, defence, and surveillance technology.

Tentative agenda

- 09:45-10:00 Arrival (coffee + tea)
- 10:00-10:45 Lydia Emmanouilidou (Solomon) + TBC
- 10:45-11:00 Break
- 11:00-11:10 Eleni Kyriakou (NKUA, DATAMIG)
- 11:10-11:25 Kinan Alajak (UU, DATAMIG)
- 11:25-11:30 Break
- 11:30-12:30 Participant sharing + open discussion
- 12:30-13:00 Lunch

Organisers: Charis Papaevangelou, University of Amsterdam / IViR / ALGOSOC, and Eleni Kyriakou, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens / DATAMIG

Supported by the RPA Global Digital Cultures.

The workshop brings together PhD researchers and ECRs to discuss these ongoing developments, how they relate to participants' work, and some of the challenges they face. This will be an interactive workshop, and participants are invited to briefly share their research and reflections on their experience working on these topics. No formal presentation is required. The discussion will focus especially on research challenges across different geographies and areas of work in the current context of the shifting socio-political climate to the right, the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, and recent return/deportation developments.

As spaces are limited, we will prioritise PhD researchers, with some room for postdoctoral and early-career researchers whose work closely fits the theme.

To express interest, please email **Charis Papaevangelou** at c.papaevangelou@uva.nl by **Wednesday 1 July** with a short 2-3 sentence note on your research or relevant work. Limited travel support may be available, prioritising people in precarious positions.

THE SHAPE OF THE CLOUD: CLOUD COMPUTING AS AI INFRASTRUCTURE IN CHINA & US

We are pleased to invite you to an ASCA talk by Prof. Jingyan Elaine Yuan, at the University of Illinois, Chicago. The talk will take place at 15:00 on July 7 in Room 1.04, PC Hoofthuis (Spuistraat 134), University of Amsterdam. Organized by the TransAsia Cultural Studies Group. For any inquiries, please contact Dr. Ke Ma (k.ma@uva.nl)

Cloud computing has become a foundational infrastructure in AI-driven development, reorganizing IT resources into scalable, programmable services. Originating as an internal response to growing computational demands, it has evolved into a platform-based model. Globally, a small number of

hyperscalers—Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud—dominate the market, embedding AI development within their vertically integrated, proprietary ecosystems. This model extends a longer trajectory of infrastructure privatization in the United States, while raising concerns about inequality, opacity, and dependency.

This talk presents a comparative study of how the trajectory of the cloud computing in China diverges. It situates the private platform expansion within a state-centered infrastructural logic characterized by territorially embedded assets, bureaucratic segmentation, and security priorities. The analysis shows that China's cloud development is shaped by ongoing negotiations between platform and state logics, producing a hybrid system in which private innovation and public control are structurally interdependent.

About the speaker

Dr. Jingyan Elaine Yuan is a Professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Her research is situated at the intersection of critical media studies and Science & Technology Studies, focusing on the social processes of digital infrastructure and culture within a global and comparative framework. Her work on social media activism, online privacy, cyber-nationalism, digital cultural production, and the platform economy has been published in leading academic journals. She is the author of the award-winning book, *The Web of Meaning: The Internet in a Changing Chinese Society*.

During the talk, Prof. Yuan will give a 45-minute lecture, followed by Q&A. The talk will be moderated by Dr. Tommy Tse (University of Amsterdam).

TWO OCEANS, ONE FUTURE: CONNECTING STORIES OF OCEANIA AND THE CARIBBEAN

North-South Ocean Dialogue & Film Screening:

Organized by Oceania Caribbean Climate Alliance (OCCA) & Global Shapers The Hague | Saturday 18 July 2026 13:00-17:00 | The Hague Humanity Hub, 58 Fluwelen Burgwal 2511 CJ Den Haag. [Details and registration](#)

The North-South Ocean Dialogue is a half day climate conference bringing together emerging and established leaders from the Pacific and Caribbean to explore shared oceanic, climate, and geopolitical challenges. Hosted in The Hague Humanity Hub, the event convenes academic insight, policy innovation, and cultural diplomacy, elevating Small Island Developing States (SIDS) priorities in European policy spaces.

Programme

13:00 – 13:05 Arrival & Networking — Coffee, refreshments, curated mingling

13:05 – 13:15 Welcome & Introduction — MC Jess Stone opens the Dialogue

13:15 – 15:00 Film Screenings — Stories from West

Papua, Rotuma, and the Caribbean

15:00 – 16:00 Panel Discussion & Q&A — Film representatives and climate leaders

16:00 – 16:50 “Woven Mat” Breakout Workshops — Three interactive roundtables, each with a traditional kava ceremony: (1) Storytelling & Storyliving, (2) One Ocean, (3) (Re)learning

16:50 – 17:00 Closing & Call to Action

Organisers

The Dialogue is organised by the Oceania Caribbean Climate Alliance (OCCA) and Global Shapers The Hague hub. Together, they bring cross-regional expertise, youth leadership, and local coordination capacity spanning the Pacific, the Caribbean, and Europe.

Speakers

- Jess Stone (MC) — Multi-award-winning Australian youth advocate, Co-Founder of OCCA
- Raki Ap (Panelist) — West Papua advocate
- John Taukave (Panelist) — Pacific community leader, ASCA PhD
- TBC — Netherlands-based Caribbean climate leader (IGO/NGO)
- TBC — Dutch climate leader (IGO/NGO)

Participants

The Dialogue will bring together a curated group of university students, early-career researchers, academics, diplomats, government officials, climate advocates, development practitioners, and members of the Global Shapers Community of the World Economic Forum.

ARTICULATING EMBODIMENT IN KNOWLEDGE-INTENSIVE INSTITUTION-SITUATIONS

September 2nd, 2026, Janskerkhof 2-3, 2-5pm, room 0.19 |

Organizer: Ohad Ben Shimon o.benshimon@uu.nl

“It matters what thoughts think thoughts. It matters what knowledges know knowledges. It matters what relations relate relations. It matters what worlds world worlds. It matters what stories tell stories.”

- Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (2016, 35)

Rather than treating institutions as stable, bounded entities, knowledge as progressively linear, or embodiment as an individual attribute, this symposium approaches institutional life, knowledge, and embodiment as relational, contingent, and emergent processes lived in practice. It questions how bodies, knowledge, and institutions co-constitute one another in situated ways, and how carefully attuning to this co-constitution can ethically and methodologically reorganize the conditions for knowledge-intensivity to emerge.

Seminar-based intellectual educational programs, post-Fordist artistic residencies, and collaborative scientific

research projects all involve sustained modes of attention, communal gatherings, and embodied participation, yet operate under very different structures of authority, accreditation, and formal recognition. Across this spectrum—from immaterial labor in cognitive capitalism (Berardi 2009; Lazzarato 1996, 2012) to post-Fordist art practice (Gielen 2009), and from seminar-based philosophical inquiry (Fjeld 2022) to interdisciplinary scientific collaboration (Klein 2021)—the question of embodiment remains crucial. Bodies, affect, attention, and relational engagement are not secondary to knowledge production, but deeply intertwined with an/or conditions how knowledge-intensivity circulates and is experienced.

This symposium, then, seeks to move beyond productivity-focused framings, attending instead to the everyday, embodied, material, and affective practices of knowledge-intensive work within institutional settings. In, between and beyond a series of short papers, guests and the audience will explore how different articulations of embodiment shape the production, circulation, and experience of knowledge-intensivity, and together envision new ways for these to emerge.

The symposium is held on the occasion of Ohad Ben Shimon's PhD defense. Ben Shimon's dissertation *Articulating Embodiment in Knowledge-Intensive Institutional Situations* argues that embodiment is not a stable object of study, but a practice of doing. It is an indeterminate phenomenon that is continually articulated and disarticulated through knowledge-intensive institutional encounters, relations, and temporal structures.

OPEN CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS | 2ND FORUM FOR FILM EDUCATION

26–27 November 2026 | University of Amsterdam

Organizers: dr. Blandine Joret & dr. Thijs Witty

More info: [visit our webpage](#).

The Forum for Film Education aims to strengthen connections between educational practice and academic research related to film and audiovisual media. Each year, researchers, filmmakers, teachers, cultural and social workers, and policymakers come together to explore the evolving landscape of film education. We welcome practitioners and researchers working across the humanities, social sciences, cultural and arts education, and the cultural sector at large. By bringing together a wide range of perspectives, the Forum creates space for dialogue, knowledge exchange and future collaborations on local and international levels.

We're excited to announce the open call for contributions for the second edition of the Forum for Film Education. We invite contributions addressing film practices and research across educational contexts:

from pre-school, primary and secondary education to higher education, museums, film theatres, archival institutions, and informal or independent learning environments. Contributions may be in English or Dutch and can take a variety of formats:

10-minute pitch

20-minute individual presentation

60-minute panel (including at least 3 speakers)

30–45-minute workshop

Alternative formats (screening, site visit, etc.)

For this second edition, we are particularly interested in contributions that engage with one or more of the following themes:

1. Film in the curriculum

What role does film play in contemporary curricula, and how can it be integrated within broader learning trajectories, both within and outside formal education? We seek contributions that explore the place of film across educational levels and school types, and that critically engage with innovative practices in film-based teaching and learning.

2. Beyond film in education

Film education increasingly intersects with emerging audiovisual and immersive practices. We are looking for contributions that engage with forms of media education beyond traditional film, including VR, XR, expanded cinema, interactive media, game-based learning, and other innovative audiovisual formats.

3. Transdisciplinary perspectives

Within this theme, we invite research and practices that cross disciplinary borders, asking: does film open new paths for transdisciplinary research, teaching, and learning? We explicitly encourage contributions from researchers in media studies, educational sciences, psychology, and related fields, as well as from practitioners, teachers, and artistic researchers.

Submission & contact

Please send your proposal (approximately 150 words) and brief bio('s) (50 words/speaker) before Monday 24 August 2026, to b.joret@uva.nl and t.witty@hum.leidenuniv.nl. Your proposal should indicate the format of your intervention, and if possible highlight one or more themes from the call.

CALL FOR PAPERS: EVER MET ANYONE NORMAL?

Two-day workshop "Ever met anyone normal?" Historical constructions of normality, sanity and health
Dates: November 5 and 6, 2026 Location: Badia Fiesolana (EUI), Florence and online Contact: Chiara Lacroix and Annelies van der Meij normalityworkshop@proton.me Aim and rationale The aim of this workshop is to bring together historians to investigate how notions of normality, sanity and health have been constructed, enforced, and contested across history, from the early modern period to contemporary

history. Echoing the famous poster of the Dutch organisation Pandora at the height of the 1970s counter-psychiatry movement - "Ever met anyone normal? And... did you like it?" - we invite participants to interrogate the obviousness of the "normal" and to reveal its historical origins across both European and non-European contexts. Over the past few decades, fields such as Disability Studies, Gender Studies, Mad Studies, and Crip Studies have emerged and flourished. These interdisciplinary areas critically examine normative assumptions about health, productivity, and personhood, often from positions outside normative able-bodiedness, able-mindedness, or the heterosexual matrix. This workshop seeks to add a historical perspective to these areas of study. Building on recent historical scholarship that "flips the script" on mental illness, disorder, disability, and gender binarism, we ask: What has it meant, in different social, cultural, and political contexts, to be considered healthy, sane, fit, straight, able, but also smart, stable, competent, productive? How do these normative concepts relate to each other, how have their boundaries been drawn and policed, and by whom? What institutions, forms of expertise, and social practices have sustained these categories? And how have individuals and communities contested them, whether by resisting, subverting, demanding inclusion, or creating new norms? By historicising notions of normality, sanity, and health, we aim to denaturalise them, revealing their contingency, instability, and embeddedness in power relations. The PULSE Network for Medical and Health Humanities meets the European University Institute Two-day workshop "Ever met anyone normal?" Historical constructions of normality, sanity and health Dates: November 5 and 6, 2026 Location: Badia Fiesolana (EUI), Florence and online Contact: Chiara Lacroix and Annelies van der Meij normalityworkshop@proton.me Aim and rationale The aim of this workshop is to bring together historians to investigate how notions of normality, sanity and health have been constructed, enforced, and contested across history, from the early modern period to contemporary history. Echoing the famous poster of the Dutch organisation Pandora at the height of the 1970s counter-psychiatry movement - "Ever met anyone normal? And... did you like it?" - we invite participants to interrogate the obviousness of the "normal" and to reveal its historical origins across both European and non-European contexts. Over the past few decades, fields such as Disability Studies, Gender Studies, Mad Studies, and Crip Studies have emerged and flourished. These interdisciplinary areas critically examine normative assumptions about health, productivity, and personhood, often from positions outside normative able-bodiedness, able-mindedness, or the heterosexual

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NEW BOOK: PLATFORMS: A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

by Anne Helmond & Fernando van der Vlist

From Instagram and Uber to Alibaba and ChatGPT, platforms shape nearly every aspect of life. They influence the ways we communicate, work, study, shop, vote, and connect. But what exactly are platforms? How do they work and how did they become so powerful?

Platforms offers a critical introduction to platforms and platformisation. Written by two leading experts, the book explains how platforms operate as companies, as services, and as technologies or infrastructures. Drawing on real-world examples, Anne Helmond and Fernando van der Vlist unpack key concepts such as platform power, governance, and strategy. They demonstrate that platforms shape economies, cultures, and institutions, and reveal their power to generate value, influence public life, and create new forms of dependence and control. Pedagogical features and practical approaches to analysing platforms are also provided.

Accessible, timely, and grounded in global perspectives, this book is a must-read for students and scholars across the social sciences and the humanities, as well as for policymakers and anyone who seeks to understand the role of platforms in our world.

You can find more information and buy the book here: https://www.politybooks.com/bookdetail?book_slug=9781509568109. Polity is currently offering a 30% discount with the code HVD30.

NEW BOOK: KEIN RICHTIGES STERBEN IM FALSCHEN LEBEN. BILDER EINES ABSCHIEDS

(No Right Way of Dying in a Wrong Life. Scenes of a Farewell), Vienna/Berlin: Turia + Kant 2026, 229 pp. By Ansgar Mohnkern

The mother a nun, the father a communist. As unpredictably as their shared journey through life began, as predictably did it come to an end: confined to a care bed. This book is an attempt to understand the final years of two dying people. It is personal, but no memoir. It is conceptual, but no theory. It speaks of illness and care, of aging and parting, of cemeteries and hospices, of love and weariness, as well as of Antigone, Hegel, Proust, and of the recurring question of why there is—in variation on Adorno—no right way of

dying in a wrong life: *kein richtiges Sterben im falschen Leben*.

NEW BOOK: WOMEN, MONEY AND MARKETS, 1770–1914. REPRESENTING THE INVISIBLE HANDS OF THE ECONOMY

Edited by Emma Newport, Joyce Goggin

A rich exploration of the many ways women shaped the economic and cultural life of the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

This collection redefines the role of women in the development of modern capitalism, revealing their active participation as investors, entrepreneurs, theorists, and cultural producers between 1770 and 1914. Drawing on archival research and literary analysis, the essays uncover how women shaped financial systems, navigated market constraints, and leveraged sentiment, education, and capital to assert economic agency.

Bridging literary studies with social and economic history, *Women, Money and Markets* challenges the conventional portrayal of the marketplace as a purely rational domain, highlighting instead the emotional and relational dynamics that underpinned women's economic lives. From shareholder lists to fictional representations, contributors explore how women influenced the financialisation of the economy and contested their marginalisation in both historical records and cultural narratives.

Featuring fresh readings of authors like Wollstonecraft and Gaskell alongside lesser-known voices, this volume offers a plural and nuanced account of women's economic engagement, and its representation, across diverse contexts. It is essential reading for scholars of literature, history, gender studies, and anyone interested in the invisible hands that helped shape the modern world.