

NICA

Netherlands Institute for Cultural Analysis

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Begroting 2012

Inhoud:

1. Missie
2. Organisatie
3. Onderwijs & onderzoek
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Bijlagen:

1. Overzicht promovendi
2. Overzicht onderzoeksmasterstudenten
3. Overzicht stafleden

1. Missie

De landelijke onderzoeksschool NICA is gewijd aan cultuuranalyse, de wetenschappelijke bestudering van de hedendaagse cultuur vanuit een interdisciplinair en theoretisch perspectief. De school organiseert onderzoeks- en onderwijsactiviteiten voor stafleden, onderzoeksmasterstudenten en promovendi. Daarnaast doet NICA dienst als professioneel netwerk om de samenwerking op het gebied van onderzoek, subsidie-aanvragen en internationalisering te bevorderen en te ondersteunen.

NICA in vogelvlucht:

- 14 interne promovendi, 52 externe promovendi;
- 56 onderzoeksmasterstudenten;
- 80 stafleden;
- 9 geaffilieerde onderzoeksmasters;
- 7 uiteenlopende activiteiten in 2011, 9 in 2012;
- 27 tot 30 deelnemers aan de Summer en Winter Schools;
- 5 goedbezochte ateliers, 3 masterclasses en 3 seminars;
- 13 internationale sprekers, onder wie Catherine Malabou (Kingston University), Richard Kerridge (Bath Spa University), Hugh Campbell (University College Dublin), Maarten Simons en Jan Masschelein (Universiteit Leuven), James Williams (University of Dundee), and Jennifer Robinson (University College London).

2. Organisatie

Penvoerder: Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen, Universiteit van Amsterdam

Directeur: Prof. dr. Christoph Lindner (UvA)

Programmadirecteur: dr. Murat Aydemir (UvA)

Directie: Prof. dr. Christoph Lindner (UvA), dr. Murat Aydemir (UvA), Prof. dr. Ernst van Alphen (LU), Prof. dr. Maaïke Bleker (UU)

Programmateam: Prof. dr. Christoph Lindner (UvA), dr. Murat Aydemir (UvA), dr. Eloe Kingma (UvA), Prof. dr. Ernst van Alphen (LU), Prof. dr. Maaïke Bleker (UU)

Bureau: dr. Eloe Kingma, manager; Chantal Olijerhoek, ondersteuning

Adviesraad: Prof. dr. Ernst van Alphen (LU, Literatuurwetenschap), Prof. dr. Maaïke Meijer (UM, Gender Studies), Prof. dr. Maaïke Bleker (UU, Theaterwetenschap), Prof. dr. Ginette Verstraete (VU, Cultuurwetenschap), Prof. dr. René Boomkens (GU, Wijsbegeerte), Prof. dr. Deborah Cherry (UvA, Kunstgeschiedenis), Prof. dr. Patricia Pisters (Mediastudies), Prof. dr. Frans Willem Korsten (EU, Literatuurwetenschap), Prof. dr. Rosemarie Buikema (Gender Studies), Prof. dr. Anneke Smelik (RU, Cultuurwetenschap).

Promovendiraad: NICA heeft vooralsnog geen formele promovendiraad, maar zal binnenkort twee promovendi opnemen in de Adviesraad

Vergaderingen: De Adviesraad komt twee keer per jaar bijeen.

Op vrijblijvende basis geaffilieerde onderzoeksmasters:

- Art and Visual Culture (RU);
- Cultural Analysis (UvA);
- Gender and Ethnicity (UU);
- Literary and Cultural Studies (GU);

- Religious Studies (UvA);
- Visual Arts, Media, and Architecture (VU);
- International Performance Research (UvA)
- Art Studies (UvA);
- Artistic Research (UvA).

3. *Onderwijs & Onderzoek*

NICA maakt geen principieel onderscheid tussen haar onderwijs- en onderzoeksactiviteiten: de onderstaande activiteiten zijn steeds toegankelijk en relevant voor zowel onderzoeksmasterstudenten en promovendi als stafleden. Het programma van NICA bestaat grotendeels uit *Schools*, *Ateliers* en *Masterclasses*. *Ateliers* en *Masterclasses* duren één dag of dagdeel en zijn gewijd aan respectievelijk een onderwerp of een persoon.

2011

Toppling Times: Cultural Activism

Atelier

31 mei

Aylin Kuryel (UvA), Begüm Firat (UvA)

EC: geen

Deelnemers: 20

i.s.m. Amsterdams Krakercollectief Schijnheilig

The encounter between the insights of political, social and critical theory on the one hand, and activist visions and struggles on the other, is urgent and appealing. Indeed, there is much to gain from a productive dialogue between the theorizations of the intricacies of our time and the subversive practices that deal with them. New forms of activism, with their insistence on creative interventions based on the notions of humor, playfulness and confusion, may provide a suitable ground to explore the relationship between theoretical acts and activist thinking. With presentations and performances by L.M. Bogad, Robin Celikates, Kees Hudig, Thijs Witty, Christian Scholl, Emrah Irzik, and John Jordan.

Lost Objects

Summer School

8-9 juni

Jan Hein Hoogstad (UvA), Murat Aydemir (UvA)

EC: 5

Deelnemers: 30

The 2011 Inaugural NICA Summer School reflects on the “life” of the object in today’s interdisciplinary and theoretical humanities. If interdisciplinarity not only complements, but also transmutes and undoes established ways of knowing, then it makes sense to ask what objects we have now lost, gained, found, and perhaps even lost again through interdisciplinarity research and teaching. Moreover, interdisciplinarity cannot become an established method or recipe: as soon as it installs an object that lines up with the others, it inevitably becomes a new form of disciplinarity. So, today, what objects do we forget, foreclose, or preempt? What object do we reify, enshrine, know all too well? And what new objects might we yet create or remember?

Pinkwashing: Homonationalism and Gay Tourism and Palestine/Israel, with Haneen Maikey

Lezing

20 juni

Mikki Stelder (UvA)

EC: geen

Deelnemers: 15

Haneen Maikey, director of alQaws, lectures on the current discourse of homonationalism in Israel from the perspective of marginalized Palestinian queers. The strategic pinkwashing of Israel's image that is used in the campaigns of gay tourism in Tel Aviv is exposed as a cover up to the exclusionary politics of the Israeli state.

What To Do With Our Brain? With Catherine Malabou

Masterclass en lezing

28-29 oktober

Adam Chambers (UvA), Baylee Brits (UvA), Thijs Witty (UvA), and Gianluca Turricchio (UvA)

EC: geen

Deelnemers: lezing: 50; masterclass 15

Catherine Malabou is best known for her development of the concept of plasticity. Plasticity, which Malabou identifies as the "motif" of contemporary neurobiology, is the capacity of the brain to change itself; it is the biological ability of the brain to give, receive and explode form. By questioning assumptions already undermined by neurobiology's latest discoveries, Malabou's work advocates a consciousness of the plasticity of the brain, that is: a political redefinition of our being with others in this world. In other words, her work invites the reader to re-think the very idea of boundaries separating "nature" from "culture": how biological alter-globalism and neuronal liberation can sparkle a new turn towards the sciences and materialism.

Mediterranean Revolutions, Postcolonial Questions

Atelier

28 oktober

Isabel Hoving (LU), Liesbeth Minnaard (LU), Sarah De Mul (KUL), Elisabeth Bekers (VUB)

EC: 1

Deelnemers: 18

i.s.m. met OSL

Iain Chambers' study on the postcolonial Mediterranean (2008) suggests a daringly new way to rethink European, Arab, Middle Eastern and North African identities as intertwined. It ties in with the larger project of the theory of globalization, which invites us to see and think the world differently. The conceptualization of the world as radically, though ambivalently, interconnected, seems to have great potential. Postcolonial theory lay the groundwork for this new imagination, but it also reminds us that we should take into account the specific (geopolitical) power dynamics that are bound up with all imaginations of the world.

New Urban Aesthetics

Seminar

Maandelijkse bijeenkomsten 2011-12
Christoph Lindner (UvA)
EC: geen
Deelnemers: 15

Now that post-, late, neocapital-, cyber- and global modernity have all entered and altered the urban experience, it is time for a reconsideration of the concept of modernity in relation to urban space, culture, and theory. How has our understanding of modernity been influenced by different thinkers, theories, and aesthetics of modernity? Are various modernities in conflict? How to rethink and reconfigure the notion of urban modernity, especially in the context of recent thinking about postcoloniality, globalization and new media?

Media and Performance

Leesgroep
Maandelijkse bijeenkomsten 2011-12
Kati Röttger
EC: geen
Deelnemers: 10

The seminar provides an opportunity for PhD students and others who do research in Media and Performance Studies to share extensive lectures of theoretical texts that touch upon key concepts and methodologies of the field. The seminar is organized in monthly regular meetings. For every meeting one of the participants proposes and prepares one special text he or she struggles with during his/her research and wishes to discuss within the group.

ICD Theory Seminar

Seminar
Maandelijkse bijeenkomsten 2011-12
Ernst van Alphen (LU)
EC: geen
Deelnemers: 20

2012

Doubt

Winter School
12, 13 januari
Ernst van Alphen (LU), Isabel Hoving (LU), Esther Peeren (UvA), Liesbeth Minnaard (LU)
EC: 5
Deelnemers: 27

Doubt is a more specific condition than uncertainty. It is not satisfied with the celebration of uncertainty and chaos, but neither is it interested in the embrace of an (imaginary? illusionary?) totality. Rather, it identifies *specific* options between which it hesitates. Doubt is a state in which action is needed, but postponed; doubt is opened to a future, yet forestalls it. How can doubt be made productive? We welcome contributions on the *epistemology of doubt* as well as on the *imagination of doubt*. What are the theoretical and methodological approaches we use to explore the middle ground between a hesitant inarticulacy and firm statements? To what extent is

doubt a productive alternative position from which to navigate and negotiate between fundamentalism and moral relativism (Berger and Zijderfeld 2009)? What is the role of uncertainty in our scholarly work, and how do we resolve it, or refuse to resolve it, making it work for us? If we want to move beyond the celebration of plurality and uncertainty, when and how does doubt (as a more *specific* intellectual position of in-betweenness) enter our work?

How to Survive the Neoliberal University?

Atelier

25 januari

Jeroen de Kloet (UvA) en Yolande Jansen (UvA)

EC: geen

Deelnemers: 29

i.s.m. Amsterdam School for Globalization Studies

Over the past decade, universities worldwide have changed profoundly. Some have referred to the new University as the corporate university, others as the neoliberal university. What role, then, does the university play today in forming and distributing knowledge and critical thinking, and what role could it play in the near future? In this workshop, we will, together with authors who have published extensively on the role of the university, reflect upon these questions. We want to search, together with the participants to the workshop, for possible ways to engage with the changing university, ways that secure the university as a place for creative, intellectual exchange and debate, ways that help us navigate amidst the educational and professional changes that are taking place today.

Eco-Poco: The Ecocritical Turn Through Postcolonial Eyes

Atelier

27 januari

Isabel Hoving (LU), Liesbeth Minnaard (LU), Sarah De Mul (KUL), Elisabeth Bekers (VUB)

EC: 1

Deelnemers: 15

i.s.m. OSL

A far-fetching posthumanist, materialist shift is taking place in the field of postcolonial/globalization studies. New, urgent questions are being posed, such as this one: How can we analyse postcoloniality and globalization without taking the vitally important and truly global dimension of the environment into account? Under the influence of the booming field of ecocriticism, the environmental aspects of colonialism and globalization are increasingly foregrounded. Indeed, our planetary awareness largely took shape through environmental pictures of the vulnerable blue planet, spaceship Earth, as seen from Apollo 8 in 1968; and through the ongoing environmental debates on global warming, the global destruction of local ecologies, and the poverty and migration that followed. We will consider the bold argument that an ecocritical approach is indispensable to postcolonial/globalization studies.

Advanced Queer Theory

Leesgroep/tutorial

Februari-mei, tweewekelijkse bijeenkomsten

Murat Aydemir (UvA)

EC: 10

Deelnemers: 23

In this tutorial/reading group, participants read three (relatively) recent books on sexuality and gender. Cover to cover. This year's books are to be chosen by the participants. Some possible options are *Time Binds*, by Elizabeth Freeman; *The Feeling of Kinship*, by David L. Eng; *The Queer Art of Failure*, Judith Halberstam; *After Sex*, Jonathan Goldberg, ed.; Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*; John D'Emilio, *The World Turned*; Amy Villarejo, *Lesbian Rule*. Other suggestions are very welcome.

Timequake: Difference and Repetition, with James Williams

Masterclass

6 maart

Patricia Pisters (UvA)

EC: geen

Deelnemers: 22

What does a great work of philosophy do? It is a time-quake: a rupture in time, an event reverberating back and forward through history, disrupting former certainties and orders, altering futures, creating new ideas and making others redundant. This workshop will seek to investigate Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition's* claim to greatness. The case will rest on its ideas, its style, the quakes it has begun, the quarrels it has already picked, the subjects and spheres it has transformed, the world it has begun to spin and the shocks it has caused and – as befits this occasion – the translations it demands. All philosophical time-quakes call to be translated. Language is their medium and the measure of their multiple effects. These great works have to be seen to work through a tongue before we divine the special nature of the effects they spread through each culture.

Transgressive Archiving, with Ernst van Alphen

Masterclass

8 maart

Murat Aydemir (UvA)

EC: geen

Deelnemers: 10

I wish to argue that the qualities that are commonly attributed to material archives and digital databases are not inherent to them. Those qualities rather depend on the concrete practices which make use of databases or archives. This implies that material archives should not be seen as outdated simply because they are associated with principles like control and stability (of meaning), which have become suspect and are considered less attractive than the labyrinthine qualities that are attributed to digital archival practices. In this Masterclass, we will explore the transgressive potential of variegated archival practices, not only in the use of digital databases, but also of material archives.

IN PETTO

How To Do Cultural Analysis and Why (Not)? A Crash Course

april

Murat Aydemir (UvA)

EC: 1

Show Me the Money! Cultural Analysis and Research Funding in the Netherlands

mei

Murat Aydemir (UvA)

EC: geen

Lost Causes
september
Summer School
Maaïke Bleeker (UU)
EC: 5

Evaluatie en perspectieven:

Met 13 interne promovendi, 55 onderzoeksmasterstudenten en 80 stafleden mag NICA zich verheugen in een grote landelijke toeloop. Onze activiteiten worden goed tot zeer goed bezocht. Een groeiend aantal studenten maakt gebruik van de mogelijkheid EC-credits te verdienen. In mei 2012 staat een bijeenkomst op stapel waarin leden 'best practices' zullen uitwisselen omtrent nationale en Europese mogelijkheden voor het aanvragen van subsidie-aanvragen.

5. Financiën

Budget 2011 & 2012

RMA Students:	20.750,00
PhD candidates:	13.000,00

Total Budget:	33.750,00
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Expenses 2011:

Toppling Times:	2.363,00
Pink Washing:	430,26
Lost Objects:	3.752,20
What to do with our brain:	651,36
Mediterranean Revolutions:	243,10

Total:	7.439,92
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Estimated Expenses 2012:

Winter school:	4.000,00
Summer school:	4.000,00

3 x Atelier:	1.500,00
3 x Masterclass	1.500,00

Total:	11.000,00
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6. Evaluatie uitvoering DLG/LOGOS-akkoord

a. Aanmelding van ReMA-studenten en promovendi:

Het verdient aanbeveling om studenten en promovendi zich rechtstreeks en op persoonlijke titel te laten aanmelden bij de onderzoeksschool van hun keuze. Studenten en promovendi uit zeer uiteenlopende disciplines kunnen immers mogelijk een sterke affiniteit hebben met de interdisciplinaire en theoretische cultuuranalyse.

b. Communicatie met de landelijke Graduate Schools:

De Graduate Schools ontvangen per email updates van onze activiteiten.

c. Aanspraken 2^e deel rugzakje promovendi:

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c. Onderwijs voor niet bij de onderzoeksschool aangemelde ReMA- en PhD-studenten:

NICA voert een principieel "open deur"-beleid: aangemelde en niet-aangemelde studenten en promovendi, externe en interne promovendi hebben allen toegang.

d. Onderwijs voor promovendi van niet-geesteswetenschappelijke faculteiten

NICA voert een principieel "open deur"-beleid: aangemelde en niet-aangemelde studenten en promovendi, externe en interne promovendi hebben allen toegang.

e. Aangevraagde/verkrege docenturen:

De procedure om docenturen per activiteit aan te vragen is omslachtig. Het verdient aanbeveling om daar een eenvoudiger en flexibeler systeem voor op te zetten, bij voorkeur één waarin de onderzoekscholen rechtstreeks uren te verdelen hebben.

Bijlage 1: Overzicht promovendi

A. Onderstaande kandidaten zijn formeel geregistreerd via de Graduate Schools

Marie Beauchamps

Paradox of Sovereignty: Denaturalization in the Age of Globalization

Supervisor: Mireille Rosello | UvA, 2011-2015

In the summer of 2010, the French press reported ministerial propositions to institutionalize the state's capacity to deprive new nationals of their French nationality in case of criminal conviction, polygamy or excision. At the same time, the Dutch new right wing coalition's agreement was being written, stating the coalition's intention to legalize the state's capacity to retrieve the Dutch nationality to new nationals found guilty of serious criminal activity. The aim of this research project is to examine the visibility of denaturalization practices, their gradual normalization and to explore possible ways of resisting them. Current denaturalization practices are narrowly linked to international security and immigration policies. The notion of pre-emption, which refers to a precautionary and categorizing principle, is central to my investigation of denaturalization because it highlights the sovereign capacity to create norms according to which residents are categorized and identified. Having in mind to find possibilities for denaturalized beings to re-gain an audible voice in society, I explore the imaginative power of art and expand the analysis beyond the limits of the social-political discussion pertaining to security and immigration policies. (De)naturalization practices are moreover further aligned with a much wider narrative on citizen rights and transnational migration. This takes me to research historical moments—such as the time around the French Revolution of 1789—that contain traces of (de)naturalization practices. By mobilizing the Foucauldian notions of sovereignty, power, knowledge and population, I explore the genealogical link between these historical events and juridical-political developments in the past twenty years.

Martijn van Boven

Discourse, Rhizome, and Cognition. Three Perspectives on Social and Cultural Change

Supervisor prof.dr. B.P. van Heusden | University of Groningen 2010- 2014

Martijn Boven is a PhD candidate in the humanities at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands. He is working on a project that is called: 'Discourse, Rhizome, and Cognition. Three Perspectives on Social and Cultural Change.' In this project he investigates the mediation of permanence and change in *praxis* (i.e. social change) and in *poesis* (i.e. cultural change). The aim is to develop and compare three opposing frameworks that can deal with the mediation of permanence and change. The first framework is a hermeneutic one and will be derived from Paul Ricoeur's later works on narrative and discourse. The second framework is a rhizomatic one and will be derived from Gilles Deleuze's early works. The third framework is a cognitive one and will be derived from cognitive science (e.g. Francisco Varela's biological approach to cognition).

Camelia Errouane

Advertising the Republic: The Role of Public Mural Decorations in the Invention of a New Republican Tradition in late 19th-Century Paris

Supervisor prof.dr. W.E. Krul | University of Groningen 2010- 2014

Late-19th century decorative murals in the public sphere of Parisian *mairies* (town halls) and other public buildings depict an idealized image of modern life under the Third Republic. The monumental paintings were intended to play an important educational role in inspiring the visitors to become moral citizens. They served as visual expressions of social values. The moral and civic ideals of the Republic, such as

Family, Work or Democracy, were translated into "modern" allegories with figures that were clearly inspired by contemporary human beings. The artists who executed the decorations were obviously trying to represent the changes of modern life by choice of subject as well as in the manner of painting. The paintings are experimental in their style as the artists tried to express new ideas and values and therefore were unable to rely on established formulas. Yet nowadays, these *bricolages* of traditional and modern elements are perceived as bizarre and old-fashioned. The generally assumed opposition between academic and modernist art seems to lie at the bottom of this disapproval; an opposition, which is usually described too simplistically. As a result, the murals have been neglected by art historians. Yet although many of the painters that executed the murals are nowadays forgotten, some of them did receive scholarly attention at the turn of the 20th century. Their decorative works are mentioned in monographs and handbooks. These publications and contemporary articles in periodicals provide some information on the artists, their life and oeuvre. Lately, there has been growing interest on these artists. An aesthetic discussion of the mural paintings is inseparably linked to their function within the political public sphere at the time. In particular, I will focus on the performative dimension of the paintings. My central objective is to understand how a new republican tradition was constructed at that time in history through the practice of civic rituals in the mairies and to investigate the role that the paintings played in that process.

Lonneke van Heugten

Festival Curation in the Forcefield of International Prestige and National Heritage
Supervisor Kati Rottger | University of Amsterdam 2011-2015

This research project focuses on the impact of theatre festivals as cultural identity mediators in-between international prestige and national heritage. Two developments fuel this question. Firstly, processes of Europeanization and globalization provoke a need for rearticulating what cultural identity means and ways of affirming it. The Dutch cultural and historical canon is one way of affirmation through official (artificial?) cultural memory. The second development is a renewed interest in different modes of transmission of history. Living or immaterial heritage and its importance for cultural identity formulated by UNESCO is an exponent of this consciousness. These developments open up a rethinking of theatre and especially internationally oriented theatre festivals as agents in cultural identity transmission.

Blandine Joret

The World in Its Own Image: On Limitless Representations where Cartography
Merges with Eyesight Perception

Supervisor Marie-Aude Baronian | University of Amsterdam 2011-2015

This project aspires to be a media-archaeological study of limitless representations in which the cartographic abstraction and direct eyesight perception are in constant dialogue. Guided by French film theorist André Bazin, who proclaimed the cinema to be essentially a reality of space, I will study digital spatial representations, highlighting the importance of his writings for understanding contemporary cinema, and building upon his conception of a cinema 'not yet invented'. More than half a century after his influential *What Is Cinema?*, cinema has undergone considerable mutations, rendering Bazin's quest more pertinent for media studies today. This proposed research attempts to provide a contemporary reading of Bazin, built on a close analysis of how spatial mediations influence our conception of the universe. Centred on key concepts like presence, mediation, point of view, distance, and closeness, this study will look at how an altered experience of space is incorporated in the artistic representation of limitlessness.

Aylin Kuryel

Visual Community in Transition: The Image Politics of Nationalism in Turkey after 1990

Supervisors Mieke Bal and Esther Peeren | University of Amsterdam 2010-2014

My dissertation explores the relationship between nationalism and imagery. I argue that creating a “visual community” is essential for nationalist ideologies to work. Images acquire various roles in the creation of a visual community on a national scale. I distinguish four different types of images in the context of contemporary nationalism in Turkey: “panoptic images,” which mainly work from top to bottom and aim at imposing a certain national identity; “bio-images,” which become an inherent part of people’s body either permanently or temporarily and turn them into national subjects; “commodified images,” the nationalist symbols circulating as commodity objects; and finally “resisting images,” which use nationalist visual patterns for critical and subversive purposes. The period after 1990 witnessed both the rise of nationalism and the crisis that nationalist practices face with. This striking phase can be well read through images. Therefore, the analysis of the creation of a visual community by such images, which is based on the acceptance or rejection of an assumed national identity, is crucial for understanding Turkey’s rapidly changing cultural and political context, and beyond this, for the theorization of the relationship between nationalism and imagery in general.

Miriam Meissner

Narratives of the 2007-2010 Financial Crisis as Mythology of the 21st-Century Global City

Supervisor Christoph Lindner | University of Amsterdam 2011-2015

The proposed project analyzes the textual and (audio-)visual narrativization of the global financial crisis of 2007-2010. In particular, it analyzes how financial crisis narratives articulated and staged the early 21st century global city as the relational setting of globally intertwined escalating crisis events and, thus, as an imaginary topos of contemporary economic globalization. The project pays special attention to figures that have been recurring in the discourses of the 2007-2010 financial crisis such as the bubble, the monster, the screen-interface and the trading room. Since what defines a global city is its powerful nodal position within a globalizing network of socioeconomic interdependencies, the analysis primarily concentrates on the question how, via the above mentioned figures, contemporary cities’ causal and technical relations to economic globalization have been articulated. The project thus focuses on the narrativization of relationality; it assumes that, within the financial crisis discourses, particular figures served to express global interdependency and explores how these figures were narratively associated with the city. By applying the concept of myth (Cassirer, 1925, Barthes 1957) to narrative analysis, the project further aspires a more critical perspective on the financial crisis discourses by suggesting that its narratives form a dynamically developing, composite myth that simultaneously construes but also estranges (mystifies) both the early 21st century global city and the actual course of financial crisis events. Methodologically, the project applies techniques of narrative, visual and aesthetic analysis (close-reading) to a selection of internationally circulating journalistic, filmic and literary depictions of the 2007-2010 financial crisis.

Judith Naeff

The Urban Experience of Post-Civil-War Beirut in Contemporary Artistic Productions

Supervisor Christoph Lindner | University of Amsterdam 2011-2015

This research project aims at analysing contemporary artistic and literary productions as a reflection of the urban experience of post-civil-war Beirut within the framework of the efforts at reconstruction initiated by the Lebanese authorities. Beirut was and is the focus of a complex configuration of conflicting

social, political and economic interests, on a local and a regional level. Before, after and to a lesser extent during the civil wars (1975-1990), the city was a flowering centre of culture. In recent years the cultural productions have increasingly focused on the development of new, critical visions of Lebanese history and society, the effects of traumatic experiences and the preservation of a collective cultural memory. In the meantime, the authorities have started large-scale reconstruction projects within the urban space of Beirut, reflecting a specific vision of past, present and future. This project will investigate the tensions that arise between artistic and political visions of the present cityscape of Beirut, which has to deal with a conflict-ridden past and a future impregnated with traumatic memories. Within the field of Middle Eastern Studies, this project seeks to contribute to a more refined understanding of post-civil-war Beirut by using new theoretical approaches derived from Cultural Studies, Urban Studies and Memory Studies. The project is important because Lebanon's small but significant and innovative cultural scene has remained largely ignored by academic research, especially from an interdisciplinary perspective. In addition, the Dutch tradition of Middle Eastern Studies desperately needs input from the field of critical cultural studies.

Lonneke van der Velden

Critical Identity Formations in the Age of Surveillance Networks

Supervisor Richard Rogers | University of Amsterdam 2010-2014

This research project comprises an empirical-philosophical analysis aiming to develop conceptual tools for analysing contemporary surveillance networks and forms of critical identity formations. On the theoretical level it aims to overcome a post-Foucauldian deadlock by reframing surveillance, the impact of contemporary surveillance technologies, and practices of subversion through the work of Gilles Deleuze and Bruno Latour. On a practical level it aims to investigate the way in which evolving methods of surveillance and network-technologies take part in processes of identity formation. More broadly the research will contribute to critical discussions of surveillance that are currently limited to legalistic jargon or dated concepts of privacy. This project aims to shift the debate from a view of surveillance as methods of fear and, as a response, protection of the private self, towards one in which practices of surveillance become part and parcel of identity formation. This standpoint is not only better suited to approach current practices of surveillance, but it also generates new insights in the possibilities and political relevance of creative interventions. The central question therefore is: how to conceptualize critical identity formations in surveillance networks?

Lucy van der Wiel

Freezing Fertility: Oocyte Cryopreservation and Ageing

Supervisors Mieke Bal and Jose van Dijck | University of Amsterdam 2010-2014

The basis of my research is the triangulation of the technology of oocyte cryopreservation, its representation in the popular imagination and a concept that is surprisingly under theorised in the study of culture: ageing. Reshuffling the abilities of the reproductive body, oocyte cryopreservation reveals the modes of thinking employed to give cultural and political shape to biotechnologies and the bodies they engage with. Given the recent development and implementation of oocyte cryopreservation, I propose a unique and topical project that will be the first book-length study within the humanities of a technology that potentially has far-reaching consequences on contemporary thinking about female fertility and ageing. Taking oocyte cryopreservation and the reproductive body as starting point, my project will approach 'ageing' as a cultural construct by positioning it in a media and historical framework, developing it in relation to the theoretical concepts of performativity and

corporeality, temporality, spatiality and integrating these notions within globalised techno-human networks.

Renske Wierda

Manoeuvring with Authority in Medical Advertisements

Supervisors Frans van Eemeren and Francisca Snoeck Henkemans | University of Amsterdam 2010-2014

In medical advertisements, manufacturers try to convince consumers to buy a medical product, such as a prescription drug, a pain killer or a dietary product. The writers of these advertisements maneuver strategically between dialectical reasonableness and rhetorical persuasiveness: it is their goal to influence consumers as effectively as possible, within the bounds of a reasonable discussion. An interesting maneuver within this genre is the use of authority. Sometimes, an argument by authority is used in a correct, reasonable manner, but sometimes it violates a certain discussion rule. To determine whether an argument by authority is reasonable, the reader of a medical advertisement can subject the argument to several critical questions. Rense's research project aims to establish how advertisers can anticipate these critical questions in their strategic maneuvering, and whether ordinary readers of medical advertisements are actually able to tell apart sound uses of the argument by authority from fallacious uses.

Philipp Schmerheim

Scepticism Films: The Problem of Knowing in Contemporary Cinema

Supervisor Josef Früchtel | University of Amsterdam 2011-2013

This dissertation project examines configurations of philosophical ideas and thought experiments in contemporary cinema by analyzing films that explore the philosophical problem of doubt about human knowledge of the world. Such 'scepticism films' are based on film plots that involve characters situated within deception situations of various sorts – simulated or fake environments, blurred boundaries between layers of reality, or systematic deception by other members of a shared world – exposing them to doubts about what they hitherto believed to know about the world they inhabit. The case studies are prepared methodologically by a detailed discussion of contemporary scholarship on the relation between film and philosophy. It will be shown that only a systematic analysis of selected films that pays attention to the means of expression available to filmmakers is able to account for the philosophical potential of narrative fiction and non-fiction film.

Tim Yaczo

Cultural Plasticity: Neuroarchaeologies of the Present

Supervisors Patricia Pisters and Jan Hein Hoogstad | University of Amsterdam 2011-2015

My project aims to intervene in the methodologies, discursive deliveries and implications of cognitive neuroscience. Considering themselves as working between branches of psychology and neuroscience, researchers of cognitive neuroscience scientifically study the biological structures underlying cognition. Propelled by developments in technology (such as Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation and Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging), studies and research resulting from employing methodologies of measurability centralize the brain as an apparatus par excellence at the intersection of physiology and psychology. The epistemological implications of such current 'recognitions' of the brain are expressed culturally in varied scenes. Characterizations in narratives are susceptible to readings of neurological structures; madness or sincerity, for example, is attributed to trauma or lesions in the brain. Gender expression and construction becomes the scene of a synaptic crime, where platitudes like male, female or trans are explained away as a

chemical and electrical reaction through the visual aid of FMRI scans. The brain, too, enters politics, not merely as a vital or biological phenomenon, but as a collection of evidence, vulnerable to management and discipline. What concerns me most about contemporary neuroscience is the seductive apophenia at play; in a quest to capture and predict 'the brain', consciousness and affect are annexed— and abbreviated—into patterns of data always already observable and intelligible. Intrigued by this sensation that neuroscience (and the trope of neuroplasticity) is becoming a brute answer to questions of corporeality, cognition and behavior, I will trace how the formation of neurocognition and plasticity implicate cultural practice and expectations.

B. Onderstaande kandidaten hebben zich informeel by ons aangemeld of worden niet intern gefinancierd

- Elena Fronk (Maastricht University)
- Maarten Michielse (Maastricht University)
- Thissen Lotte (Maastricht University)
- Anja Köppchen (Radboud Universiteit)
- Guiselle Starink-Martha (Radboud Universiteit)
- Maaïke Feirtsma (Radboud Universiteit)
- Daniëlle Bruggeman (Radboud Universiteit)
- Jacqueliën Rothfusz (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen)
- Piet Devos (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen)
- Jenifer Chao (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Hein Goeyens (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Jenifer Steetskamp (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Melanie Schiller (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Hanneke Stuit (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Michael Vocino (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Maryn Wilkinson (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Jan van Oirschot (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Irina Souch (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Jorge alves lino (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Emiel Martens (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Pedram Dibazar (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Simla Dogunan (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Fanne Boland (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Melle Kromhout (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Laurike in 't Veld (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Dominik Phypheroen (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Sanneke Stigter (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Nina Köll (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- Mari Nakamura (Universiteit Leiden)
- Joana Ozorio de Almeira Meroz (Vrije Universiteit)
- Aleks Alaettin Carakci (Leiden Universiteit)
- Yanfeng Bian (Leiden Universiteit)
- Chiara Marchini (Leiden Universiteit)
- Janna Houwen (Leiden Universiteit)
- Jesse Prevoo (Leiden Universiteit)
- Ray Julius-Adeoye (Leiden Universiteit)

- Jessy Kuo (Leiden Universiteit)
- Nouzha Baba (Leiden Universiteit)
- Mohammed Tariq (Leiden Universiteit)
- Daan Wesselman (Leiden Universiteit)
- Timea Lelik (Leiden Universiteit)
- Norlela Ismail (Leiden Universiteit)
- Aicha Ait Berri (Leiden Universiteit)
- Tendai Mangena (Leiden Universiteit)
- Piet Keisers (Leiden Universiteit)
- Ahl Ben Taleb (Leiden Universiteit)
- Pedro Manuel (Universiteit van Utrecht)
- Marijn de Langen (Universiteit van Utrecht)
- Jeroen Fabius (Universiteit van Utrecht)
- Liesbeth Groot Nibbelink (Universiteit van Utrecht)
- Joao da Silva (Universiteit van Utrecht)
- Nico de Vos (Universiteit van Utrecht)

Bijlage 2: Overzicht onderzoeksmasterstudenten

• Frank van Haperen	Media Studies	UvA
• Adriana Ivanova	Media Studies	UvA
• Tessa Askamp	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Karin Anzivino	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Dewi Vrenegoor	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Ana Catarino	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Dima Hamadeh	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Kathleen Stephenson	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Chelsea Oostdijk	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Stephan de Groot	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Fiep van Bodegom	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Friederike Mehl	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Rikus Zijlstra	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Charlotte van Oostrum	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Nina Polak	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Dana Dolghin	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Sacha Post	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Fleur Beyers	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Kiira Halinen	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Oznur Tuna	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Josephine Meijer	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Stephan de Groot	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Merel Sijbrant	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Imara Limon	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Reka Deim	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Luke Shirock	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Penn Ip	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Juliën Staartjes	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Salvatore Bohrer	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Carola de Jong	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Lisa Romig	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Brina Orožim	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Naomi Combrink	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Alexandra Abram	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Rosalyn Borst	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Atene Mendelyte	Media Studies	UvA
• Egle Mykolaityte	Media Studies	UvA
• Simon Marschall	Media Studies	UvA
• Christian Perez	Cultural Analysis	UvA
• Isabel Verkes	Philosophy	UvA
• Anne de Loos	Art Studies	UvA
• Gunes Sahin	Art Studies	UvA
• Linnea Semmerling	Art Studies	UvA
• Dick Zijp	Art Studies	UvA
• Suzanne Knip	Art Studies	UvA
• Suzanne Visser	Art Studies	UvA
• Nina Westzaan	Art Studies	UvA
• Jesse Ahlers	Artistic Research	UvA
• Michal Kirschbaum	Artistic Research	UvA

• Patty Jansen	Artistic Research	UvA
• Judith Westerveld	Artistic Research	UvA
• Melina Reintjens	kunst & visuele cultuur	UL
• Karlijn Slegers	kunst & visuele cultuur	UL
• Myrthe Huijts	kunst & visuele cultuur	UL
• Meredith Holmgren	Area Studies	UL

Bijlage 3: Overzicht stafleden

1. prof. dr. E.J. (Ernst) van Alphen - Universiteit Leiden, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
2. dr. A. (Agnes) Andeweg- Universiteit Maastricht, Faculteit der Cultuur- en Maatschappijwetenschappen
3. dr. M. (Murat) Aydemir - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
4. prof. dr. M. (Mieke) Bal - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
5. dr. S. (Sophie) Berrebi - Universiteit van Amsterdam Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
6. prof. dr. K. (Karin) Bijstelveld - Universiteit Maastricht, Faculteit der Cultuur- en Maatschappijwetenschappen
7. prof. dr. M. (Maaïke) Bleeker - Universiteit Utrecht, Dep. Media- en Cultuurwetenschappen
8. dr. M. (Maria) Boletsi - Universiteit Leiden, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
9. Prof. dr. R.W. (René) Boomkens - Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Faculteit Wijsbegeerte
10. dr. K. (Kiene) Brillenburg Wurth - Universiteit Utrecht, Dep. Moderne Talen
11. dr. U. (Ulrike) Brunotte - Universiteit Maastricht, Faculteit der Cultuur- en Maatschappijwetenschappen
12. prof. dr. R. (Rosemarie) Buikema Universiteit Utrecht
13. dr. S.P.M. (Stijn) Bussels - Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Faculteit der Letteren
14. dr. S.M.G. (Sebastien) Chauvin - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Maatschappij- en Gedragwetenschappen
15. prof. dr. D. (Deborah) Cherry - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
16. dr. L.T. (Laura) Copier - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
17. prof. dr. W. (Wouter) Davidts - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Faculteit der Letteren
18. dr. Y. (Yra) van Dijk - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
19. prof. dr. C.A. (Caroline) van Eck - Universiteit Leiden Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
20. dr. M. (Matthijs) Engelberts - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
21. R. (Rachel) Esner - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
22. dr. R.W.H. (Rudolph) Glitz - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
23. prof. dr. M. (Marieke) de Goede - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Maatschappij- en Gedragwetenschappen
24. prof. dr. F. (Frances) Gouda - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Maatschappij- en Gedragwetenschappen
25. dr. D.A. (Dan) Hassler Forest - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
26. dr. J. (Jo) Heirman - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
27. drs. E. (Ernst) van den Hemel - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen

28. dr. L. (Louis) van den Hengel - Universiteit Maastricht, Faculteit der Cultuur- en Maatschappijwetenschappen
29. prof. dr. J.W.(Jan Willem) van Henten - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
30. dr. J.H. (Jan Hein) Hoogstad - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
31. dr. Y. (Yasco) Horsman - Universiteit Leiden, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
32. dr. I. (Isabel) Hoving - Universiteit Leiden, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
33. dr. M.M. (Monica) Jansen - Universiteit Utrecht, Faculteit Geesteswetenschappen
34. dr. Y. (Yolande) Jansen - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
35. dr. M.J.A. (Madeleine) Kasten - Universiteit Leiden, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
36. dr. S.C. (Saskia) Kersenboom - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
37. prof. dr. (Frank) Kessler - Universiteit Utrecht, Instituut voor Media & Re/presentatie
38. dr. ir. J. (Jeroen) de Kloet - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
39. prof. dr. F.W. (Frans Willem) Korsten - Universiteit Leiden, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
40. dr. G.M.M. (Giseline) Kuipers - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Maatschappij- en Gedragwetenschappen
41. dr. T.K. (Tarja) Laine - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
42. prof. dr. S. (Susan) Legene - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Faculteit der letteren
43. prof. dr. W. (Walter) van de Leur - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
44. prof. dr. C.P. (Christoph) Lindner - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
45. dr. A.A. (Amade) M'Charek - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Maatschappij- en Gedragwetenschappen
46. prof. dr.S. (Sander) van Maas - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
47. prof. dr. M. (Marita) Matthijsen - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
48. dr. V. (Vincent) Meelberg - Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, Faculteit der Letteren
49. dr. E.M. (Edwin) van Meerkerk - Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, Faculteit der Letteren
50. prof. dr. M. (Maaïke) Meijer - Universiteit Maastricht, Faculteit der Cultuur- en Maatschappijwetenschappen
51. dr. L. (Liesbeth) Minnaard - Universiteit Leiden, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
52. dr. J.J. (Julia) Noordegraaf - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
53. dr. H. (Henk) Oosterling, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam, Faculteit der Wijsbegeerte
54. prof. dr. D. (David) Pascoe - Universiteit Utrecht, Faculteit Geesteswetenschappen

55. dr. E. (Esther) Peeren - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
56. prof. dr. P.P.R.W. (Patricia) Pisters - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
57. dr. L. (Liedeke) Plate - Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, Institute for Gender Studies.
58. dr. T. (Thomas) Poell - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
59. dr. S. (Sandra) Ponzanesi - Universiteit Utrecht, Faculteit Geesteswetenschappen
60. prof. dr. J. (Joost) Raessens - Universiteit Utrecht, Faculteit Geesteswetenschappen
61. dr. I.A.M. (Ihab) Saloul - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
62. prof. dr. A. (Anneke) Smelik - Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, Faculteit der Letteren
63. dr. M. (Markus) Stauff - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
64. dr. M.J.C.G. (Martijn) Stevens - Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, Faculteit der Letteren
65. dr. W.B.S. (Wanda) Strauven - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
66. dr. A. (Aagje) Swinnen - Universiteit Maastricht, Centre for Gender and Diversity
67. dr. M. (Marijke) de Valck - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
68. dr. P. (Pablo) Valdivia Martin - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
69. prof. dr. R. (Renée) van de Vall - Universiteit Maastricht, Faculteit der Cultuur- en Maatschappijwetenschappen
70. dr. K. (Karel) Vanhaesebrouck - Universiteit Maastricht, Faculteit der Cultuur- en Maatschappijwetenschappen
71. dr. N. (Nanna) Verhoeff - Universiteit Utrecht, Faculteit Geesteswetenschappen
72. prof. dr. G.E.E. (Ginette) Verstraete - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Faculteit der Letteren
73. dr. P.W.J. (Peter) Verstraten - Universiteit Leiden, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
74. dr. J.M. (Marco) de Waard - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
75. dr. K. (Karin) Wenz - Universiteit Maastricht, Faculteit der Cultuur- en Maatschappijwetenschappen
76. dr. A.L.B. (Astrid) van Weyenberg - Universiteit van Amsterdam, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
77. prof. dr. S. (Sally) Wyatt - Universiteit Maastricht, Faculteit der Cultuur- en Maatschappijwetenschappen
78. prof. dr. K. (Kitty) Zijlmans - Universiteit Leiden, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
79. prof. dr. ing. (Rob) Zwijnenberg - Universiteit Leiden, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen