



*Netherlands Institute
for Cultural Analysis*

YEAR REPORT 2012

NICA: *Netherlands Institute for Cultural Analysis*

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1. MISSION

NICA is the Dutch national research school dedicated to cultural analysis, i.e. the academic study of contemporary culture from a broad Humanities perspective.

The scholars and students participating in NICA come from a variety of disciplines in the Humanities, such as Comparative Literature, Film Studies, Theatre Studies, Modern Languages, Philosophy, and others.

Additionally, the school brings together scholars, MPhil and PhD students from eight universities in the Netherlands: the Universities of Amsterdam (both University of Amsterdam and Free University Amsterdam), Leiden, Utrecht, Nijmegen, Maastricht, Groningen, and Rotterdam.

Nine two-year research master programmes are affiliated to the school. Some eighty staff members, 24 internal (funded) and 52 external PhD students, as well as current 77 MPhil (or research master) students (classes of 2011 and 2012), all work together in NICA.

The school's research profile may be described as:

(1) *hermeneutic* in its broadest sense, that is, centred on the description, analysis, interpretation of, and reflection on, diverse cultural artefacts and phenomena, e.g. novels, web sites, paintings, exhibition, films, poems, demonstrations, performances, and opera's;

(2) *interdisciplinary*, because the products of current and on-going cultural developments resist enclosure within established disciplines—although, of course, the expertise and archives of the traditional Humanities disciplines remain indispensable;

(3) *theoretical* in that it opens up the study of culture to conceptual and philosophical questions;

(4) and focused on *contemporary* culture—including the ways in which cultures shape a relation to the past, an approach that commonly goes under the heading of “cultural memory.”

Hosted at the University of Amsterdam, NICA facilitates a true intellectual community, fostering a high level of interaction between graduate students and staff members from different departments and universities, between PhD and MPhil students, as well as between graduate students and research staff.

The school favours a light and “bottom-up” organizational structure, designed to facilitate emerging interests and priorities; our activities are as likely to be initiated by students as by staff members.

The school's yearly curriculum comprises a series of seminars, courses, masterclasses, a Summer School, workshops, reading groups, and lectures. Introducing students to a wide range of scholars, issues, objects, and approaches, NICA enables and encourages its students to develop their own research interests and formulate their own research projects.

Key Numbers:

- 8 participating universities;
- 9 associated research masters;
- 291 participants to our 2012 activities;
- 24 current internal PhD students;
- 77 current research master students;
- 53 certificates given out to participants.

2. ORGANISATION

Host: Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen, Universiteit van Amsterdam

Director: Prof. dr. Christoph Lindner (UvA)

Programme director: dr. Murat Aydemir (UvA)

Executive Board: Prof. dr. Christoph Lindner (UvA), dr. Murat Aydemir (UvA), Prof. dr. Ernst van Alphen (LU), Prof. dr. Maaïke Bleeker (UU)

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

Office: dr. Eloe Kingma, manager; Chantal Olijerhoek, secretary

Advisory Board:

- Prof. dr. Maaïke Meijer (UM, Gender Studies)
- Prof. dr. Ernst van Alphen (LU, Literatuurwetenschap)
- Prof. dr. Maaïke Bleeker (UU, Theaterwetenschap) (*chair*)
- Prof. dr. Ginette Verstraete (VU, Cultuurwetenschap)
- Prof. dr. René Boomkens (GU, Wijsbegeerte)
- Prof. dr. Patricia Pisters (Mediastudies)
- Prof. dr. Frans Willem Korsten (EU, Literatuurwetenschap)
- Prof. dr. Rosemarie Buikema (Gender Studies)
- Prof. dr. Anneke Smelik (RU, Cultuurwetenschap).

Associated Research master programmes:

- 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. ACTIVITIES

Seminars (6 EC)

Love and Politics: Passion, Affection, Community

Seminar, 1st semester 2012-13

University of Amsterdam

Dr. Johan Hartle (University of Amsterdam), dr. Anders Johansson (University of Amsterdam)

Cross-Media Seminar: Technologies of the Mediated Subject

Seminar, 1st and 2nd semester 2012-13

University of Amsterdam

Prof. dr. Christoph Lindner (University of Amsterdam)

Film and Philosophy Seminar: Cinema as Aural Art

Seminar, 1st and 2nd semester 2012-13

University of Amsterdam

Prof. dr. Patricia Pisters (University of Amsterdam)

Urban Cultures Seminar: Rhythm

Seminar, 1st and 2nd semester 2012-13

University of Amsterdam

Prof. dr. Christoph Lindner (University of Amsterdam)

Amsterdam Theory Seminar: Knowledge and Globalization

Seminar, 1st and 2nd semester 2012-13

University of Amsterdam

Prof. dr. Mireille Rosello and dr. Sudeep Dasgupta (University of Amsterdam)

Summer and Winter Schools (4 EC)

Minor Jurisprudences: Literature, Law, and Animality

Winter School, January 15-16, 2013

University of Leiden

Prof. dr. Frans-Willem Korsten (Erasmus University Rotterdam/Leiden University), dr. Jasco Horsman (Leiden University)

Causes: Science and the Humanities

Summer School, September 6 and 7, 2012

Utrecht University

Prof. dr. Maaike Bleeker and dr. Iris van der Tuin (Universiteit Utrecht)

Doubt

Winter School, January 12-13

Leiden University

Dr Isabel Hoving (Leiden University), Liesbeth Minnaard (Leiden University), Esther Peeren (University of Amsterdam)

Masterclasses (1 EC)

Michel Chion: Trans-Sensory Rhythm in Cinema
Masterclass, December 7, 2012
University of Amsterdam
Prof. dr. Patricia Pisters (University of Amsterdam)

Laura Marks: Methods for Affective Analysis
Masterclass, October 16, 2012
Radboud University Nijmegen
Prof. dr. Laura Marks (Simon Fraser University, Vancouver) Dr. Martijn Stevens (Radboud University Nijmegen)

Ernst van Alphen: Databases, Archives, and Art
Masterclass, March 8, 2012
University of Amsterdam
Prof. dr. Ernst van Alphen (Leiden University)

James Williams: "Time-Quake"
Masterclass, March 6, 2012
University of Amsterdam
Prof. dr. James Williams (University of Dundee), Patricia Pisters (University of Amsterdam)

Workshops (1 EC)

The Next Step in Ecocriticism
Workshop, November 23, 2012
Radboud University Nijmegen
Dr. Isabel Hoving (Leiden University)

Remediation and Reinvention: Literature, Science, Media
Workshop, November 7, 2012
University of Amsterdam
Dr. Kiene Brillenburg Wurth (Utrecht University)

Art, Culture, and the Environment
Workshop, June 19, 2012
Leiden University
Dr. Isabel Hoving (Leiden University)

The Surge of Autochtony: Politics, Rhetorics, and Aesthetics
Workshop, Platform for Postcolonial Readings, June 22, 2012
Dr. Isabel Hoving (Leiden University), dr. Liesbeth Minnaard (Leiden University), dr. Elisabeth Beekers (VUB), dr. Sarah de Mul (OU)

Ecocriticism Meets Postcolonial Studies
Workshop, January 27, 2012
University of Amsterdam
Dr. Isabel Hoving (Leiden University)

Other

Show Me the Money?!

Discussion and advice on NWO-applications, November 28

University of Amsterdam

Dr. Murat Aydemir (University of Amsterdam)

PhD Tips and Tricks: Workflow Apps

December 13, 2012

University of Amsterdam

Drs. Joana Ozorio de Almeida Meroz (Free University Amsterdam)

How to Do Cultural Analysis and Why (Not)?

Crash Course, June 22, 2012

University of Amsterdam

Dr. Murat Aydemir (University of Amsterdam)

How to Survive the Neoliberal University?

Debate, January 25, 2012

University of Amsterdam

Dr. Yolande Jansen and Prof. dr. Jeroen de Kloet (University of Amsterdam)

Discourse Network 2000: Around Kittler

Reading Group, 2012-13

University of Amsterdam

Drs. Melle Kromhout (University of Amsterdam)

Deleuze Reading Group: Film-Philosophical Encounters

Reading Group, 2012-13

University of Amsterdam

Drs. Asli Ozgen and Nur Ozgenalp (University of Amsterdam)

Overview 2012:

Event	ECTS	Number participants	RMA participants	PhD participants	Other participants
Doubt	5	27	15	8	4
How to Survive	-	29	9	11	9
Eco-Poco	1	15	5	2	8
Advanced Queer Theory	10	23	12	8	3
James Williams	-	22	15	7	
Transgressive Archiving	-	10	2	8	
BASCE	-	NB			
How to do Cultural Analysis	1	15	12	3	
The Surge of Autochtony	1	16	9	7	
Causes	5	21	11	7	3
Laura Marks	1	15	7	8	
Remediation	-	17	10	7	
Ecocriticism	-	13	8	5	
NWO: Show me the money	-	27	7	7	13
Michel Chion	1	41	18	12	11
Total	25	291	140	100	51

4. FINANCIAL REPORT

<i>Earnings</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Expenses</i>	<i>Balance</i>
Fees PhD researchers *	5.000	11.000	6.000-
Fees Research Master students *	8.000	17.000	9.000-
Office budget Bureau (DLG)	30.000	30.000	-
Budget Bureau t.b.v. ReMa (DG)	10.000	10.000	-
Additioneel budget coördinatie (FGW)	-	2.326	2.326-
Overig	-	92	92-
Total Earnings	53.000	70.418	17.418-
<i>Expenses</i>			
Director	20.000	16.514	3.486
Coordinator & Office Manager	20.000	25.812	5.812-
Total Personnel Costs	40.000	42.326	2.326-
Winter School	5.000	3.870	1.130
Summer School	4.000	2.260	1.740
Workshops	2.000	2.872	872-
Master Classes	2.000	1.528	472
Other Events	-	864	864-
Total Research Activities	13.000	11.394	1.606
Total Expenses	53.000	53.720	720-
Added to the budget	-	16.698	16.698-

* Only € 7.750 has been collected up to now; the additional € 20.250 is due in 2013.

5. BUDGET 2013

Earnings

Fees PhD-researchers	8.000
Fees Research Master students	20.000
Basisbudget Bureau (DLG)	30.000
Budget Bureau t.b.v. ReMa (DG)	10.000
Total Earnings	68.000

Expenses

Director	20.000
Coordinator & Office Manager	20.000
Total Personnel Costs	40.000

Winterschool	5.000
Summerschool	5.000
Seminars	3.000
Master Classes	3.000
Other Events	2.000
Total Research Activities	18.000

Total Expenses	58.000
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Added to the budget	10.000
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APPENDICES

PhD Candidates

A. Officially registered via the Graduate Schools

1. Marie Beauchamps

Paradox of Sovereignty: Denaturalization in the Age of Globalization

Supervisor: Mireille Rosello | University of Amsterdam, 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.

2. 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).

3. 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.

4. **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.

5. **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.

6. **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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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?

10. 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.

11. 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 manoeuvre 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.

New in 2012:

14. Artyom Anikin

Deciphering the Cultural Palimpsest of New Amsterdam

Supervisors Christoph Lindner & Esther Peeren | University of Amsterdam 2012-2016

The notion of the palimpsest on objects containing stray remnants hinting at an older and hidden layer of information, when adjusted for the field of cultural analysis, offers a methodological framework for deciphering and re-manifesting bygone cityscapes and culture in a contemporary context. This framework will be investigated and applied to the spatial re-territorialization of New York as New Amsterdam in recent years. In the decade since September 11th public and academic debates in the city have focused on the politics of memory and the process of memorialization. Renewed interest in the colonial history of New York and recent attempts to reconstruct the space of Dutch Manhattan through architecture, monuments, festivals, literature, film, and digital media have superimposed an image of a vanished city upon a contemporary metropolis. By developing the

palimpsest as a critical theory and surveying this (re-)created space the cultural palimpsest of New Amsterdam can be deciphered, providing a clear perspective on the relation of the city to its past.

15. Lonnie van Brummelen

Drifting Studio Practice. Return of the making in the thinking

Supervisor Patricia Pisters | University of Amsterdam 2012-2016

Discourse that leaves artistic work unquestioned sways the platforms of art and culture. Works of art are reduced to content and used to illustrate current theories and political positions. With this practice based research I want to arrive at a theory of artistic practice that counterbalances the current preoccupation with the textual and ideological.

My preferred artistic approach is to temporarily move into a territory unknown to me, and to explore this territory from within. This requires a constant shuttling back-and-forth between the field where the research is conducted, and the realm where the findings will be contextualized and interpreted. I call this way of working a drifting studio practice. What could be the epistemological value of work developed on the unstable ground of a drifting studio? Could a drifting studio practice, with its loose, inefficient and non-teleological knowledge production provide challenge to existing theories and positions? What could a practice driven theory look like? These are questions I seek to explore.

I will apply the method of shuttling back-and-forth by paralleling artistic production to production in other sectors. To develop a vocabulary and ground the research empirically, I will conduct fieldwork in communities of farmers and fishermen. Theories on fieldwork and representation by anthropologists and historical reflections on worker and work by filmmakers and thinkers will contextualize this empirical research. To prevent that in my research 'field' gets narrowed down to a merely human sphere, I will also look at material cinema and object-oriented philosophy.

16. Cui Chen

The Representation of Savage and Savagery as a Means of Non-representation.

Supervisors Prof. Frans-Willem Korsten and Dr. M. (Maria) Boletsi | Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society 2012 - 2016

My current research topic focuses on "The Representation of Savage and Savagery as a Means of Non-representation." This research will work on savage in two different discourses. On the one hand, it aims to show how savage is represented in a specific discourse by focusing on the temporality of savage. Firstly, it will study representations of savages before civilization by focusing on their concepts of love and war. Then, it will work on their role in the process of civilization by emphasizing that savage is not alienated from the civilized, but it exists within civilization and is an indispensable part of civilization. Lastly, it will study how savagery (the negative aspect of the contemporary society) is produced by capitalism due to the rapid development of science and technology. On the other hand, I want to study as a means of non-representation how savagery is used to think of an alternative mode of being and hope savagery can help us to think about our future.

17. Pedram Dibazar

Non-Visibility and the Politics of Presence: a spatial analysis of contemporary Iran

Supervisor Christoph Lindner | University of Amsterdam 2012-2016

This project is a cultural study of tactics of presence in the present-day Iranian public sphere. It refers to a multiplicity of spheres of socio-cultural presence of within and beyond the city. The concept of the city encompasses numerous spatio-temporal formations, including public appearances, power relations, social interactions, urban configurations, cultural representations, societal sensibilities, artistic materializations, narrative devices and affective registers. These formations, I will argue, contribute to liminal spatialities of non-visible, non-conspicuous, nonassertive and non-certain presences. As such, this project studies the ways in which politics of presence in Iranian city life work in favor of the maintenance of potentiality through the suspension of visible action and slippage between socio-cultural boundaries. Those politics of presence, I will argue, work against the reification of identities by pushing power relations into a state of uncertainty.

Building on concepts of tactics (De Certeau) and art of presence (Bayat), this project explores the link between visibility and basic urban design strategies of accessibility, recognition and encounter (Fincher and Iveson) in the context of the socio-politico-cultural environment of contemporary Iran. With presence in Iranian cities being directly related to safety and security concerns, this project will be a study of the affective economies of fear and “othering”. The non-visible registers of presence will be addressed as tactics to insulate against those insecurities, to by-pass them, and to open up a space of resistance, non-conformity, and becoming. By studying certain social and cultural spatialities through the concept of non-visibility, this project tends to outline the politics of presence in contemporary Iran.

18. Simon Ferdinand

Map Art: Alternative Visions of Globalisation

Supervisor Jeroen de Kloet & Esther Peeren | University of Amsterdam 2012-2016

The use of cartography as the thematic and formal substance of artistic production has become increasingly prevalent amongst a very diverse set of visual artists over the last century. This project aims to establish the significance of this developing genre within the context of the ongoing theoretical debates over the nature, future trajectory and cultural implications of globalisation. Through the detailed analysis of carefully selected case studies, I propose to test the hypothesis that map art constitutes both a crucial register of the effects of globalisation upon culture and consciousness, and a privileged site for cultural responses to it.

Arising out of my own desire to bring many of the themes of my previous work to bear on a topic with a strong contemporary resonance, the project’s prime contribution to the nascent scholarship of map art will be to foreground globalisation, which purports to be a decisive historical and conceptual frame. In so doing, the proposed study will position itself both within and against the fragmented but rapidly developing discourse about map art. In particular, I aim to augment the conception of map art as a postmodernist disavowal of the authority of cartography by emphasising the ways in which artists have actively embraced its potential, especially as a way of grappling with the violence of globalisation and envisioning possible alternatives.

19. Annelies Kleinherenbrink

Bridging the Gap between Evolutionary Neuroscience and New Materialism Using the Philosophy of Henri Bergson: A Case Study of Sex Differences in the Brain

Supervisor Patricia Pisters | University of Amsterdam 2012-2016

The proposed project aims to introduce post-dualistic philosophy into evolutionary neuroscience. Both neuroscience and the evolutionary sciences generally rely on the separation of nature and nurture. This state of affairs stands in stark contrast with the wide consensus amongst scholars that this dualism is obsolete and that human behavioral and cognitive traits are the result of the dynamic interaction between biological and social factors. It is therefore important to develop a theoretical, conceptual and methodological framework which translates post-dualist thought into empirical research. The project starts out as a case study of scientific texts about the evolution of sex differences in the brain, in order to map the extent of dualism present in this field. After this, the main task of the project is to extract from Henri Bergson’s oeuvre those concepts on which a theoretical, conceptual and methodological framework for empirical research can be built, which allows scientists to investigate sex differences in the brain without maintaining the dualisms which are so clearly present in evolutionary (neuro)science today.

20. Ellen Kleijnen

Route to reading. An evaluation of the effectiveness of a library in a primary school in improving reading and language skills among pupils from migrant populations

Supervisor Frank Huysmans | University of Amsterdam 2012-2016

Children from non-Western migrant groups in the Netherlands begin their primary school career with a considerable disadvantage, especially when it comes to language proficiency. Their language disadvantage continues throughout their primary school career. This study aims to investigate

whether an integrated library facility (aimed at reading promotion among these children) in a primary school leads to better reading and language skills among pupils of (predominantly) non-Western origin. Therefore, a quasi-experimental design is used involving two primary schools in Gouda: one with an integrated library and one without such a facility. Over a three year period, questionnaires and tests will be repeatedly administered from the pupils. Their parents and teachers will also be surveyed on multiple occasions

21. Melle Jan Kromhout

Noise Identities. Toward a Noise-Based Concept of Identity in Recorded Music

Supervisor Sander van Maas | University of Amsterdam 2012-2016

'Noise' is often referred to in opposition to 'sound' and 'music': an abject, transgressive or disruptive element, a threat to identity. Contrary to this view, recording practices, musical developments and listening habits show that noise is actually an important feature of recorded music. Based on this, the project argues noise is not just the antithesis of identity, but also a formative agent in the formation of singular identity in recorded music. The importance of noise is based on its decisive role in defining the identity of sounds: its noisy first instance (the 'attack') influences each sound's specific overtones. This 'noise-logic' – noise determining sonic identity – became pivotal in recorded music, since recording is all about specific sound. The resulting concept of 'noise identities' is used for assessing the meaning of sound in the age of technological media: recorded music only seems to become meaningful when noise is accounted for.

Although the importance of noise for the formation of identity in recorded music was discovered in practice, it has hardly been theorized. This project aims to do so by asking: how to conceive identity in an age of noise? It entails an historical and theoretical reevaluation of noise in a media paradigm and introduces the concept of 'noise identities,' which is developed through several case studies as a tool for the analysis of musical, as well as non-musical practices.

22. Joana Ozorio de Almeida Meroz

A History of the Construction of the Idea of Dutch Design, 1945-2010.

Supervisors: Ginette Verstraete, Timo de Rijk, and Javier Gimeno Martínez | Free University 2012-2016

This research examines the history of the construction of the idea of Dutch Design, 1945-2010. It advances from the premise that Dutch Design is the product of a discursive construction rather than the natural result of a 'typically Dutch' identity or culture. Accordingly, this research traces the development of ideas about Dutch Design as well as the actors involved in the production and institutionalisation of those ideas. Ultimately, the aim is to develop an empirical understanding of the actual relationships between Dutch Design and its socio-cultural contexts without relying on stereotypes of national culture and of design. The broader relevance of this study is that it contributes to the development of a theoretical-methodological framework within which the relationship between design and society can be studied scientifically. This is key to the development of the new academic field of Design studies in the Netherlands and abroad. This research is funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek, NWO) programme Mosaic.

23. Chiara Marchini

24. Eugen Octav Popa

Thought Experiments in Academic Discussions

Supervisor Frans van Eemeren | University of Amsterdam 2012-2016

Thought experiments are hypothetical scenarios which are used in academic discussion to justify or refute claims. One can encounter thought experiments throughout history in fields as diverse as physics, ethics, philosophy of language and cognitive sciences. Some have had a particularly innovative effect in the field in which they were produced (e.g. G. Galileo's Falling cannon balls, A. Einstein's Beam of light, J. Searle's Chinese room, J. Thomson's Violonist). Kuhn (1977) associated

these “armchair inquiries” with the conceptual reframing of scientific revolutions while Popper (1967) recognized some of them as perfect illustrations of the falsificationist methodology. Scholars generally agree that the hypothetical scenario of thought experimentation can be used to support or reject claims in science and philosophy (Horowitz & Massey, Eds. 1991). However, at present, there is no clear account of how this happens: what kind of argumentation is involved and how this argumentation can be assessed.

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