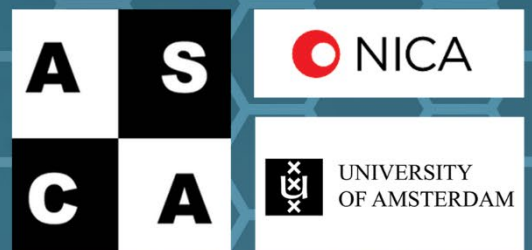


ASCA WORKSHOP 2025

RE-IMAGINING UNIVERSALITY IN THE PLURIVERSE

May 26–28, 2025

University of Amsterdam
The Netherlands



ASCA Workshop 2025

ABSTRACTS & BIOS

Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis

University of Amsterdam

The ASCA Workshop 2025, Re-Imagining Universality in the Pluriverse, is organized by Laila Bouziane and Serra Hughes. Design by Armando Troisi. Special Thanks to Eloë Kingma, Jantine van Gogh, Jaap Kooijman, and Esther Peeren for their support. Warm thanks also go to Armando Troisi, Oscar Talbot, Abdulkerim Pusat, and Jingyi Wan for their invaluable assistance with logistics.

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INTRODUCTION

In a period of increased global division, political polarization, and inequality, while the planet faces the common threat of a worsening ecological emergency, it is important to reconsider and investigate anew the potential for human commonalities. In order to adequately understand and address the alarming rise of far right parties across Europe, the widening appeal of populist leaders, and the surge in anti-immigration sentiment across the world, all while the planet is increasingly under threat by inadequate attention to global warming, it seems crucial to arrive at a universal understanding of concepts like “nation,” “racism,” “colonization,” or “climate emergency.” However, the premise of universalism has been challenged by decolonial critiques as the edifying project of imperialism that privileges a singular version of reality over others, while the concept of the “pluriverse” conceives of a reality where humans are part of a multitude of diverse worlds that are also more-than-human.

This workshop asks if it is possible to establish a new vision of universality through pluriversality. Can diverse epistemologies be recognized and honored while also potentially revealing glimpses of universality that can contribute to a sense of shared space and time necessary to address the needs of the globalized present? Is it possible to address the concerns of the planet without finding a constructive way to talk about human commonalities that do not equate to universalism as oppression? Is it possible to distinguish universality from imperial and hegemonic notions of universalism and, if so, how? This workshop brings together cultural analysts, theorists, artists, and researchers to investigate if universality can be approached through pluriversality. The aim is to do the urgent work of looking at universality, as opposed to imperial universalism, from new perspectives and find constructive ways to conceptualize a shared but diverse world.



PC HOOFTHUIS, Spuistraat 134, 1012 VK Amsterdam

8:30 – 9:00 (PCH 0.05)

REGISTRATION & COFFEE

9:00 – 9:15 (PCH 1.04)

WELCOME REMARKS

Esther Peeren (*University of Amsterdam*)

Esther Peeren is Professor of Cultural Analysis at the University Amsterdam and Department Chair Literary Studies & Linguistics. Her research focuses on processes of marginalization, center-periphery relations, and (in)visibility. From 2018 to 2024, Esther led the European Research Council-funded project “Imagining the Rural in a Globalizing World.” With a team of PhD students and postdocs, she explored what aspects of contemporary rural life, as globalized, do and do not become visible in cultural imaginations of the rural in literature, film and television, and how this affects the political mobilization of the rural. Esther’s publications include the monographs *Intersubjectivity and Popular Culture: Bakhtin and Beyond* (Stanford University Press, 2008) and *The Spectral Metaphor: Living Ghosts and the Agency of Invisibility* (Palgrave, 2014), and the edited volumes *Other Globes: Past and Peripheral Imaginations of Globalization* (Palgrave, 2019, with Simon Ferdinand and Irene Villaescusa-Illán), *Planetary Hinterlands: Extraction, Abandonment and Care* (Palgrave, 2024, with Pamila Gupta, Sarah Nuttall and Hanneke Stuit) and *Rural Imaginations for a Globalized World* (Brill, forthcoming, with Tjalling Valdés-Olmos).

OPENING: Re-Imagining Universality in the Pluriverse

Laila Bouziane (*University of Amsterdam*), **Serra Hughes** (*University of Amsterdam*)

Laila Bouziane (See [page 27](#) for bio)

Serra Hughes (See [page 51](#) for bio)

9:15 – 10:45 (PCH 1.04)

KEYNOTE 1: Markus Messling (*Käte Hamburger Centre CURE / Saarland University*)
Tragic Universalism: The Case of Champollion

Respondent: **Esther Peeren** (*University of Amsterdam*)

Chair: **Ben Moore** (*University of Amsterdam*)

Today, ideals of humanity are under challenge from relativistic and identitarian positions across the globe. How, then, can we still imagine forms of universality after the era of European universalism? Can humanity and its ideals still serve as an ethical claim, an epistemic perspective, or a political horizon? These questions vividly converge in the history of a statue standing in the Courtyard of Honour at the Collège de France depicting Jean-François Champollion, the famed decipherer of Egyptian hieroglyphs. Created by Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi, best known for the Statue of Liberty (NY), the monument was meant to honour a Republican hero, but its aesthetic casts a tragic and unsettling shadow. Unintentionally, but all too fittingly, that rupture mirrors a crack running through Champollion's understanding of the world in the final years of his life, as he witnessed—in a uniquely fundamental way—the destructive force of Europe's drive to universalize its own perspectives and norms. Reading this statue as an allegory of enlightenment—as uneasy evidence of empire's evils and a monument to the entanglement of knowledge and doubt—the talk argues instead for an ideal of universality imagined as a tragic sensitivity and virtue that can point toward hope.

Markus Messling is full professor of Romance literatures and comparative literary and cultural studies at Saarland University, and director of the Käte Hamburger Centre for Cultural Practices of Reparation (CURE) funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). Previously, he was deputy director of Centre Marc Bloch, the Franco-German Research Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities, and professor of Romance literatures at Humboldt University of Berlin. From 2009 to 2014 he directed the Emmy Noether Excellence Grant "Philology and Racism in the 19th Century" (German Research Foundation) at the University of Potsdam. Since 2019, he has been principal investigator of the ERC Consolidator Grant "Minor Universality: Narrative World Productions After Western Universalism". He is an ordinary member of Academia Europaea and has held visiting professorships and fellowships at EHESS Paris, the University of Cambridge, the School of Advanced Study/University of London, and Kobe University in Japan. – Recent Publications (selection): *Universality After Universalism: On Francophone Literatures of the Present*. Transl. from the German Michael T. Taylor.

Foreword Souleymane Bachir Diagne. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2023 (free open access: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111128306>); Minor Universality: Rethinking Humanity after Western Universalism. Ed. with Jonas Tinius. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2023 (free open access: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110798494>); Universalism(e) & ... Conversations with Arjun Appadurai, Leyla Dakhli, Souleymane Bachir Diagne, Giovanni Levi, Gisèle Sapiro, David Scott, Adania Shibli, Maria Stavrinaki. Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter, 2024 (free open access: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111373164>).

Esther Peeren (See [page 5](#) for bio)

Ben Moore is Assistant Professor in English Literature at the University of Amsterdam. His work focuses mainly on nineteenth-century literature, including a current project on money, space and affect in the period. He is the author of *Human Tissue in the Realist Novel, 1850–1895* (2023) and *Invisible Architecture in Nineteenth-Century Literature: Rethinking Urban Modernity* (2024), as well as various articles and book chapters on topics such as cities, modernity and childhood.

11:00 – 12:30 (PCH 1.04)

KEYNOTE 2: Ruth Clemens (*Leiden University*)

Being on the Same Frequency: Ways of Listening to the Impossible

Respondent: **Jeff Diamanti** (*University of Amsterdam*)

Chair: **Marc Farrant** (*University of Amsterdam*)

Despite recent theoretical turns towards an understanding of knowledge as situated, textual culture as implicated in epistemological hierarchies, and the reader/listener as a capacious and non-unitary posthuman subject, dominant scientific models of reading and listening tend to rely on a singular coherent human subject. What comes after the unitary listening or reading subject? Drawing on Deleuze's writing on Leibniz, and incorporating perspectives from Glissant and Oliveros, this lecture presents a theorization of language as impossible. Impossibility is a philosophical concept which names ontologically possible yet contradictory worlds. Linguistic impossibility is therefore a way of figuring difference across, between and within language(s). From theories of literary translation and multilingualism (Yildiz, Apter) to inventing imaginary languages (Yaguello), to material practices of transcription, impossibility offers a way to reconsider and investigate anew the potential for human and more-than-human commonalities. Following Pauline Oliveros's conceptualisation of listening as a situated and collaborative

“grand improvisation” which includes “accelerated artificial evolution - hybrid humans - new beings born of technology - new challenges, consequences, dangers, freedoms and responsibilities,” I will draw on the strange case of an early twentieth-century experiment with coded music technology which helped to develop new forms of communication.

Ruth Clemens is a researcher, teacher, and writer based in Utrecht, and she lectures at Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society (LUCAS). Her NWO-funded postdoctoral research project 'Posthuman Music Machines: Literature in the Age of the Pianola' studies culture from the age of the player-piano (1896-1929) to uncover how this novel media technology shaped and was shaped by wider cultural engagements with the affect of automation. Her work has appeared in *Comparative Critical Studies*, *Modernist Cultures*, and *Feminist Modernist Studies*, and she has contributed to the books *Deleuze and Guattari and Fascism*, *More Posthuman Glossary*, and *Posthuman Pathogenesis*, among others. As well as posthumanism, media materialities, and modernism, Ruth's research interests include trans- and multilingualism, critical epistemology, and planetary mineral cultures, and she has led artistic research workshops at the Royal Academy of Art (KABK), the Grey Space in the Middle (The Hague), and Hypha Studios (London).

Jeff Diamanti is an Associate Professor of Philosophy and Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam. In 2016-17 he was the Media@McGill Postdoctoral Fellow in Media and the Environment where he co-convened the international colloquium on Climate Realism, the results of which appear in a book collection on [Routledge](#) (2021) and a double issue of [Resilience](#) (2020). His first book, [Climate and Capital in the Age of Petroleum: Locating Terminal Landscapes](#) (Bloomsbury 2021) tracks the political and media ecology of fossil fuels across the extractive and logistical spaces that connect remote territories like Greenland to the economies of North America and Western Europe. His new research, *Bloom Ecologies*, follows the mining of phosphorous in the occupied Western Sahara to the aquatic currents forcing algal bloom and hypoxic milieu all over the planet. Diamanti has edited several book and journal collections including *Contemporary Marxist Theory* (Bloomsbury 2014); *Materialism and the Critique of Energy* (MCM' Press 2018); *Energy Culture* (West Virginia University Press 2019); *Bloomsbury Companion to Marx* (2018). [His work](#) has appeared in the journals *e-flux*, *Radical Philosophy*, *Stasis*, *New Formations*, *Postmodern Culture*, *Mediations*, *Western American Literature*, *Krisis*, and *Reviews in Cultural Theory*, as well as a number of books including *After Ice* (University of British Columbia Press) and *Fueling Culture* (Fordham UP).

Marc Farrant teaches literary analysis in the English Department at the University of Amsterdam. His research focuses on the intersection of political ideas and literary forms, as well as the critical legacies of modernism and experimentalism in contemporary anglophone writing. Most recently he has published on the agonistic aesthetics of J.M. Coetzee, and the complicitous entwinement of neoliberalism and autofiction in writers such as Ben Lerner.

13:45 – 15:15 (PCH 0.05)

PANEL 1: Rethinking the Human: Universal Differences and Human/Non-Human Relationality

Chair: **Alessandra Benedicty-Kokken** (*University of Amsterdam*)

Nomadic Humanism: Against Colonial and Decolonial Approaches

Buket Korkut-Raptis (*Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University*)

This talk aims to express the view of nomadic cultures on what it means to be human. Each culture/civilization has a view of humanity that aspires to be a universal conception. Colonial approaches have imposed individualist and reason-centric conception of human who is also considered to be the center of the universe. Decolonial approaches have rightly challenged the authority of this conception. But this has led to a certain sense of relativism on our understanding of what it means to be human. We have lost our vision of universality about our human communalities. The fact that the colonial conception of humanity is not the right vision does not mean that we are committed to diverse visions of humanity, each with an equal degree of rightness. Nomadic cultures had already provided us with a conception of humanity that is still a candidate for a universal vision to be pursued. Nietzsche is right when he claims that “humans are still undetermined animals.” Our universal conception of humanity is rather an ideal that we, humans, seek to reach. In this sense, we need to reevaluate all the possible conceptions of humanity that are candidates for a universal ideal of human we shall cherish. This talk will argue that nomadic cultures had already provided us with such a perspective that is not only a candidate for a universal conception but the best available conception that we all need to embrace. It is the universality we need in our contemporary pluriverse. To this end, the talk will not try to prove why it is the best alternative but rather express the view of nomadic cultures which will be called Nomadic Humanism with the hope that this universal conception may inspire us all for coping with our contemporary problems in the age of Anthropocene.

Informative Note: The content of this proposal will be based on a chapter of my book manuscript entitled “Nomadic Thinking” that is accepted for publication in Turkish and under review to be published in English.

Buket Korkut-Raptis

Affiliation: Philosophy Department, Faculty of Humanities, Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, TURKEY

Areas of Expertise: Philosophy of Science (M.A.); Ethics (PhD.); Philosophical Anthropology, Continental Philosophy; Philosophy of Nomadic Culture.

Educational Background: Bachelor’s Degree in Industrial Engineering, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, TURKEY, 1998

M.A. in Philosophy, Boğaziçi University, TURKEY, 2003

PhD. in Philosophy, University of Notre Dame, USA, 2011

For a brief list of publications see: <https://www.mu.edu.tr/en/personel/buketkorkut>

Re-Envisioning Hope for All: Human Identity Formation Research in Japan Through a Critical Phenomenological Approach

Yaeko Hori (*Nagoya University of Commerce and Business*)

Identity-related studies in human science have been largely influenced by postmodern theories, which critically acknowledge the plural dimensions of identity as voiced and performed by marginalized groups in society. Intersectionality has been widely used to analyze power dynamics at the intersections of identity categories such as nationality, language, race, gender, and religion. However, some scholars argue for a more comprehensive conceptualization of identity and a methodological approach that examines power and privilege in a non-additive manner, addressing contemporary inequalities and injustices.

To expand critical inquiry beyond dichotomic frameworks, I conducted research aimed at re-envisioning a more hopeful future for all. I proposed a new conceptualization, inspired by phenomenology, in which identity is understood as the way we navigate life with an enduring essence. To this end, I developed a critical phenomenological approach that integrates the theory of translanguaging, allowing for the analysis of both linguistic and non-linguistic expressions. This approach considers identity categories and binaries not as fixed constructs but as reference points for interpreting lived and embodied experiences. The research methods included in-depth interviews, thematic analysis contextualized with additional data (e.g., observations, subjective field notes, and online

communication). The study was conducted in Japan, a country that has historically experienced both colonizer and colonized perspectives. This presentation focuses on the lived experience of a Filipino Catholic sister who participated in the study through a rapport-based relationship with the researcher.

The analysis reveals how she navigates life as a “constituting whole” while seeking a moral foundation through intra-communication with herself and inter-communication with people, nature, music, and God. Moreover, the findings highlight the role of language in fostering “empathetic solidarity” within the researcher-participant relationship. Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper exploration of the universal essence—what it means to be human, while resisting the pitfalls of moral relativism.

Yaeko Hori holds an M.A. in Comparative Cultures, an M.A. in TESOL, and a Ph.D. in Humanities and Human Communication. She is currently an associate professor in the Faculty of International Studies at Nagoya University of Commerce and Business in Japan. Her interdisciplinary research interests encompass applied linguistics, psychology, immigrant studies, and the philosophy and methodology of phenomenology. Her work focuses on language use and learning, the philosophy of language and communication, and human identity formation in the contemporary world, particularly from a post-humanist perspective.

‘Nature Is Man’s Inorganic Body’: The Extra-Human Universality of the Human Species in Marx and Benjamin

Turkuaz Benlioglu (*University of Amsterdam*)

This paper will explore the concept of universality as it appears in an 1844 essay by Karl Marx, titled ‘Estranged Labour’, in the context of a brief schematic presentation of his philosophical anthropology which, I will show, is concerned less with identifying specific properties shared across individual human beings that help define the universal character of the human species but, instead, more with what I want to provisionally call an extra-human universality that Marx associates with the human species, whose ‘nature’ or universal character is predicated on its coevolutionary relation to the rest of nonhuman nature. Through close reading, I will suggest that this specific concept of universality allows Marx to differentiate the human species from other species in an ecological and non-anthropocentric way, which is also politically charged and continues to hold increasing contemporary relevance. I will then pursue the traces of this idea in the work of Walter Benjamin, who reflects on the relationship between humans and the rest of nature in terms of an enigmatically formulated modernist body politic informed by utopian

Thinking.

Turkuaz Benlioglu is a PhD Candidate at ASCA, writing her thesis on Walter Benjamin and the weather. She is interested in modern continental philosophy and critical theory (particularly Benjamin and the early Frankfurt School), cultural criticism, ecological thought and eco-criticism, theories of modernity, theories of utopia, and the intersections of literature and philosophy. Before joining ASCA, she completed her MA and BA at the Visual Cultures Department at Goldsmiths, University of London.

The Corpse as Feminist Posthumanist Figuration: Theorizing Beyond International (Human Rights) Law's Claim to Universalism

Amira Fretz (*Leiden University*)

International human rights law provides one of the most dominant and visible universal/ising discourses that permeate political spheres in the name of common norms and values. Much like public international law writ large, however, human rights have long been critiqued for purporting and maintaining an exclusionary humanism based on a liberal conception of the human – in fact, international human rights seem to help 'endow with content, the 'universal' embedded in contemporary calls for the international'. Matched to this exclusionary humanism is a distinct strain of anthropocentrism, which imbues and codifies in legal regimes of the international the supremacy of the human animal over the non-human Other. This is evident even in international environmental law, whose tenets are systematically subjugated to the interests of (economic) development.

In thinking the role and potentialities of international law in addressing the global crises that define the Anthropocene, the universal/ised human subject that stands at the core of this regime needs to be reevaluated. That is, the potential to decentre the human of international (human rights) law must be interrogated as it relates to its non-human Other, while simultaneously reckoning with the colonial undertones of the exclusionary category itself. Using the figure of the corpse as it emerges in international human rights law, this presentation will argue that a feminist, posthumanist analytic effectively addresses the tensions between abstract universalisms and localisation/vernacularisation of human rights norms, while the posthuman opens up a space to challenge the assumptions of both these vectors. By (perhaps counterintuitively) centring the fleshy materiality of the corpse, the historical exclusions of the category of the human can also be attended to. Lastly, the feminist posthumanist intervention probes the solidaristic potentials of such an unthinking of the human through the corpse.

Amira Fretz is PhD Fellow at Leiden University College, Leiden University. Her PhD project studies the human corpse in international justice from a feminist, posthumanist lens. Drawing on feminist, queer, and decolonial theory throughout her work, she intervenes in both critical approaches to international law as well as critical theory to interrogate the potentialities of post-mortem justice for the systemically marginalised corpse in and beyond the law. At LUC, she teaches across the major programmes in World Politics and International Justice. She holds a research MA in Gender Studies and a Master of Laws in International Law from Utrecht University.

Alessandra Benedicty-Kokken is University Docent at the University of Amsterdam's Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis ([ASCA](#)) and [Literary and Cultural Analysis](#), and she maintains an affiliation to the [Center for Worker of Education at City University of New York](#), an institution to whose pedagogical model she is extremely dedicated. She is co-Book Reviews Editor for the [Journal of Haitian Studies](#), with Marie-José Nzegou-Tayo and a board member of the Haitian Studies Association. Most recently she is co-editor on: [Rethinking Gender from the Ethnographic Museum](#), with [Journal of Material Culture](#) (2023) and online with the Research Center of Material Culture, as well as an article rethinking the legacy of Dessalines as related to the notion of betrayal, as well as work on rethinking the (im)possibilities of feminist solidarity, with a co-written article with Cae Joseph-Masséna on [Tracy Chapman's oeuvre](#) and the role of the crossroads in Africana thought, as well as an article on [Évelyne Trouillot's and Kettly Mars's novels](#).

13:45 – 15:15 (PCH 1.05)

PANEL 2: Telling Many Worlds: Negotiations/Imaginations of Plurality and Universality

Chair: **Paulo Lemos Horta** (*New York University*)

Becoming-Worlds: Postmigrant Literature in the Pluriverse

Hanna Zehschnetzer (*University of Cologne*)

The recently announced postmigrant turn (Cramer, Schmidt, Thiemann 2023) is based on the assumption that, due to the universality of migration and mobility movements and the interrelated pluralization of societies, established patterns of thought must be reconsidered and new scientific categories of analysis must be created. Originally referring to the perspectives of the second or third generation of migrants, the term postmigrant – in a broader and more productive sense – does not refer to generations or individual actors that are imperialistically tied to a certain kind of migration experience, but rather to a general transformation of society as a whole, which is characterized by hybridization and diversification against the backdrop of migration (cf. e.g. Foroutan 2021). Thus, the postmigrant as epistemological concept focuses on pluriversality by reimagining migration and strengthening the sense for a shared transculturality.

One particular manifestation of the postmigrant is the idea of a postmigrant literature. As an alternative to classifications such as migrant literature or intercultural literature, the term aims to reconceptualize the current public and scientific discourse on migration by making marginalized perspectives visible and by overcoming binary constructions of language, culture, and identity in and through literature. Are there any universal themes, motifs, or aesthetics though that make up a postmigrant literature? Or does the term in fact narrow down the view on the perspectives of individual actors, and thereby universalizes a diverse and individual experience? Based on Rosi Braidotti's approach of "Becoming-world" (2013), this presentation critically reflects on the concept of postmigrant literature as one manifestation of the pluriverse. Using the example of Saša Stanišić's novel *Herkunft* (2019; cf. *Where you come From*, transl. by Damion Searls, 2021), it shows how literature may contribute to the awareness of the universality of transculturality in a pluriversal and diverse world.

Hanna Zehschnetzer is a scholar in comparative literature with a focus on transcultural literature, Heimat as an interdisciplinary concept, theories of world literature, and entanglements of crime and literature. She studied American Literature, German Literature, and Criminal Law/Criminology at the University of Bonn, Germany. Publications include her doctoral thesis on *Dimensionen der Heimat bei Herta Müller* (2021) and (with Jil Runia and Dana Bönisch) the edited volume *Heimat Revisited. Kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven auf einen umstrittenen Begriff* (2020). She currently works as a course director and lecturer in comparative literature at the Department of Romance Studies at the University of Cologne, Germany.

Tracing the Bacchae – Re-Imagining Universality through Irrational Resistances

Mariefi Sykallou (*Utrecht University*)

How do irrational resistances disrupt the rational polis? This paper engages with Euripides' *Bacchae* as both a textual artifact and a point of departure for broader historical inquiry into irrationality and resistance. If, as Agave states at the end of the play, "Let others engage in these rites," this project takes up the call by searching through history for other *Bacchae*. From Maenads and witches to pétroleuses and contemporary irrational insurgents, this study uses a genealogical method to trace subversive, irrational, effeminate threats to the rational polis. It examines how irrationality has been constructed as a site of danger and subjugation within colonial, philosophical, and biomedical discourses mobilized to regulate bodies, desires, and agency. Yet, irrationality is not merely imposed as a measure of humanness; it is reclaimed as resistance, unsettling the rational-irrational binary that underpins colonial and heteropatriarchal orders. Drawing on Saidiya Hartman's critical fabulation, this study speculatively recovers silenced *Bacchae*, those who disrupted the polis across myth, history, and insurgency. It interrogates how power continually invents new mechanisms to contain irrationality and how these resistances refuse containment, spilling over the boundaries of race, gender, and species. What happens when the effeminate irrationals enter the city? Can these insurgencies, often dismissed as excess, open new imaginaries for universality within a pluriversal world? By engaging with a pluriversal archive (literature, philosophy, historical records, and biomedical discourse), this study unsettles Eurocentric frameworks that equate universality with rationality. Through this intervention, the project envisions a pluriversal reconfiguration of knowledge, listening for the echoes of irrational resistances across time.

Mariefi Sykallou is a graduate student in the Gender Studies Research Master's program at Utrecht University. With a background in Dramatic Arts and Education Science, her academic interests lie at the intersections of biopolitics, sexuality studies, governmentality, post- and decolonial theory. She is particularly interested in how cultural narratives challenge hegemonic power structures and disrupt colonial, patriarchal, and heteronormative frameworks. Sykallou's work critically engages with theories of resistance, the politics of irrationality, and alternative epistemologies, with a focus on amplifying marginalized voices and reimagining gender and identity within critical, counter-hegemonic frameworks.

Cannibalizing Prometheus: Plural Embodiments of Myth

Martina Flores Mendeville (*University of Amsterdam*)

In 1928, Brazilian poet Oswald de Andrade published the Anthropophagic Manifesto, arguing that colonized countries should digest in their own terms the colonizer culture that is imposed into them. Creating a parallel with cannibalistic rites among indigenous peoples such as the Tupi, Andrade adds the formula "Tupi or not Tupi, that is the question". Andrade figuratively cannibalizes Shakespeare's Hamlet and gives the basic premises of cultural cannibalism: the digestion of hegemonic cultural objects allows for agency, as artists use these construction materials to create their own works. The so-called original materials are cannibalized, subjected to the artists' gaze and experiences to become something new.

In this presentation, I'd like to address (cultural) cannibalism as an interesting tool for (decolonial) emancipation via its re-appropriation of canonical Western cultural materials and narratives. To do so, I will be using the myth of Prometheus. I will begin with the remaking of this myth by Heiner Müller, 20th century GDR dramatist also considered a "universal playwright" given his focus on traumas that concern all people regardless of their nation, class or culture (Carl Weber, 1984). Moreover, Müller's deconstruction (even demolition) of the "greatest hits" of modernity further interrogates the role of Western hegemonies in art and politics worldwide.

Then, I will address Proyecto Prometeo (2000-2002), a site-specific performance by Colombian theatre company Mapa Teatro, which remakes Heiner Müller's remaking of Prometheus. During this project, Mapa Teatro worked with the inhabitants of El Cartucho in Bogotá, a precarious neighborhood that was then about to be reconverted and its inhabitants on the verge of being displaced. Like Müller's Prometheus, some inhabitants have become accustomed to the vulture eating their guts and find it difficult to leave. Nonetheless, Prometheus is here re-embodied through a pluriverse of voices: instead of

merely staging Müller's text, the participants of Proyecto Prometeo contaminate the myth with their own subjectivities, giving birth to multiple Prometheus figures. Through these distinctive and cumulative embodiments, they inject new life into the myth.

Martina Flores Mendeville (Santiago, Chile) is a PhD candidate at the University of Amsterdam, member of the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA), faculty of Humanities (FGW). Her current research focuses on the theatre of Heiner Müller and its stagings in Latin America since 1989. Her research axis includes politics and aesthetics, theatre and violence, as well as relational approaches with an emphasis on (cultural) cannibalism. She has presented her academic work in international conferences EASTAP and IFTR. She has published in *K. Revue trans-européenne d'arts et philosophie* (Université de Lille) and *Revista Apuntes de Teatro* (Pontificia Universidad Católica, Santiago).

Paulo Lemos Horta is the author of a series of books that center the agency of people overlooked and silenced in literary history, among them *Marvelous Authors: Secret Authors of the Arabian Nights, Aladdin and The Annotated Arabian Nights* (with Yasmine Seale) and *Cosmopolitanisms* (with Bruce Robbins), for which he also translated Silvano Santiago's "The Cosmopolitanism of the Poor." These works have been translated into several languages and received accolades including nonfiction book of the year in the Canadian press and notable book of the year mention in Buzzfeed and the Wall Street Journal. He has written for PMLA, *Words Without Borders*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books* and *The Times Literary Supplement*. His keynote presentation draws from research for his forthcoming book, *Rotten Little Worlds: World Literature in an Age of Nationalism*. Articles from this new research have appeared in *Interventions* and the *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Inquiry*. A translator of Pessoa and Camões among others, he has a research interest in large language models and translation. He has served on the executive board of Harvard's Institute for World Literature, for which he has also served as faculty, and the International Comparative Literature Association, where he co-organized a publishing workshop linking authors, translators, editors and publishers. Prior to joining NYUAD, where he is associate professor of creative writing and literature, he founded and designed a world literature program for Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada.

15:30 – 17:00 (PCH 1.05)

PANEL 3: Pluriversal Practices: Portals Not Windows

Chair: **Ruth Clemens** (*Leiden University*)

From Windows to Portals: Ventana Conference: A Proposal for Co-Creating a Pluriversal Space in Academia

Victoria Vargas-Downing (*Leeds Arts and Humanities Research Institute*) & **Yael López-Torres** (*Independent Researcher*)

This paper examines the evolution from Ventana Conference II to Ventana Conference V, a four-year running bottom-up international ECR academic event. This article explores the question: 'How does the Ventana Conference contribute to the discussion of decolonizing academia and navigating towards pluriversality?'

We delve into the conflicts that gave origin to the conference, such as our identity as Latinas studying our PhD on Latin American topics based in Leeds and York (UK), questioning, acknowledging and affecting our sentipensares. Initially focused on Latin American research areas, 'Ventana' went through a process of reconfiguration with the pandemic, embracing virtual environments and questioning hegemonic academic formats, integrating contributions of more countries based on the Global South, and later, members from non-Western origins studying in the UK [Argelia, Nigeria, Mexico, Brazil, Chile].

We argue that 'Ventana' is not only a window but a portal that activates innovative and decolonial forms of creating and addressing academic issues, holding space for enacting theoretical and practical ways of doing and thinking beyond Western debates. From an autoethnographic perspective, the paper addresses how scholars can navigate pluriversal ways of thinking and doing within institutional hierarchies in academia, while questioning notions of universality and embracing pluriversality.

For this article, we delve into the decolonial frameworks and empirical experiences behind the production of the conference, such as the value of discomfort, vulnerability, new formats and multilingual settings to create dialogues between historically marginalised voices. We provide an account of this transformative and reflexive process from its beginnings, changes, challenges and alternative forms of hosting and conducting an academic event. Finally, we bring lessons from these experiences on how to create portals that, if crossed, may allow re-thinking and creating knowledge in academia otherwise.

Victoria Vargas-Downing is a Chilean art historian and heritage researcher based in the UK. She is a transdisciplinary researcher with a PhD in Cultural Studies from the

University of Leeds. She is interested in the relationship between contemporary art and heritage from decolonial and feminist perspectives, activism, language, epistemic justice and environmental humanities. During the last year, she has been working in a series of interdisciplinary projects, such as Virtual Water Museum of Water@Leeds (PI: Gabriela Lopez), Moving Mountains AHRC Fellowship (PI: Rebecca Jarman) and Artist Crossing University of Buenos Aires and University of Leeds.

Yael López-Torres is a Mexican researcher specializing in democratization, civil society, gender, and violence. She has worked at Mexico's Attorney General's Office, taught at the Ministry of Public Education, and been active in human rights advocacy. Since 2020, she has chaired the Ventana Conference on decolonial approaches to different research areas. Her work bridges academia and activism, focusing on the impacts of the war on drugs and colonial legacies on marginalised communities in Mexico. She holds a PhD in Politics and an MA in International Relations (IR) from the University of York, UK, and a BA in IR from the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

Consilience: A Unity of Knowledge and the Role of Artistic Researchers Within and Beyond Universities

Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes (*University of Amsterdam*)

Setting out an ambitious vision towards a unity of knowledge, E.O. Wilson's term consilience (1998), this paper argues, can be recovered for current research uniting the efforts of humanities scholars, scientist, and especially artistic researchers. Wilson's intervention arguably came just a little too early to be easily and widely considered to join forces with the direction of research that his fellow biologist and similarly anti-neo-Darwinist colleague Lynn Margulis (with James Lovelock) proposed under the moniker of Gaia hypothesis: a focus on symbiosis not competition can arguably pave the way towards uniting the sciences and humanities.

Attempting to respond to the question "How can art [in its various forms] contribute to an understanding of pluriversal worlds in their shared universals," I wish to propose that artistic researchers and their presence in the uni(!)versity can play a major role in bridging the unhelpfully divided departments and faculties that usually keep us from knowing about – and explaining our work to – each other, i.e. linking up to the extent that we can speak of solidarity, or better: adjacency (Tina M. Campt). Barbara Bolt's insistence on the performativity of artistic research will help me in this argument, as will my experience of supervising artistic researchers in various contexts. That performativity – with a consilient

and adjacent perspective in mind – is also what leads artistic (or artists and) researchers to direct their attention beyond the boundaries of (public) universities.

Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes is Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History at the University of Amsterdam. Until 2014 she was Professor of Iconology in Belfast. Originating from Jena, she studied in Heidelberg, London and Cologne. She researched her PhD as a Joyce Foundation Scholar, Zurich, was a Government of Ireland postdoc at UCDublin, and lived in Ireland for 20 years. Her books include: *W.G. Sebald's Artistic Legacies: Memory, Word and Image* (co-ed 2023); *Brian O'Doherty/Patrick Ireland: Word, Image and Institutional Critique* (ed. 2018); *Post-War Germany and 'Objective Chance': W.G. Sebald, Joseph Beuys and Tacita Dean* (Steidl 2011), and *Joyce in Art* (2004). She has curated exhibitions internationally.

Design to Misfit: Exploring Pluriversal Thinking Through a Critical Design Workshop

Kaat Kenis (*University of Antwerp*)

Design has long been shaped by an implicit universalism, assuming a singular, idealized user that conforms to dominant norms of ability, gender, race, and embodiment. This assumption marginalizes those who "misfit" within designed environments (Garland-Thomson, 2011), making design complicit with systemic exclusion. This presentation explores how critical design can serve not only as a method for challenging such assumptions (Escobar, 2017, p. 45) but also as a pedagogical tool for fostering pluriversal thinking in design education.

Drawing on insights from a one-week intensive workshop, titled *Made to Misfit: Design for the Uninvited*, this research examines how students engaged with misfitting as a generative site of critical inquiry. Through the creation of provocative probes—physical or interactive artifacts designed to spark reflection and debate—students engaged with the limitations of dominant design standards that fail to accommodate diverse bodies, needs, and experiences. Rather than treating misfitting as a problem to be solved, the concept encouraged students to reflect on how design shapes who belongs and who is excluded. As part of the process, students were tasked with taking their probes into public spaces to observe interactions, gather responses, and, in some cases, co-designing iterations of their provocative probes based on public engagement.

By situating critical design within a disability justice framework, the workshop serves as a space to critically examine its potential to disrupt hegemonic knowledge production in design. However, it also raised critical questions about the risk of reinscribing dominant

epistemologies under the guise of critique. It invites reflection on whether critical design can move beyond critiques to actively facilitate pluriversal design practices that embrace multiple ways of knowing, experiencing, and shaping the world.

Kaat Kenis (she/her) is an FWO-funded PhD researcher at the Faculty of Design Sciences of the University of Antwerp. She holds an MA in Gender & Diversity studies from Ghent University and an MSc in Product Development from the University of Antwerp and her current work is supervised by Kristof Vaes (UA) and Leni Van Goidsenhoven (UvA). Her research explores intersectional perspectives in Inclusive Design, challenging dominant notions of diversity and inclusion to address systemic challenges in today's superdiverse society. With a focus on power dynamics in design processes, she draws inspiration from feminist and critical disability studies.

Decolonizing from the Margins: Virtual Museums in the Context of War

Lisa Ezrati (*Università di Bologna*)

How to resist? If art can enter in resistance, so can museums. For this workshop, I would like to present two case studies of resilience against some of the most traumatic events of the past few years, the wars in Ukraine and Palestine. Through the creation of virtual museums by two collectives, the Museum of Stolen Art and the Sahab Museum, we are challenged to reconsider how new technologies can participate in the resistance against cultural genocide, territorial invasion and colonization. These initiatives reconsider the questions of heritage, memory and resistance. Both these museums were created in reaction to intense political events: the Russian invasion in Ukraine, which led to the destruction and looting of artworks, and the situation in Palestine that escalated into a brutal war in 2023. The Sahab Museum was created a year before, but its existence took an even more necessary turn with the war. Re-using the name and model of the museum, they reflect upon its use to make it an anti-colonial tool, by enabling a collaborative curatorial practice and thus favoring the agency of the communities. Their location in the metaverse makes them reachable by the greatest number, thereby allowing us to re-imagine a pluriversal solidarity against oppression. These virtual museums, through their political engagement, and their Ukrainian and Gazan positioning, foster an example of worldwide solidarity. Through these museums, the traditional conception of museums based on European universalism is converted towards a pluriversal and transnational museum, bringing to the fore communities and collaboration practices in heritage discourses.

Lisa Ezrati is a French-born scholar in Art History and Cultural Anthropology. She is interested in topics like critical museology, virtual museums and community resistance in conflict contexts. In doing so, she aims to foster transnational solidarities and interdisciplinary research.

Ruth Clemens (See [page 7](#) for bio)

15:30 – 17:00 (PCH 0.05)

PANEL 4: Memory, Archives, and Cultural Resistance in the Pluriverse

Chair: **Steven Turner** (*University of Amsterdam*)

The World Is More than Just Europe: Re-Thinking the Iberian “Age of Discoveries” from 15th–17th Century Through 21st Century Contestation of Cultural Heritage by Antiracist and Decolonial Movement

Vinicius Fonseca (*University of Utrecht*)

The project will delve into the meaning and applications of canceling practices within antiracist and decolonial movements. The specific focus is on cancelling as a reparative strategy aimed at addressing the enduring impact of historical injustices in the present. Termed ‘reparative canceling,’ these practices seek to rectify symbols, art, knowledge, cultural heritage, and ingrained cultural norms that are deemed harmful and unjust, thus perpetuating the legacy of colonial history. These practices can vary from suppressing/banning, removing/displacing, to renaming and blacklisting/censoring, among others.

The intention is to investigate how reparative cancelling of cultural heritage is performed within antiracist and decolonial activism in both postcolonial (Global South) and post-imperial (Global North) societies. The project will analyze groups in Latin America, namely in Brazil and Colombia, and Iberian countries, namely in Portugal and Spain. Specifically, it will scrutinise the foundations, justifications, reparative outcomes, and potential drawbacks of the diverse cancelling strategies employed by contemporary antiracist and decolonial publics to engage with memory and cultural heritage.

By looking into contemporary social movements mobilization at cultural heritage sites, it will discuss the narratives around national history and identity established by Spain and Portugal, as well as Brazil and Colombia, regarding the cultural heritage dedicated to the memory of the “Discoveries of the Americas.” From activists to Indigenous organizations and politicians, the project will explore different forms of performing reparative cancelling as a strategy for producing counter narratives/memory, and, ultimately, obtaining

historical reparation. The idea is to understand differences and similarities in the contestation practices, the outcomes and drawbacks for the subjects at the forefront of the struggle to diversify how memory, history and national identity is materialized through and by cultural heritage. The methods of research include oral interviews, participant observation, document analysis, discourse analysis and visual analysis.

Vinícius Fonseca holds a master's degree in Applied History from Erasmus University Rotterdam and a bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Brasília. His research covers Historical Culture and Heritage, with a particular interest in how history shapes current-day public policies and how to account for popular demands asking for reparation. Since December 2024, Vinícius has been working as a PhD Candidate at the University of Utrecht in the Gender and Postcolonial studies field, within the Department of Media and Culture Studies.

Creative Institutionalism in the Kurdish Diaspora: Dynamics, Challenges and Contributions

Abdulkerim Pusat (*University of Amsterdam*)

This article argues that the Kurdish diaspora has emerged as a vibrant space for constructing and reinforcing cultural and national identity through creative institutionalism. This process involves establishing formal and informal institutions - cultural, political, and artistic – that enable the Kurdish community to preserve and express their heritage, articulate political aspirations, and navigate challenges associated with displacement. As this is the first article to use this theoretical perspective to examine the role of creative institutionalism within the Kurdish diaspora in Europe, I explore its transnational effects on the homeland and national struggle, the interaction between creativity and institutionalization, and its impact on Kurdish identity and global visibility. The Kurdish diaspora, dispersed across multiple continents, has emerged as a significant socio-political force, advocating for Kurdish identity and rights and contributing to the host countries' cultural and institutional landscapes. As Korangy indicates, "Kurdishness in the diaspora undergoes a continual process of re-imagination and re-creation." ¹ At the heart of this transnational community lies a remarkable phenomenon: Creative Institutionalism. This concept captures the innovative strategies through which Kurdish diasporic communities establish, sustain, and evolve institutions to preserve their cultural identity, navigate political challenges, and engage with broader global frameworks. Kurdish diasporic institutions play a pivotal role in fostering solidarity within the community and bridging gaps with external stakeholders of host communities. Through

their contributions to multicultural dialogues, human rights advocacy, and artistic expression, they highlight the potential of diasporic agencies to impact global discourses. This study explores the dynamics of creative institutionalism within the European Kurdish diaspora, examining the strategies employed to navigate challenges and the broader contributions of these efforts to both Kurdish identity and the global landscape. By delving into this interplay of resilience, innovation, and impact, we gain a deeper understanding of the Kurdish diaspora's unique position as a beacon of cultural and institutional creativity in a complex and interconnected world.

Abdulkerim Pusat is a refugee sociologist from Kurdistan and a Hestia junior researcher at ASCA, Faculty of Humanity of the University of Amsterdam, where he is part of the IMAGINART group project. He received a master's degree in Secondary Education. During this time, he wrote about culture, society, ethics, music, and other topics for various magazines, websites, and newspapers. Abdulkerim is deeply preoccupied with ethical issues. He has been living in the Netherlands as a refugee since 2016 while regularly writing columns for Kurdish newspapers and websites.

Bridging 1909: The Authenticity and Ethics of the AI-Restored Archival-Footage from Albert Kahn's *Les Archives de la Planète*
Kaiqi Zhu (*University of Amsterdam*)

The digitization and AI restoration of archival footage have reinvigorated historical images, making them more accessible to contemporary audiences. But what does it mean when these images, originally captured through a colonial lens, are 'restored' using technology developed within the same power structures that once controlled their circulation? This project examines the case of Beijing 100 Years Ago, an AI-restored version of footage from Albert Kahn's *Les Archives de la Planète*, exploring how the digital enhancement of historical film can reinforce or challenge colonial narratives. The original footage, taken by a French photographer traveling through China in 1909, was part of a broader Western impulse to document the so-called 'vanishing world.' Today, AI-driven restoration techniques—colorization, frame interpolation, resolution enhancement—risk transforming these films from historical records into spectacles that align with contemporary aesthetic expectations. But who decides how these images are altered? And what are the ethical stakes of reintroducing them into public memory in a modified form? By analyzing both the visual transformation of Beijing 100 Years Ago and the online discourse surrounding its reception, this project interrogates how AI restoration shapes perceptions of history and authenticity. It also considers the broader implications of archival ownership—who

has the right to restore and reinterpret these images, and under what conditions? Can AI restoration be a form of reclaiming lost histories, or does it risk erasing the very traces that make these images historically significant? This study contributes to discussions on digital preservation, archival restitution, and the politics of audiovisual heritage. In a time when calls for the repatriation of cultural artifacts are growing, it raises pressing questions about whether AI restoration serves as a means of returning history to the people it represents—or further obscuring the power imbalances that shaped its creation.

Kaiqi Zhu is a Research Master's student in Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam. His research focuses on AI ethics, visual archives, and cultural studies, with a particular interest in how technology reshapes our understanding of history. He also explores Chinese film and TV aesthetics, examining the broader socio-political contexts behind these visual constructions.

Stephen Turner is an Assistant Professor in Media and Culture at the University of Amsterdam. His publications address geo-media in settler colonial contexts, including painting, photography and film, and the architecture and infrastructure of university environments. His creative writing includes collaborative projects with artists Dane Mitchell and Ann Shelton. He has co-edited a book with Tim Neale on the challenge of Indigenous law, *Other People's Country: Law, Water and Entitlement in Settler Colonial Sites* (2019), and is currently working with Sean Sturm on a book about the university and dissent.

17:00 –18:00 (PC 0.05)

WORKSHOP 1: Peloric Flower

Chair: **Laila Bouziane** (*University of Amsterdam*)

Re-Imagining Interspecies-Ecological Pluriversal Futures

Jennifer Crouch (*Art-Science Practitioner & Researcher*)

This practice-based workshop invites participants to engage in speculative world-building via creative visual storytelling and the exploration of biological processes of mutation and transformation. "Peloria" is the Greek word for monster and a peloric flower is a plant mutation lasting a single growing season usually transforming flowers from having bilateral to radial symmetry. Other mutations we will explore include plant galls and fasciations which provide rare bursts of abnormal growth in stems and flowers, which much like peloria offers a sudden abundance of nectar, pollen, and a plethora of food sources and habitats for multiple organisms. Mutations occur for multiple reasons in response to species-environment exchanges including environmental stresses and symbiosis-parasitism interactions. These mutational processes, often pathologised in western enlightenment and modernist scientific narratives, are re-framed as embodied processes of resistance that critique Eurocentric notions of universality. With the ecological destruction and political challenges of the capitalocene, how can the 'mutant' become a plural and emancipatory process of becoming?

This workshop re-imagines mutation and transformation to challenge fixed notions of species and identity via creative visual storytelling and illustrated vignettes used to map, collage, and envision alternative futures that decenter human affect and reframe disability, 'unnaturalness' and disease. The relationality and multiplicity of our resulting visions will nurture insights into the ways in which our own mutated subjectivity is both emancipatory and formed by molecular flows that connect us to ecology (and act beyond us). Subsequent discussion will explore what this means in relational, ecological and cultural terms, exploring how posthumanist discourse intersects with decolonial and pluriversal perspectives to reshape and diversify concepts of organisms' intra-action imminence with environment.

The workshop will be structured around three interwoven activities:

1. Cartographies of mutation and pluriversal becoming– Participants create collective maps that challenge dominant imaginaries of biology and health, repositioning knowledge from diverse perspectives.
2. Collage and assemblage of alternative futures – Using found and drawn images, participants re-construct speculative fabulated bodies that relocate and reconstruct how mutation can resist the devastation of our era.
3. Illustrated Vignettes and Storytelling – Through drawing and narrative-building exercises, we generate vignettes that express shared and divergent concerns, desires, and possibilities for posthumanist co-existence.

Participants will leave having co-created tangible artifacts and conceptual tools to rethink universal values in a way that honors multiplicity, relationality, and ecologically grounded social justice.

Jennifer Crouch is an art-science practitioner and researcher working in sculpture, textiles, installation and image-making. Their work investigates the multi-scalar nature of embodied epistemologies and how materials, sensations and biogeochemical cycles intersect and shape our subjectivities. Jennifer has a background in physics and medical illustration which informs their work as an educator and public engagement professional through interactive events and workshops. They were awarded their PhD in 2023 which merged research in corporeal matter, embodied knowledge and physics to explore the computational and embodied phenomena in MRI through post-digital practices of sculpture, weaving textiles and illustrated cartographies.

Laila Bouziane is a PhD researcher at ASCA, University of Amsterdam, where she was a guest researcher from 2019 to 2021. She holds a B.A. in Literary and Cultural Studies and an M.A. in Comparative Studies. Her current research focuses on representations of cyberspace and digital technologies in contemporary cultural production, drawing on frameworks from decolonial thought, utopianism and technoculture. Her published work includes "A Hermeneutical Reading of Postcolonial Literature" (The International Human Sciences Review, 2019). Her doctoral project examines the intersections of utopian imaginaries and posthuman discourse in twenty-first century fiction.



PC HOOFTHUIS, Spuistraat 134, 1012 VK Amsterdama

09:15 – 10:45 (PCH 1.04)

KEYNOTE 3: Barnita Bagchi (*University of Amsterdam*)

“A place of truth, discomfort and safety. a home where words and story reside”: **Universality in Entangled Literary Worlds**

Respondent: **Stefan Niklas** (*University of Amsterdam*)

Chair: **Sudeep Dasgupta** (*University of Amsterdam*)

The sub-title of my lecture quotes from Shankari Chandran, a contemporary writer, on writing from the heart. The writer in question, bringing together worlds from Australia and South Asia, is one whose fictions and interviews I analyse as part of my literary case-studies in this talk, with works analysed ranging adventurously across genres such as dystopia, thriller, and narratives of ageing. I analyse in this talk these literary worlds from transcultural and entangled perspectives. I analyse constellations that are interwoven between cultures, with literature and culture seen as non-monoclonal and non-sutured. I argue that there is a firm place for situated universality in such analysis, and work with border-crossing concepts such as rights, utopia, dystopia, and such narratives of formation and development. The texts I analyse come from expanding repertoires of world literature, both originally Anglophone (though also from world Englishes) and in bhashas (vernacular Indian languages) such as Bengali/ Bangla.

Barnita Bagchi is Chair and Professor of World Literatures in English at the University of Amsterdam. She has published widely on utopia, histories of transnational and women’s education, and women’s writing in western Europe and south Asia. Her articles have appeared in a wide array of journals, such as *Utopian Studies*, *Religion and Society: Advances in Research*, *Paedagogica Historica*, *New Cinemas*, *Open Library of Humanities*, *Mobilities*, and *Women’s History Review*, and she has published numerous chapters in edited volumes. Her book-length publications include *Pliable Pupils and Sufficient Self-Directors: Narratives of Female Education by Five British Women Writers, 1778-1814* (New Delhi: Tulika: 2004), a part-translation with introduction, *Sultana’s Dream and Padmarag: Two Feminist Utopias, by Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain* (New Delhi: Penguin Classics, 2005; renewed Penguin USA edition, 2022), and the edited volumes, *The Politics*

of the (Im)possible: Utopia and Dystopia Reconsidered (SAGE, 2012; republished by Atlantic, 2024), *Urban Utopias: Memory, Rights, and Speculation* (Jadavpur University Press, open access, 2020).

Stefan Niklas Stefan Niklas is a University Lecturer Assistant Professor in Philosophy at the University of Amsterdam. He specializes in aesthetics and social / cultural / political philosophy. He is currently working on a project called "Planetary Aesthetics" which aims to outline an aesthetic theory that — with reference to the medium of speculative fiction — examines the (im)possibility of concretely imagining the planet and life on it.

Sudeep Dasgupta is Associate Professor in Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam. His publications focus on visual culture and aesthetics, critical theory, postcolonial studies, feminist and queer theory. Recent publications include "Disidentification, Intimacy and the Cinematic Figuration of the Postcolonial in Europe" (2021), "The Aesthetics of Displacement: Dissonance and Dissensus in Adorno and Rancière" (2019) and "The Aesthetics of Indirection: Intermittent Adjacencies and Subaltern Presences at the Borders of Europe" (2017). He is co-editor (with Mireille Rosello) of *What's Queer about Europe ?* (2014), and *Constellations of the Transnational: Modernity, Culture, Critique* (New York and Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2007).

11:00 – 12:30 (PC 1.04)

PANEL 5: Troubling Universalisms Revisited

Chair: **Oscar Talbot** (*University of Amsterdam*)

Universality from Then to Now: The Realignment of Anti-Normative Critique in A Pluriversal World

Marc Farrant (*University of Amsterdam*)

In times of fragmentation, polarization, echo chambers, filter bubbles and ideological silos, this short presentation traces back the current universalisation of particularisms to the overlapping contexts of neoliberalism and cultural theory since the 1960s. Whereas Fred Jameson suggests postmodernism is defined by a waning of affect, it is here posited that our post-postmodern era can be defined by a waning of critique. This is nowhere more evidently felt than in the vibe shift that marks our contemporary: the strange co-opting of anti-normative critique by the global forces of illiberal populism. I trace this

back to a convergence of both left and right critiques of liberalism – epitomised by Michel Foucault’s writings on neoliberalism in the 1970s and 1980s – which help to frame how the post-politics of the 1990s can be seen as coextensive with the hyper-politics of our populist and authoritarian present. Ultimately what is at stake here is unpacking the false homology that links the decentering work of theory and critique to the decentered conditions of our neoliberal epoch.

Marc Farrant (See [page 9](#) for bio)

The Aesthetics of the Strange: Unruly Universals and Perplexing Particularities in the Pluriverse

Monique Roelofs (*University of Amsterdam*)

Chicanx feminist poet-scholar Gloria Anzaldúa connects the borderlands with the strange and associates her experience of writing with a sense of universality. Building on Anzaldúa’s queer aesthetic politics of the strange, this essay explores the role of the strange in juggling and shaping tensions between unruly universals and perplexing particularities from the angle of several writings by Jorge Luis Borges. As it happens, Anzaldúa adopts Borges’s figure of the aleph, conceived as a place that contains all other places, as an image for the borderlands. Following through on the linkages between Anzaldúa’s decolonial vision and Borges’s fiction while briefly contextualizing the analysis in light of Wynter’s, Dewey’s, and Adorno’s views of the universality-particularity relation, this essay brings out the logic of the strange as an aesthetic mode of pluriversal inhabitation and public belonging.

Monique Roelofs is Professor of Philosophy of Art and Culture at the University of Amsterdam. She has published widely on decolonial, feminist, and Black aesthetics, and art and politics. She is the author of *Arts of Address: Being Alive to Language and The World* (Columbia UP, 2020) and *The Cultural Promise of the Aesthetic* (2014). She recently co-edited *Black Art and Aesthetics: Relationalities, Interiorities, Reckonings* (2024). Currently, she is completing *Strange Tastes: Aesthetic Sensibility and the Public in Latin American and Latinx Feminisms* (under contract with Duke UP) and a book exploring the world-making and world-unsettling aesthetic capacities of address.

Grounding the Grid: On Saba Innab's *Tread Lightly – Leave No Trace*
Steyn Bergs (*Utrecht University*)

In her essay on grids in modernist art, Rosalind Krauss concludes that “one of the most modernist things about it is its capacity to serve as a paradigm or model for the antidevelopmental, the antinarrative, the antihistorical.” A form uniquely suited to defer the choice between materialist and idealist conceptions of artistic practice, the grid functioned and functions for many artist as “a staircase to the Universal,” and indeed nothing would appear to have universal appeal quite like the grid as a regular representation of Euclidian space. As David Lloyd has demonstrated, however, the apparent formal perfection and innocence of the grid in fact create an “aesthetic terra nullius” that “belies its intimate relation with the quite violent erasure of the persistent traces of historical alterity.” This paper will therefore analyze an exhibition that mobilized the grid not for its appeal to universality, but in order to historicize this appeal itself; Jordanian-Palestinian architect, urban researcher and artist Saba Innab’s *Tread Lightly – Leave no Trace* (2023). In this small exhibition, the regularity of the grid was belied not just by the presence of sculptural models that intimate a sense of the “permanent temporariness” that Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti argue to be characteristic of the urbanized refugee camp, but also by carefully selected figurative elements referring to historical articulations of modern and colonial territoriality, such as moments of so-called primitive accumulation and the German peasants’ war. In so doing, I hope to demonstrate, Innab’s practice presented a grounding of the grid—not a straightforward denunciation of its seeming universality, but a critical situating of that universality in time and space.

Steyn Bergs is a critic and an art historian, and works as Assistant Professor of modern and contemporary art at Utrecht University. Currently, his research focuses on the aesthetics of infrastructure in contemporary art, as well as on current artistic practices that address uneven development and trouble linear conceptions of time and history. His texts have appeared in numerous magazines, book publications, and journals, including *Third Text*, *Radical Philosophy*, *Afterimage*, *Art Journal*, and the *Journal of African Cinemas*, among others. Additionally, he frequently collaborates with artists and other practitioners in the field on various projects, and is a founding member of MAX, a self-organized space for artists, designers, and research practitioners in Brussels.

Universality and Incompleteness in *In the Light of What We Know*
Ben Moore (*University of Amsterdam*)

This talk proceeds from the observation that all the contributors to our special issue put universalism in relation to something apparently negative, or which marks a point of failure: the Lacanian real, the strange, the archaic, unfulfilled desire. Susan Buck-Morss has similarly suggested that we should approach the universal 'not by subsuming facts within overarching systems of homogenizing premises, but by attending to the edges of systems, the limits of premises, the boundaries of our historical imagination'. This talk posits that to move away from imperial and hegemonic notions of universal history, while holding on to some form of universality, it is vital to attend to incompleteness. To consider this question, I turn to Zia Haider Rahman's 2014 novel *In the Light of What We Know*. A recurrent trope of the novel is Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem, a mathematical proposition which shows for any formal system there will always be statements that are true but remain unprovable. What is universally true, the novel seems to posit, is incompleteness. Histories of war, imperialism, financial collapse and migration circulate in the novel, which invites us to see these as similarly incomplete systems that intersect on the terrain of the self, while at the same time failing to fully reconcile them. Rahman's novel leaves us, I suggest, with a picture of incompleteness as both a means of thinking universality and a limit against which our knowledge of others stumbles.

Ben Moore (See [page 7](#) for bio)

Oscar Talbot Oscar Talbot is a PhD researcher in the Philosophy Department at the University of Amsterdam. He researches the intersection between abolition, radical ecology, and state violence.

11:00 – 12:30 (PCH 1.14)

PANEL 6: Affective Pluralities: Shared Worlds of Loss, Vulnerability, and Ecological Care

Chair: **Jennifer Crouch** (*Artist, researcher, author and art-science practitioner*)

Towards a Dialectical Imaginary of the Planet: Speculating about Open Totality with Édouard Glissant

Nick Psomas (*University of Amsterdam*)

In contemporary environmental discourses, the notion of “the planetary” designates the self-transformation of human beings into a single geological force. The technological capacity to significantly modify Earth’s biological, chemical, and geophysical processes stages an encounter with the planet as a totality. At the same time, positing a single, unified subject against the planet risks re-instantiating the exclusionary logic of universalism. More specifically, narratives of a common planetary destiny efface the power relations, forms of colonial and capitalist domination, and histories of oppression that are deeply implicated in the current ecological catastrophe.

In this context, the purpose of this paper is to investigate what it would mean to immanently construct an imaginary of the planet as an open totality through a critical engagement with the poético-philosophical thought of Édouard Glissant. Drawing from Glissant’s dialectic between totality and the opacity, I argue that the construction of a planetary imaginary necessarily entails the approximation of the planet as a totality, yet a totality that remains fundamentally unconstructable, opaque, and subsequently, constitutively open. To this end, I first reconstruct Glissant’s notion of open totality in relation to the question of the planetary. Against the Eurocentric discourse of universalism, Glissant posits an alternative notion of totality as a continuous unfolding of an infinite web of relations. Participation in the open totality of “Whole World” involves the recognition of each entity’s singular material embeddedness, or opacity. With these considerations in mind, I then demonstrate how Glissant offers the conceptual foundations for a form of immanent speculation that rejects any representation of the planet as a transparent and static object of abstract and isolated contemplation. Rather, the construction of a planetary imaginary is a shared process that acknowledges the instability and precarity of being-in-the world with others. Finally, I discuss the political implications of such a planetary imaginary for a democratic politics of co-habitation.

Nick Psomas is a PhD candidate in philosophy at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis. He is part of the “Planetary Aesthetics” project, focusing on the problem of planetary imagination through the philosophical thought of Theodor W. Adorno, Édouard Glissant, and Cornelius Castoriadis. More broadly, his research interests include aesthetic theory, social and political thought, and the philosophy of the imagination and the imaginary. Additionally, Nick holds a research master in Philosophy from the University of Amsterdam, and a BSc in Political Science from Leiden University.

Liberalism and the Pluriverse: Respecting Eco-Relational Pluralism

Manuel Rodeiro (*Mississippi State University*)

Decolonial and Indigenous scholars and activists have sought to rectify this misunderstanding by advocating for a pluriversal worldview that embraces the cultural and epistemic diversity of human communities. Rather than merely defending the pluriverse, however, I argue that embracing pluriversality and shifting away from the one-world outlook is not only possible but is demanded by liberalism—the supposed dominant ideology of those who adhere to a singular global narrative.

The reason for this is that citizens’ connection to nature can play a central role in their ability to develop and pursue their life plans. Thus, for a given society to satisfy the condition of respect for reasonable pluralism, the state must remain eco-relationally neutral by permitting citizens to maintain a reasonable range of connections with the natural world. This condition is often unmet, as evidenced by modern states’ extensive preference for extractivist lifestyles over sustainable ones. Respect for eco-relational pluralism cannot be met if extractivist interests incessantly trump other citizens’ desire to maintain an ecologically sustainable and intimate bond with their non-artificial environment.

Critics of liberal environmentalism have wrongly assumed that maintaining state neutrality requires conceding the demands of economic growth and development. Such responses would not be legitimate if states intentionally pursue economic growth and development for their own sake, e.g., to ‘raise the standard of living.’ Respect for eco-relational pluralism puts the onus on states to justify any proposed environmentally destructive activity as a means of obtaining or preserving justice. This burden will often fail to be met. Before kowtowing to critics’ conviction that environmentalism can only succeed once the fetters of political liberalism are abandoned, it makes sense first to try applying the political ideal of respect for pluralism to the domain of eco-relationality.

Manuel Rodeiro is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Mississippi State University. He earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy from The Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY) in 2020 and holds a J.D. from Fordham University School of Law (2010). His research focuses on the intersection of Environmental and Political Philosophy. He is especially interested in examining the capacity of liberalism to address the current environmental crisis.

Mourning the Unknowable: Butler and Derrida on Witnessing Ecological Vulnerability

Suzanne Weijland (*Radboud University, Nijmegen*)

Judith Butler offers a compelling argument for using our shared primary vulnerability as universal concept to argue that movements of mourning could allow us to move outside of our current political communities. In this paper I critically consider the way we might open up Butler's theory of mourning to consider the political possibilities of mourning loss in what has been called the sixth extinction. I follow Kelly Oliver's critique that while this vulnerability might be intrinsic to all human beings, it is not uniquely so. If Butler's theory is built upon vulnerability as a universal concept, this necessarily demands an inclusion of the non-human other. Oliver supplements Butler with a Derridean framework as this implies a responsibility without knowing the other – I build forth on this by insisting we follow Derrida's framework of mourning, in which every new encounter necessarily instantiates a new mourning for the other, which manifests itself in an incorporation of the other which can never be complete. I argue that in using Butler alongside a Derridean concept of mourning, we can think about mass loss as following the same constitutive axis whether it is ecological or human in nature. I argue that this is of great significance in our current ecological breakdown as we face mass loss on a scale which is incomprehensible: our news fills up with natural disasters and genocide in tandem, showing increasingly complex entanglement between the two. Finally, I critically discuss this theoretical entanglement by analysing the way that Israeli ecocidal strategies display an attitude that should be countered by a Derridean hyperbolic responsibility which starts by mourning the other.

Suzanne Weijland is a Dutch research master student of Metaphysics and Philosophical Anthropology at Radboud University, Nijmegen. She is a 2023 graduate of the University of Amsterdam's Literary and Cultural Analysis Bachelor programme. Her research interests include mourning – in the context of familial nostalgia, psychoanalytic queer

theory, and the environmental breakdown –, the place of the animal in the metaphysical tradition, and affective indexical relationships with memory objects.

A World of Grief: Making Sense of Westernization in Li Yiyun's *Where Reasons End*

Jingyi Wan (*University of Amsterdam*)

In this paper, I will produce a close reading of Yiyun Li's 2019 semi-autobiographical novel *Where Reasons End*. The novel unfolds an imaginary dialogue between a Chinese immigrant mother-writer in the U. S. and her sixteen-year-old son, whom she lost to suicide. Li, through constructing the novelistic world in which the dialogue unfurls unendingly, navigates topics relating to her status as a first-generation immigrant versus her son being of the second generation; her first speaking Chinese and then adopting English while the son speaks English as his first language; her feeling obligated to act within certain limitations as a mother and seeing her son as invested with unlimited potential; and her various ways of approaching the scene of his death, the full knowledge of which has been withheld from her. The experience of being an immigrant constitutes an important part of the Westernization thematized in the novel. If the mother-writer constructs the imaginary world of the novel to negotiate the loss of her son to suicide, then this chapter asks how is Westernization negotiated through the negotiation of the loss of the son and the ensuing grief. The grieving she does as a mother is presented as both universal and particular to her positionality as an immigrant from China. This chapter argues that this particularity is elaborated in the novel as related to the historical process of the Eastern desire to get closer to the West. This historical process is transposed by the novel to the West, and negotiated in the form of the death of her son and the loss of a culture and language that the mother-writer cannot simply replace with an acquisition of U.S. culture and the English language.

Jingyi Wan is a PhD candidate at the University of Amsterdam, specializing in contemporary East Asian literature and feminist studies. Her forthcoming work will be published in *Women in World-Literature*, an edited collection from Liverpool University Press, and in *Pólemos: Journal of Law, Literature and Culture* in 2025. She has presented her research at leading international conferences, including the 2022 Women in World(-)Literature symposium at the University of Warwick, the 2022 ESSCS in Amsterdam/Leiden, the 2023 Future/Futures conference at the Lisbon Consortium, and the 2024 Critical Legal Conference: Speculation(s) in Lund.

Jennifer crouch (See [page 27](#) for bio)

13:45 – 15:15 (PCH 0.05)

PANEL 7: Assemblages of the Planetary: Ecology, Planetary Epistemologies, Decolonial Perspectives

Chair: **Miloud Rahmoun** (*Ibn Zohr University*)

Unsettling the Archive: Spectral Memory and the Haunted Afterlife of Saartje Baartman Shabnam Shirzadi (*University of California, Merced*)

This presentation explores the haunting afterlife of Saartje Baartman, the Khoikhoi woman exhibited in 19th-century European freak shows, as she reappears in contemporary performance works by Nelisiwe Xaba, Chantal Loïa, and Lebo Mashile. Drawing on Jacques Derrida’s hauntology, Avery Gordon’s spectral sociology, and Saidiya Hartman’s method of critical fabulation, I examine how these artists challenge the colonial archive’s epistemic violence—its erasures, silences, and disciplinary fantasies of knowledge—by invoking Baartman’s ghost not as a subject to be recovered, but as a fugitive presence that resists capture.

These performances do not seek to reconstruct Baartman’s “true” story. Instead, they imagine with and through the gaps: Xaba’s choreographic metamorphoses, Loïa’s grotesque mimicry and confrontation of the spectator, and Mashile’s poetic embodiment of Baartman as an artist with complex interiority. Collectively, they enact critical fabulation—refusing archival closure while offering speculative, plural modes of remembrance. In this context, the body becomes a site of re-inscription, and the stage a space where the ghost interrupts the logic of historical certainty, I argue that these works do not merely reject universalizing Baartman’s story, but they haunt it: they expose her archival presence’s colonial foundations while gesturing toward a shared, pluralistic ethics of memory. Baartman’s spectral presence becomes a pluriversal figure, not to be resolved, but to unsettle: a disruptive embodiment of difference that cannot be reduced to sameness. Ultimately, this paper asks whether performative haunting itself might serve as a method of decolonial remembrance—a way of dwelling in history’s fractures, refusing epistemic closure, and imagining otherwise.

Shabnam Shirzadi is a Ph.D. candidate in Interdisciplinary Humanities at the University of California, Merced, currently based in the Netherlands. She obtained her masters in theater studies from University of Amsterdam in 2020, where she was awarded the Amsterdam Merit Scholarship. Her dissertation traces and studies the haunting legacies of colonial human exhibitions, human zoos and freakshow in contemporary artistic

expressions. Alongside her research, Shabnam teaches performance theory and analysis at the Academy of Theatre and Dance (AHK) in Amsterdam, while also returning to her own artistic practice as a playwright and dramaturg.

Performance Lecture: mediterraneans

Deniz Buga (*Independent Artist*)

Mediterraneans from different shores experience the sea's material history and its embedded hierarchies differently. Palestinian American writer Suja Sawafta, denied access to Palestine's Mediterranean, writes in her text "Two Shores, One Sea, Longing for Palestine's Mediterranean" that she cannot submerge her body in its waters elsewhere. "I have been pulled from this element by colonial violence," she says, describing how the water almost burns when she touches it.

The architect duo Mathur and Da Cunha on their research platform "Ocean of Wetness" write: "Wetness is everywhere to some degree. It is in the seas, clouds, rains, dew, air, soils, minerals, plants, animals. The sea is very wet; the desert less so." They invite us to think of the ubiquitous wetness as the unifying element of the world.

This performance lecture addresses hierarchical horizon lines, human-made perceptions of topography, and the multiple humanitarian crises simultaneously taking place in the Mediterranean basin. How can we approach the sea—specifically the Mediterranean—to develop a framework for antiracist and democratic thinking? This lecture seeks to propose a mapped-out disorientation, imagining disorientation itself as a decolonial act.

Deniz Buga, Istanbul, 1982. Currently lives in Amsterdam. His film, video, and photography works primarily focus on urbanism, minority politics, and queer stances. His work was presented at various film festivals and museums including the San Sebastian Film Festival, Oxford Modern Art Museum, Centre Pompidou, and C/O Berlin.

Buga was a resident artist at Rijksakademie, Amsterdam.

Mediating Climate Truths: Visual Evidence, Trust, and Public Deliberation

Jan Babnik (*IRRIS Institute*)

The role of investigative journalistic and artistic practices in constructing and mediating evidence has become increasingly significant in contemporary mediatized societies. "Enthusiasm" – historically perceived as the main nemesis of Enlightenment rationality, a

force of credulity and susceptibility to persuasion – remains still today, although under a different denominator, a powerful element in shaping collective perception. The distinction between rational deliberation and the affective dimensions of belief has long structured debates about evidence and its reception.

Visual strategies – ranging from OSINT methods, forensic counter-investigations, and data visualizations to documentary aesthetics and evidentiary realism – particularly in the context of climate change and environmental degradation – actively shape how information is perceived and interpreted. Investigative journalism and art engage with the construction and contestation of facts, mediating their perception and interpretation in the public sphere, engaging with trust and deliberation as essential components of public discourse. This raises fundamental questions: Can different visualization and mediation strategies truly foster and contribute to shared understanding? How do fact-building practices function within deliberative frameworks to address contested claims?

Investigative art and journalism increasingly employ forensic methodologies, using satellite imagery, photogrammetry, 3D modeling, and AI-assisted analyses to construct narratives grounded in evidence. These visual forms function as interfaces, translating disparate data into structured, persuasive narratives. Examples include autographic visualizations tracing environmental transformations, representations of global warming impacts, instrumental images such as thermal scans or satellite composites used in climate investigations, OSINT techniques harnessing citizen journalism and open-source verification, and counter-investigative aesthetics that challenge dominant narratives.

Rather than merely exposing facts through visual means, the communicative process of building evidence entails an interactive and participatory dynamic that actively fosters deliberative practices. Emerging models of investigative communities and citizen-led journalism open spaces for participation, particularly in climate advocacy and environmental justice, shifting aspects of knowledge production from centralized institutions to broader networks.

Can visual strategies move beyond merely exposing the mechanisms of power? Is there potential in fostering a new commonality – one that reclaims “enthusiasm” as a force of collective imagination, shared commitment, and deliberation rather than allowing it to become a source of division and manipulation? The presentation will explore selected case studies addressing global warming that exemplify these methods and their epistemological implications.

Jan Babnik (1977) works as a researcher, editor, curator, and educator. He is a researcher at Institute IRRIS for Research, Development and Strategies of Society, Culture and Environment, editor-in-chief of *Membrana – Journal of Photography, Theory and Visual Culture* and *Fotografija* magazine, and a director of the Membrana Institute. Currently, he is an assistant researcher for the SoMe4Dem EU Horizon project. He is primarily concerned with visual-discursive theories and research practices and the theory of photography – especially documentary photography, the discourse on photography, and the philosophy of visual culture. He holds an MPhil in Phenomenology and History of Philosophy from the University of Ljubljana and a PhD in Philosophy of Visual Culture from the University of Primorska. He is a member of the Slovenian Society of Aesthetics and a board member of the MGLC Council (International Centre of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana).

Toward Ethnomusicology 3.0: Applied Collaborative Ecomusicology in the Cosmological Musicking and the Mountain Cultural Festival

Brian Trinanda K. Adi (*University of Amsterdam*)

In the context of escalating ecological crises, Ethnomusicology must evolve from its Eurocentric colonial foundation to Ethnomusicology 3.0, an innovative approach that integrates music with environmental activism and cultural preservation. This research introduces that concept of Ethnomusicology 3.0: "Collaborative Applied Ecomusicology," a paradigm that amalgamates applied ethnomusicology and ecomusicology principles with Field to Media approach, focusing on the role of music and musical media production in fostering community development and ecological resilience. By engaging with the concept of "cosmological musicking," the study explores how music can transcend human-centered perspectives to encompass relationships with non-human entities and broader ecological systems.

A case study on Ki Ageng Qithmir music group and the Muria mountain community in Central Java, Indonesia, exemplifies this approach. Through music and media productions, the group addresses ecological and cultural challenges, promoting community empowerment and identity. The research underscores the potential of music and media as tools for cultural expression, social integration, and ecological advocacy.

This interdisciplinary investigation highlights the relevance of relational epistemologies and cosmological narratives in shaping sustainable practices within communities. By integrating music with local cosmologies, this approach advocates for ecological justice

and cultural revitalization. Festivals like the Muria Raya Festival serve as catalysts for cultural exchange, fostering innovation and strengthening eco-cultural networks.

The study concludes by advocating for Ethnomusicology 3.0, emphasizing collaborative action research that recognizes the agency of all beings, offering a transformative lens to address contemporary ecological and cultural challenges.

Brian Trinanda K. Adi is a dedicated ethnomusicologist specializing in the intersection of music, culture, and ecology. With a focus on applied collaborative ecomusicology, Brian's work explores the potential of music as a tool for ecological activism and cultural preservation. He has been instrumental in initiating community-based musical projects in Central Java, Indonesia, particularly with the Muria mountain community. His PhD research in ASCA advocates for a cosmological perspective in music-making, fostering cultural resilience and ecological awareness. Brian is committed to integrating music and media production as a means of social change and environmental advocacy.

Miloud Rahmoun, Associate Professor at Ibn Zohr University in Agadir, Morocco. My research focuses on literary and cultural studies, discourse analysis, and media studies, with a strong interest in comparative literature. I aim to explore the intersections of modernity and tradition, identity construction, and critical theory, particularly in contemporary literary and cultural contexts. I am deeply engaged in comparative approaches to literature and seek to expand my professional and academic development in the fields of literature, critical theory, and contemporary comparative literature. My publications include "Laroui's Critique of Arab Ideology: A Critique of the Arab intellectual par excellence". *Maghrebi Encounters Rethinking representation in Postcolonial Criticism*. (2023), "The Role of CEDocs and its Effectiveness in Facilitating Postgraduate Research in Moroccan Universities." *Innovation, Technologies, Education et Communication* 5 (2022), "Experimenting with Project Based Learning Method in Teaching Literary Modules and the Incorporation of Soft Skills". *The internationalization of higher education Crossed Views*. (2022), "Cultural Alienation and Language Discontinuity in *La Mémoire Tatouée*". *Littera Aperta: International Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies* 5 (2017): 73-83 and "Abdelkebir Khatibi's *La Mémoire Tatouée*: A double critique reading of space". *Excerpts in Multicultural Studies*. Group de Recherche ERET Vol 1 (2018).

13:45 – 15:15 (PCH 1.14)

PANEL 8: Pluriversal Aesthetics: Embodied Knowledge, Art Practices and Relational Imaginaries

Chair: **Monique Roelofs** (*University of Amsterdam*)

Re-Imagining Shared Ground: Halka/Haiti by Malinowska and C.T. Jasper
Agnieszka Hudzik (*Saarland University*)

This presentation contributes to the workshop's inquiry by analyzing the collaborative art project *Halka/Haiti*. 18°48'05"N 72°23'01"W by Joanna Malinowska and C.T. Jasper. Situated at the intersection of artistic expression and critical cultural analysis, this project, initially conceived for the Polish Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale (2015), offers a compelling case study for understanding how art can stage the tension between the particular and the universal.

Halka/Haiti centers on a performance of Stanisław Moniuszko's Polish national opera *Halka* in Cazale, Haiti, engaging an audience with complex historical ties to Poland. By transplanting this cornerstone of European "high" culture to a postcolonial context, the artists examine the intricate relationships between opera, Enlightenment ideals, colonialism, and the formation of national identities – themes directly relevant to the workshop's concern with the problematic legacy of imperial universalism. The project's core lies in its panoramic video documentation, which captures a localized assembly that transcends simplistic notions of ethnonationalist diaspora, subtly critiquing the homogenizing tendencies often embedded within concepts of "nation" and belonging, as exemplified by initiatives like the Karta Polaka.

Drawing on the Haitian Creole concept of *Rasanblaj*, defined by its capacity for assembly, resistance, and the reconfiguration of existing structures, the artwork presents a fleeting yet potent vision of coexistence. This resonates with the workshop's exploration of whether diverse epistemologies can reveal glimpses of universality without replicating oppressive universalisms.

The analysis will focus on how *Halka/Haiti*, through its specific artistic and cultural context, gestures towards a shared human experience grounded not in imposed uniformity but in the recognition of diverse worlds and the potential for interconnectedness – aligning with Glissant's vision of a "joyfully welcomed diversity of human communities." By examining the project's intertextual and intermedial references,

my presentation argues that artistic interventions like Halka/Haiti can contribute to a pluriversal understanding of shared human commonalities, offering a nuanced perspective on reimagining universality in our increasingly divided world.

Agnieszka Hudzik is a literary scholar and comparatist currently working as a postdoc at the Cluster for European Research, Saarland University. She received her PhD in comparative literature from the Freie Universität Berlin in 2016. She is the author of two German monographs on *Broch and Witkacy* (2013) and "The Philosophy of Seduction in Modernist Prose" (2018). She is now working on her book project (habilitation), *Retrotopias Reimagined: Community in Literature and Art after Universalism*, which examines depictions of communal coexistence in literature and contemporary art, conceptualizing a plural and open 'we'.

Third Space as Bodily Interaction

Marieke Naomi van der Steen (*University of Amsterdam*)

This paper examines the public space performance *Third Space* (2021) by Achterdeberg Producties, as a case study to explore the physical dimension of Homi K. Bhabha's concept of 'Third Space'. Drawing on my own experience as a performer in *Third Space*, I offer a critical phenomenological perspective on Bhabha's theory, emphasizing the importance of embodied experience, often overlooked in academic discourse. I argue that forms of hierarchical thinking and 'othering' not only occur in explicit ways, but also through subtle, embodied interactions in space. By focusing on bodily dimensions, these dynamics become visible and, more importantly, it becomes possible to explore new ways for multiple perspectives to coexist in a non-hierarchical manner.

In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha builds on Edward Said's work *Orientalism* (1978), which critiques how binary thinking - such as the Occident/Orient divide - creates and sustains cultural hierarchies. Bhabha moves beyond binary thinking and looks at how cultures interact and negotiate, creating hybrid spaces in-between in which several perspectives can be present in a non-hierarchical manner.

Inspired by Bhabha's theory, performance *Third Space* explored these in-between spaces through a very diverse cast, including professional actors, first-time performers, people from various nationalities and socio-economic backgrounds, and with and without "disabilities". The languages the performers spoke were so diverse that there was not one communal language. Therefore, the rehearsals focused on collective movement

exercises to search for alternative (non-hierarchical) ways of making contact between the performers. For example, during the first rehearsal, there was no formal introduction round; instead, performers got to know each other through contact-improvisation. While moving together, you have to physically rely on another person, asking for a certain openness and trust towards each other, creating shared spaces 'in-between'.

Marieke Naomi van der Steen is a PhD candidate at ASCA and a lecturer in philosophy at the University of Amsterdam. Her research integrates a critical phenomenological approach with aesthetics, feminist philosophy, critical race theory, disability studies, and performance philosophy. Drawing on her background in philosophy and her knowledge of theatre practice, she explores bodily experiences and frequently uses theatre performances as case studies. Her work aims to foster productive dialogues between theory and practice.

Sketching the Pluriverse: on Drawing, Deep Listening, and the Ruptures of Fieldwork

Suzi Asa (*University of British Columbia Okanagan*)

This presentation critically examines the tension between immersion and transduction when doing humanities research, particularly when doing sensory ethnography, proposing drawing as a research-creation method that engages with the ruptures, resistances, and failures embedded in cultural practices. While immersion has traditionally been valued for its deep engagement with research subjects, it risks flattening complex sensory experiences. Instead, a transductive approach, drawing on Stefan Helmreich's concept of "transductive anthropology," allows researchers to attune to sensory misalignments and creative disruptions rather than seeking seamless integration into a field.

I explore how drawing, beyond its representational function, serves as an active ethnographic tool that highlights the multi-layered nature of cultural soundscapes. Engaging with Pauline Oliveros's theory of deep listening Tina Camp's understanding of listening to images, I argue that listening and drawing intersect as creative, participatory acts that challenge text-based methodologies and Eurocentric epistemologies in sound studies. I believe this perspective resonates with the 2025 ASCA Workshop theme of re-imagining universality by foregrounding alternative knowledge systems that resist hegemonic frameworks.

Through an analysis of some other ethnographers who use drawing as a method and my personal sketches—including initial drawings from my PhD research in musical tavern settings (meyhane)—I demonstrate how mapping, drawing and abstraction capture ephemeral, embodied and affective aspects of cultural experience. This method fosters a reflexive ethnographic practice that does not impose a singular interpretive framework but instead embraces multiplicity.

Ultimately, this paper will argue for a transductive, affective and creative ethnographic approach that resists the totalizing tendencies of immersion while fostering an embodied, processual understanding of cultural experiences. By positioning drawing as a sensuous methodology, I hope to contribute to broader discussions on pluriversal knowledge production, aligning with the conference's inquiry into how artistic and cultural practices can offer new pathways for negotiating commonalities within difference.

Suzi Asa (they/them) is a PhD candidate at the University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO), specializing in Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies within the Power, Conflict, and Ideas theme. Their research explores sensory ethnography, creative methodologies, and diasporic belonging. Currently, they are an Affiliated Researcher at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA). Their doctoral research, *Echoes of Belonging, Queerness, and Diaspora: The Politics of Multi-Sensory Meyhane Rituals*, examines the evolution of meyhanes—sensorially rich taverns found in Turkey— within diasporic communities, focusing on their transformations in the Netherlands considering different migration waves. Through ethnographic drawings and archival materials, their work investigates how sensory practices shape diasporic belonging. Suzi holds an rMA in Cultural Analysis from the University of Amsterdam and a double BA in Media and Visual Arts and Psychology from Koç University, Istanbul. They have worked on projects exploring aural populations in Istanbul, co-coordinated the Justice Atlas podcast series with Anadolu Kültür, and participated as a guest artist-researcher in the Istanbul Biennial Production and Research Programme. Their work engages drawing as an ethnographic method to uncover alternative narratives within archives, shaking the claim of truth-making with sensory ways of reiterating.

Contact: Placedness, Knowing and Poïēsis in Renée Green’s Spatial Projects
Joseph Steele (*University of Amsterdam*)

To think beyond [ethnographic] allegorical in representation, in thinking about fruitful uses of Benjaminian approach in the essay film (C. Russell, L. Rascaroli), a proposition is set forth to examine place in the work of artist Renee Green not through the essay films themselves, but in how she inhabits invitations to exhibit, through her practices of writing, research and especially details related to colour, sound, and architectonic space. Space and place are interrogated in Green’s work through story, tacit and embodied knowledge, and biographical and spatial crossings, interested in relations and networks, more than they are architectonic space-inhabiting as in how one lives in a home or like how a performer embodies a role. AVects are important and ideas are tested out against memory and theories. This article examines Green’s poiēsis (making, coming into being) through spatial/ place-based interpretation, as has been written about by numerous authors (N. Alter, H. Copeland, L. Gangitano, R. Gray, R. Green, J. Meyer, J. Rebentisch, J. Steele, G. Sutton, E. Zabunyan). In drawing on her earlier dialogue on contact zones with James Clivord and the debate with Hal Foster following the “Artist as Ethnographer” in *Art of the Real* (1996), Green continues to think through space/place, interpretation, gardens (real and imagined), and the figure of the walker. This is explored through geometry and systems, the use of colour fabric, Baroque perspective, music and non-diegetic audio elements, and linguistic utterances in exhibitionary space. Green challenges the epistemic certainty assumed in critical distance—much in the way Fabian approaches anthropology’s denial of coevalness—and finally problematizes eVects of distance and memory, which might have an intoxicating, specious eVect (W.G. Sebald). Time, in Green’s work, engages ‘ongoingness’, a continuous [re-]examination, the time of narrative enacting a present through the means of the story, returns and returning (S. Leung, K. Mercer).

Eschewing the art historical term ‘site-specificity,’ Green settles on ‘system-specificity’ which allows for mobility and compounding, while vectors for other ways of knowing and delimiting space come from Lisa Lowe, Yi-Fu Tuan, Doreen Massey, Kathleen Stewart, Trinh T. Minh-ha and through Green’s dialogues with interlocutors Fred Moten, Miwon Kwon, Yvonne Rainer, and Avery Gordon. The article is illuminated with plates of Green’s works [from documenta 11: Kassel (2002), exhibition “Tracing” Como IT (2016), the film and exhibition *Begin Again, Begin Again* (at MAK Schindler House LA 2015), and “Within Living Memory” (CCVA Cambridge MA 20)] and frames from *UNTITLED ESSAY FILM* [poiēsis].

Joseph Steele (*1982 Ridgewood US) is an artist and holds a PhD in Emergent Technology and Media Art Practices (2023) from the Department of Critical Media Practices at the University of Colorado Boulder. He is a lecturer at CU Boulder and a Research Affiliate in the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (UvA). He was affiliate at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam's CLUE+ Interfaculty Research Institute (Art History, Humanities) and was Visiting Assistant Professor in Comparative Arts and Media Studies. Based in the Netherlands, his work examines ethnographic modes of representation and how artists trouble discourses, working with the archive and exhibitionary space. Joe holds a Master in Design Studies in Art, Design, and the Public Domain from Harvard Graduate School of Design (2016) and BFA from MassArt (2005, Fine arts, media & photography). He was a Fellow at MIT's OpenDocLab (2017). As working group member at Nieuwe Instituut Rotterdam's Collecting Otherwise, he contributed a roundtable program and was a member of the *Asterisk cell. Joe has participated in the Mountain School of Arts LA in 2020 and was part of the full-spectrum curatorship at IMPAKT Centre for Media Culture, 2022 (Utrecht). Joe is active in experimental film collectives AgX (Boston US) and WORM Filmwerkplaats (Rotterdam NL) has presented lectureperformance, films, installations, curatorial projects, and papers internationally. Joseph is an independent researcher in post-production and distribution on the documentary UNTITLED ESSAY FILM which accompanied his dissertation "Archive Poiēsis: On the Practice of Renée Green [supervisor: Prof. Reece Auguiste], focused on the practice of American artist, filmmaker, and writer Renée Green (* Cleveland US 1959). Through interviews, discourse analysis, and close reading, Joe studies how Green uses hermeneutics, analysis of re-photography, study of positionality of narrator/author, and art ethnography and historiography in the layered, inter-media works.

Monique Roelofs is Professor of Philosophy of Art and Culture at the University of Amsterdam. She has published widely on decolonial, feminist, and Black aesthetics, and art and politics. She is the author of *Arts of Address: Being Alive to Language and The World* (Columbia UP, 2020) and *The Cultural Promise of the Aesthetic* (2014). She recently co-edited *Black Art and Aesthetics: Relationalities, Interiorities, Reckonings* (2024). Currently, she is completing *Strange Tastes: Aesthetic Sensibility and the Public in Latin American and Latinx Feminisms* (under contract with Duke UP) and a book exploring the world-making and world-unsettling aesthetic capacities of address.

15:30 – 16:30 (PCH 0.05)

SEMINAR DISCUSSION 1: Universal Truths: The Politics of a Pedagogy of Care and The Contemporary Relevance of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Within and Beyond Higher Educational Institutions

Siobhan Wall-Suleyman (*Artist, Writer and Curator*)

Chair: **Amira Fretz** (Leiden University)

The seminar will begin by reading through copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Participants will be invited to start reading the document. Are there things they'd change, add or omit? What is missing? Whose rights might be ignored or misinterpreted? Taking the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a crucially important document, I look at how artists have used the Declaration in their work and ask whether it is being applied in higher education in The Netherlands and The UK. Is it as inclusive and progressive as it was when it was written in 1948, a significant moment in global history? Using work by the late artist and lecturer Monica Ross, the focus of the seminar will focus on access to higher education, comparing art colleges in Britain with undergraduate and postgraduate institutions in The Netherlands. Reflecting on insights by Rosi Braidotti, participants will be invited to ask whether contemporary art practices are important in asking whether we (seminar participants) can make (universal) truth claims or is this replicating a eurocentric position?

Siobhan Wall-Suleyman is a former senior lecturer at London Metropolitan University. She is an Amsterdam based artist, writer and curator who works in and beyond traditional gallery spaces. She has taught at the Rietveld Academie, The KABK in Den Haag as well as on the MA in Museums and Contemporary Curating at the UCA, Surrey. Siobhan Wall-Suleyman is renowned for making artist's books on the themes of 'corporeal dissonance', ableism, the clothing industry and women's labour. Inspired by Jo Spence and the Wellcome Collection's exhibitions on Skin, Work and other themes, she enjoys reinterpreting images of ill health, alopecia and invisible disabilities. She is a member of the NUJ's Disabled Members Council and is currently writing a book on contemporary drawing practices. She lives in Amsterdam Zuidoost, where she enjoys cycling, and drawing in her OAZO atelier.

@siobhan_drawings (Instagram)

Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siobhan_Wall

Amira Fretz is PhD Fellow at Leiden University College, Leiden University. Her PhD project studies the human corpse in international justice from a feminist, posthumanist lens. Drawing on feminist, queer, and decolonial theory throughout her work, she intervenes in both critical approaches to international law as well as critical theory to interrogate the potentialities of post-mortem justice for the systemically marginalised corpse in and beyond the law. At LUC, she teaches across the major programmes in World Politics and International Justice. She holds a research MA in Gender Studies and a Master of Laws in International Law from Utrecht University.

15:30 – 16:30 (PCH 1.14)

SEMINAR DISCUSSION 2: Narrative Hegemony and the Arab-Muslim Other in the U.S.

Jonas Elbousty (*Yale University*)

Chair: **Elliot C. Mason** (*Uppsala University*)

The discourses that have been propagating stereotypes about Arabs and Muslims in the West, particularly the United States, have contributed to the proliferation of vilifying acts against them. These discourses which are often ignited by politicians, the right-wing media, Tv shows and movies, and literary works, have normalized Orientalist stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims, solidifying and even legitimizing narratives that portray them as uncivilized, ignorant, and violent people. This narrative, which represents all Arabs and Muslims alike and frames them as a monolithic block of backward threats, has to be interrogated. In this paper, I argue that there is an urgent need to question these existing stereotypical narratives by creating more narratives that refute them and unveil the untold, and often purposefully disguised, stories of Arabs and Muslims. I explain that Narrative Plenitude—the multiplicity of representations and discourses—is a way of revealing the diversity that exists amongst Arabs and Muslims in their backgrounds, identities and ideologies, which can help uncover other viewpoints, attitudes, and experiences that refute those existing stereotypes about who Arabs and Muslims are and what they can do.

Jonas Elbousty holds an MPhil and a PhD from Columbia University. He is an academic, writer, and literary critic and translator. He teaches in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Yale University where he served as the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations for seven years. He is currently the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Council on Middle East Studies

and oversees the Yale Summer Study Abroad Program in Rabat, Morocco. He is the author or co-author of eight books, including *Faces* (Georgetown University Press, 2024), *Reading Mohamed Choukri's Narratives* (Routledge, 2024), *The Screams of War* (Seagull Books, 2024), *Tales of Tangier* (Yale University Press, 2023), *Aswat Mu'asira: Short Stories* (Georgetown University Press, 2023), *Vitality and Dynamism: Interstitial Dialogues of Language, Politics, and Religion in Morocco's Literary Tradition* (Leiden University Press, 2014). His work has appeared in *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *ArabLit*, *ArabLit Quarterly*, *Asheville Poetry Review*, *Banipal*, *Prospectus*, *Sekka*, *Journal of North African Studies*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *Comparative Literature*, *Journal of New Jersey Poets*, *World Literature Today*, *The Markaz Review*, among other publications. He is the book series editor of the *Cultural Production on the Middle East and North Africa*, and editor in chief of the *Journal on Maghrebi Studies*. Elbousty has received many awards, including the *Ordre des Palmes Académiques* (Commander of the French National Order of Merit), 2020 Poorvu Family Award for excellence in teaching at Yale University, Special Commendation for contributions to education from the State of Massachusetts Senate, and numerous research fellowships, including American Institute of Maghrebi Studies Fellowship, A. Whitney Griswold Fellowship, Edward J. and Dorothy Clarke Kempf, Frederick W. Hilles fellowship, etc. He is also an elected fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute and a member of the Oxford Union.

Elliot C. Mason is a postdoctoral researcher and activist. Most recently, he is the author of *Poetics of Value: The Primacy of Insurgency as Marxist Methodology* (forthcoming), and co-editor, with Valentina Moro, of *Judith Butler and Marxism: The Radical Feminism of Performativity, Vulnerability, and Care* (2025). He is a member of Workers and Students in Swedish Academia for Palestine (WASSAP).

Email: elliotcmason@pennydropscollective.org

16:45 – 18:00 (PCH 0.05)

WORKSHOP 2: More Than Me

Chair: **Serra Hughes** (*University of Amsterdam*)

Interactive Artistic Workshop on Embodiment and Plurality

Siobhan Wall-Suleyman (*Artist, Writer and Curator*)

Inspired by the growth in radical, independent publishing, the proliferation of artists' books in alternative bookshops, archives and academic institutions, this workshop aims to disrupt the ubiquitous focus on the idea of the coherent (Western) self. Intimately entangled with largely unarticulated individualism and capitalist, self-promoting identity, we'll work collaboratively, adding to what other participants are making and thinking. Instead of making simple, self-contained, simple folding books, we'll work on each other's 'publications', in timed breaks. Every 5 minutes participants will cut out images, glue, then collage found text and then move on to another 'book,' maybe deconstructing, destroying or adding to what has already been made. The process is dialogic, or even multi-logic, but may be disruptive and not always respectful! (These are, in the end, only pieces of paper.)

There will be a brief introduction to ideas around the coherent, colonial, Western self, in and beyond the visual arts, as well as time to give and receive feedback at the end of the session. The ameliorative impact of a disruptive, incoherent self in drawing practices will be examined in the light of Julia Kristeva's writing on the abject. The idea of the collective, dispersed focus of abstract Islamic art will also be integral to debates about vision and visuality.

Siobhan Wall-Suleyman (See [page 48](#) for bio)

Serra Hughes is a PhD candidate in English literature at the University of Amsterdam. She is the co-organizer of the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis's annual workshop in 2025: *Re-Imagining Universality in the Pluriverse*. She has a BA in Eastern and Islamic History from Simon Fraser University and an MA in English Literature from Stockholm University. Her research interests span world literature, global speculative literature, literary multilingualism, and posthumanism.



UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam

09:00 – 10:30 (Doelenzaal)

KEYNOTE 4: Paulo Lemos Horta (*New York University*)

Universal Literature in an Age of Nationalism

Respondent: **Barnita Bagchi** (*University of Amsterdam*)

Chair: **Jaap Kooijman** (*University of Amsterdam*)

In recent years, media have celebrated tiny, independent presses for spotting Nobel Laureates such as Annie Ernaux, Olga Tokarczuk, and Jon Fosse. These micro-operations stand defiantly against a backdrop of unprecedented corporate consolidation across the cultural industries, particularly publishing. How does a small house like Fitzcarraldo Editions outcompete a giant such as Penguin Random House? Part of the answer lies in the fervent literary subcultures supported by niche online magazines, blogs, and a dedicated readership outside traditional channels. Yet, there's a troubling flip side. The largest literary publishers—New York's "big five" or even top eight—are increasingly indifferent to international fiction. In the past innovative publishers such as New Directions scouted and cultivated talents like Clarice Lispector, Vladimir Nabokov, and Roberto Bolaño, only to lose them eventually to larger houses. Today, these larger publishers are less keen to pursue international authors, preferring the familiarity of domestic writers. Interviews conducted across Germany, Italy, Spain, France, and the United States confirm a widespread publishing nationalism that predates the recent rise of xenophobic political discourse.

What, then, becomes of "universal literature" in this increasingly nationalist climate? Nobel's own will explicitly foregrounded humanism, progress, and the betterment of humanity—values clearly embedded in the Literature Prize's medal inscription: "It is beneficial to have improved human life through discovered arts." One promising answer emerges precisely from the margins: micro-presses and democratized publishing platforms are redefining universal literature from below. No longer dictated solely by elite institutions such as the Swedish Academy or prestige arbiters like the New York Times, this decentralized literary culture is invigorating and exciting. Consider the New Academy Prize—an "alternative Nobel" spontaneously created by activists, academics, and librarians during the Nobel's 2018 #MeToo-related suspension. Yet, this alternative

universality from below remains fragile, contingent upon the continued support and resilience of libraries, universities, and social movements. In an era of resurgent right-wing nationalism, the survival and vibrancy of a democratic and plural universal literatures depend fundamentally upon our commitment to protecting and nurturing these grassroots institutions.

This talk draws on literary history and archival research into the publishing world to examine the shifting mechanics of universal literary prestige, asking what they reveal about hierarchies of knowledge and how those hierarchies might be challenged. I build on my earlier work on cosmopolitanisms from below to explore how South-South solidarities, editorial agency, and the role of small presses reveal new possibilities for universalism. These emergent forms are not anchored in metropolitan centers like Paris or New York but grow out of a broader, more decentered constellation of actors—activists, editors, translators, and publishers—who are reshaping what counts as world literature. Rather than rejecting universality wholesale, I trace how it is being reimagined at the level of practice: through publishing choices, translation flows, and editorial labor that together suggest the contours of a new, pluriversal literary commons.

Paulo Lemos Horta is the author of a series of books that center the agency of people overlooked and silenced in literary history, among them *Marvelous Authors: Secret Authors of the Arabian Nights, Aladdin and The Annotated Arabian Nights* (with Yasmine Seale) and *Cosmopolitanisms* (with Bruce Robbins), for which he also translated Silvano Santiago's "The Cosmopolitanism of the Poor." These works have been translated into several languages and received accolades including nonfiction book of the year in the Canadian press and notable book of the year mention in Buzzfeed and the Wall Street Journal. He has written for PMLA, *Words Without Borders*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books* and *The Times Literary Supplement*. His keynote presentation draws from research for his forthcoming book, *Rotten Little Worlds: World Literature in an Age of Nationalism*. Articles from this new research have appeared in *Interventions* and the *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Inquiry*. A translator of Pessoa and Camões among others, he has a research interest in large language models and translation. He has served on the executive board of Harvard's Institute for World Literature, for which he has also served as faculty, and the International Comparative Literature Association, where he co-organized a publishing workshop linking authors, translators, editors and publishers. Prior to joining NYUAD, where he is associate professor of creative writing and literature, he founded and designed a world literature program for Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada.

Barnita Bagchi (See [page 28](#) for bio)

Jaap Kooijman (Amsterdam, 1967) is an associate professor in Media Studies and American Studies and academic director of the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA) at the University of Amsterdam. He is the author of *Fabricating the Absolute Fake* (AUP 2013) and *De muziekfabriek* (Mazirel 2024), and co-editor, with Glyn Davis, of *The Richard Dyer Reader* (BFI 2023). His articles on American pop culture and politics have been published in journals such as *The Velvet Light Trap*, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *The Journal of American Culture*, *Post Script*, *Celebrity Studies*, *Popular Music and Society*, *Cinema Journal*, *Critical Studies in Television*, and *VIEW Journal of European Television History and Culture*, as well as in edited collections such as *Unpopular Culture* (AUP 2016), *A Companion to Celebrity* (Wiley 2016), *Revisiting Star Studies* (Edinburgh UP 2017), *Music/Video: Histories, Aesthetics, Media* (Bloomsbury 2017), and *Beyoncé: At Work, On Screen, and Online* (Indiana UP 2020). His audiovisual essays have been published in *[in]Transition: Journal of Videographic Film & Moving Image Studies*, *NECSUS: European Journal of Media Studies*, *16:9*, *Collateral*, *tecmerin: Journal of Audiovisual Essays*, and *zfm: Zeitschrift für Medienwissenschaft*.

11:00 – 12:30 (Doelenzaal)

PANEL 9: Mobility, Postcoloniality, and Plural Narratives

Chair: **Niall Martin** (*University of Amsterdam*)

What Remains: Rethinking Universality Through the Counter-Narratives of Waste

Natalia Andrievskikh (*Cornell University*) & **Andrei Guruianu** (*Cornell University*)

In *Examined Life*, a documentary that brings abstract philosophy to the streets of New York City, Slavoj Žižek challenges his audience to love the world, including the world of trash – the part of our lives that we usually ignore. “To recreate if not beauty, then the aesthetic dimension in trash itself – that is the true love of the world,” he announces. If considering the aesthetic dimension of waste seems like a formidable task, then perhaps it is worth our effort to question the potential of waste to facilitate a new kind of universal epistemology, one that resists the falsely universal consumerist framework of disposable value. In this presentation, Guruianu and Andrievskikh will revisit the insights from their 2019 book, *The Afterlife of Discarded Objects: Memory and Forgetting in a Culture of Waste* (Parlor Press), to search for the possibility of the universal in the multitude of

human experiences with material objects. The authors argue that attention to waste – things that no longer hold functional or commercial value – brings about a new appreciation of the material world and its agency.

Can waste serve as a universal category, or is it always culturally and historically contingent? Can an ethics of care toward waste and discarded objects offer a model for a more inclusive, pluriversal understanding of knowledge? In the book, we collected and analyzed stories from multiple, mostly anonymous, respondents who shared their memories about playing, making art from, or otherwise engaging with objects that are broken or discarded. These stories are often personal, playful, and tinged with nostalgia, but they also encapsulate the socio-cultural imagination within their individual contexts while inviting the on-looker to zoom out and observe social, political, and economic linkages between cultures. The crowdsourced stories told in diverse voices encourage reflection on the global interconnectedness of human experience. By recognizing waste as an active participant in global narratives, we can rethink shared universals—not as a singular, imposed framework but as a set of entangled material realities.

Natalia Andrievskikh is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Communication at Cornell University. She is a scholar of writing pedagogy, media and culture studies, and environmental rhetoric. In her creative work she explores the role of myth-making in construction and preservation of memory. She received her MA in English and PhD in Comparative Literature from Binghamton University.

Andrei Guruianu is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Communication at Cornell University. His critical and creative works often explore such topics as memory and forgetting, the role of art and of the artist, and the ability of place to shape personal and collective histories. He holds an MA in Journalism from Iona College and a PhD in English from Binghamton University.

Restaging the Universal, Upstaging the Particular and Morphologies of the Self

Sudeep Dasgupta (*University of Amsterdam*)

The distinction between the particular and the universal emerges out of the particular dynamic of the universal itself. Opposing universality to plurality, I argue, is an attempt to stabilize the dynamic relationality intrinsic to the universal itself. The paper will develop this argument in three parts. Firstly, reading recent critiques in postcolonial queer studies (Menon, *On Queer Universalism* 2016) and feminist critical theory (Benhabib, "Against False Universals" 2024, Butler in *Reading Greek Tragedy with Judith Butler* 2024), crucial reformulations of the power of the universal will be outlined. Expanding on their philosophical and cultural consequences, the paper will develop a notion of the self whose very constitution marks the processual dimension of universality as it develops through its intrinsic outside - the other, the particular, the non-identical. Thirdly, by focusing on the self rather than a macro-level universal (principle, norm, law, etc.), the political stakes of selfhood, particularly in terms of postcoloniality, gender and sexuality will be elaborated. The social emergence of the self through the destabilizing dynamic of the universal offers a way out of static and ahistorical notions of particularity evident in the re-emergence of problematic notions of authenticity, indigeneity and counter-modernity.

The movement of the universal, both at the larger scale of world history and the microlevel of self-formation, is precisely how the 'staging the universal' (Rancière 2007) upstages spurious notions of particularity (Spivak, "Echo" 1993) in their contemporary articulations in cultural theory broadly, and decolonial and sexuality studies in particular.

Sudeep Dasgupta is Associate Professor in Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam. His publications focus on visual culture and aesthetics, critical theory, postcolonial studies, feminist and queer theory. Recent publications include "Disidentification, Intimacy and the Cinematic Figuration of the Postcolonial in Europe" (2021), "The Aesthetics of Displacement: Dissonance and Dissensus in Adorno and Rancière" (2019) and "The Aesthetics of Indirection: Intermittent Adjacencies and Subaltern Presences at the Borders of Europe" (2017). He is co-editor (with Mireille Rosello) of *What's Queer about Europe ?* (2014), and *Constellations of the Transnational: Modernity, Culture, Critique* (New York and Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2007).

Judith Butler and Marxism: Pluriversal Abolitionisms

Elliot C. Mason (*Uppsala University*)

Abandoning their previous work on performative particulars, Judith Butler has increasingly turned to liberal celebrations of difference, arguing in their latest book that transsexuality need not threaten the survival of those who accept their binary sexuation; all genders can live happily together. Butler, here, posits a universal politics of particularity, in which particulars all co-exist without a dominant universal.

Marxism's drive, conversely, has always been the universalization of antagonistic particulars, taking a dominated particular—the working class or labor-power—and universalizing it as the abolition of the universal. The universalization of the particular abolishes universals. How does this project work, though, for those whose social meaning has developed through particularity? What happens to black sociality if race is abolished, or to queer forms of community if sexuality is abolished? While many recent Marxist-feminists have attempted to reconcile Butler with communism, none has so far focused on the interplay of particulars and universals. In this talk, I take Butler's and Marxists' criticisms of universality to the case of Palestinian particularity.

Zionists dismiss Palestinian particularity as nothing but Arab universality; Palestinians can therefore be displaced to any Arab country. Meanwhile, Palestine is forcibly split into sealed enclaves, surrounded by militarized settlements, rendering Palestinian culture an infinite series of mutually antagonistic particulars, with each community cut off from the others. These colonial maneuvers make claims on both Palestinian particularity and universality difficult to maintain without complicity in a Zionist agenda.

Actualizing Butler's and Marxism's theories of abolitionist particulars, this talk understands Palestinian resistance as an archipelagic pluriverse, bound by incompatible agonisms. This talk summarizes the introduction of the recent volume *Judith Butler and Marxism*, which I co-edited with Valentina Moro.

Elliot C. Mason (See [page 50](#) for bio)

Food, Eating and Feeding Contact Zones: Home-Making 'In' The Pluriverse
Manpreet K. Janeja (*Allard Pierson Museum, University of Amsterdam*)

What might home-making through food reveal about possibilities of re-imagining 'universality through pluriversality'? Examining the contextual work of food, eating and feeding practices as contact zones (Pratt) in bringing forth 'homes' and home-making as a multi-faceted and multi-scalar phenomenon (Duyvendak), I offer some ruminations on this matter. Driven by epistemic disobedience (Mignolo) and decolonising knowledge-making, my offerings draw on two decades of comparative and ethnographic investigations on food as a form of relating to others, all kinds of others – humans and non-humans/more-than-humans (Janeja) in postcolonial/imperial cities 'in' and 'out' of Asia and Europe.

Manpreet K. Janeja is a socio-cultural anthropologist working at the intersection of food, migration, and religion in urban South Asia and Europe. Her research focuses on issues of trust and diversity, the body and senses, time and materiality. She has taught at the Universities of Cambridge, Copenhagen, and Utrecht, held fellowships and research positions at Cambridge, Leiden and Amsterdam (KNAW-Meertens), and is currently Researcher at the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam. Her publications include *Transactions in Taste*, *Ethnographies of Waiting*, and *Contested Narratives of Bangladesh*. Her next book titled *The Aesthetics of School Meals* is in process.

Niall Martin is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Literary and Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, with research interests in the topics of noise, waste, disorientation, replaceability, and il/literacy. Graduate research on the relationship between noise and neoliberalism is incorporated in his book on British writer and psychogeographer Iain Sinclair: *Iain Sinclair: Noise, Neoliberalism and the Matter of London* (2015). More recently, together with Ilios Willemars, he has published *The Replaceability Paradigm* (2024), which examines how ideas of 'replacement' have come to exert such rhetorical force within cultural discourses as

disparate as migrations and AI. His work on il/literacy examines how the construction of the il/literate as a historical and conceptual figure extends questions of decolonisation into discussions of semiosis and new materialism.

13:45 – 15:15 (Doelenzaal)

PANEL 10: Rewriting the Universal: Pluriversal Philosophies and Ontological Encounters

Chair: **Markus Messling** (*Käte Hamburger Centre CURE / Saarland University*)

Rereading Abdelkébir Khatibi's *La Mémoire Tatouée* and *Amour Bilingue* Through the Lens of Double Critique: Negotiating Self, Space and Identity
Miloud Rahmoun (*University Ibn Zohr*)

Abdelkebir Khatibi's concept 'Double Critique' provides a compelling framework for rethinking contemporary literary and cultural criticism. In a world increasingly defined by plurality, hybridity, and intercultural entanglements, critical and innovative methodologies must move beyond monolithic readings of literary and cultural texts. 'Double Critique' calls for a dual interrogation of both the self and the other and, at same time, disrupts unparalleled epistemological entanglements fostering a space for multidimensional engagements. This paper explores the applicability of 'Double Critique' as a reading method in today's pluriverse world, where meaning is built through fluid and dynamic interactions between thought, language, interpretation, and history. Rather than reducing texts to singular dimensions, Double Critique advocates for a transparency that accommodates harmonic readings, deconstructs hegemonic narratives, and reconstruct new cultural, sociological and literary affinities. Through engaging with Khatibi's theoretical lens, this study seeks to highlight the urgency of rethinking literary and cultural criticism not as an act of creative negotiation but rather as an act of recreation of the 'self', 'space' and 'identity'. The paper employs 'Double Critique' to comparatively read *La Mémoire Tatouée* and *Amour Bilingue* and, therefore, argues that the concept provides a necessary intellectual strategy for navigating the complexities of contemporary globalized cultures, allowing for a more multidimensional and dialogic comprehension of texts in their diverse linguistic, semiotic, and socio-political involvement.

Miloud Rahmoun (See [page 41](#) for bio)

Markus Messling (See [page 6](#) for bio)

Debating Talmud and Psychoanalysis: University and (Non-)Identity in the Thought of Gérard Haddad

Azyza Deiab (*Saarland University*)

The question of how to conceive of universality after the critique of universalism raises fundamental issues not only concerning social coexistence but also, more broadly, the necessity and very existence of a “consciousness of shared humanity” (Markus Messling 2023) across political, philosophical, psychological, and cultural domains. In the ongoing tension between commonality and difference, the concept of identity has become increasingly central to contemporary socio-political debates (cf. François Jullien 2017), whether in the context of emancipatory struggles or cultural essentialism.

In 20th-century discourse, the era of anti-colonial struggles and decolonisation is often seen as a period of stark rejection of European universalist claims, coupled with the construction of distinct national identities. Following Souleymane Bachir Diagne’s *Universaliser* (2024), my contribution challenges this perspective by arguing that, even during decolonisation, certain actors within the social structures of dominance at the time articulated conceptions of universality that transcended both hegemonic grand narratives and relativist or nationalist claims, revealing more nuanced engagements with the notion of the universal.

This paper examines Gérard Haddad’s thought and action, a Franco-Tunisian psychiatrist and essayist, as a case study of such an alternative conception of universality. As a Sephardic Jew and thus part of a social minority, Haddad experienced exclusion from the newly emerging Tunisian nation-state in the 1960s. Deeply influenced by his studies of Jewish writings in the tradition of Leibowitz, as well as by Lacan’s psychoanalytical approach, his reflections on identity and universality challenge ideological constructs of cultural identity politics. By fostering a self-critical engagement with belonging and difference that can serve as a vanishing point for contemporary social criticism regarding current discussions on nationalism and global solidarity, a sense of what it could mean to “create a self that is oriented towards openness and the future” (Cynthia Fleury 2023) emerges.

By interweaving collective and individual history, this contribution aims to explore Haddad’s life and thought – conceived here as a “pluriverse in miniature” – as a lens through which to connect individual experiences with the broader question of universality,

“and thus to make possible an experience of universality from within a historically situated position.”
(Messling & Tinius 2023).

Azyza Deiab is a PhD candidate at the Chair of Romance Literatures and Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies at Saarland University, where she is pursuing a doctoral thesis on sociopolitical thought and cultural theory in Tunisia during the 1950s and 1960s (supervised by Markus Messling). She serves as the scientific coordinator of the “TRANSMED” project on youth policy in the Mediterranean, conducted in collaboration with partner universities and cultural institutions in Tunisia, France, and Germany (funded by FGYO). Previously, she was a member of the ERC research group “Minor Universality: Narrative World Productions After Western Universalism”. Recent publications: Edited with Elsie Cohen, Clément Ndé Fongang, Franck Hofmann, Markus Messling, Hélène Thiéard, and Jonas Tinius. *Universalism(e) & ...: Entretiens avec / Conversations with Arjun Appadurai, Leyla Dakhli, Souleymane Bachir Diagne, Giovanni Levi, Gisèle Sapiro, David Scott, Adania Shibli, Maria Stavrinaki*. Berlin / Boston: De Gruyter, 2024.

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Neither One Nor Many: The End(s) of Being

Stephen Turner (*University of Amsterdam*)

Given the putative stand-off of universalism and pluriversalism, or cosmological perspectivism, I argue that the binary is bedeviled by the assumption of being as prior, existent and substantial. Universalism makes it possible to imagine more limited worlds, whose inhabitants cannot conceive the greater whole. The pluriverse implies multiple worlds with a multiplicity of inhabitants, human and non-human. But living within one means I cannot assume the existence of other worlds without universalist co-option to attain that insight. If universalism precludes perspectivism, because any single world must be less than the one presumed by the oversight of the universal view, then the pluriverse makes an all-encompassing reality of my world, which is all. For others to be equally conceivable reinstalls a universal or shared cosmological world. The hinge of universe and pluriverse is the assumption of ground as ontological, variously underpinning claims to universal justice or the cosmological Real.

Ontological being is not given: in languages such as Indigenous Maori the copula “to be” does not exist. Rather, ontological entities are epiphenomenal, secondary and congealed forms of the multiplicity of relations amongst humans, non-humans and environments

(Salmond 2012). Furthermore, ontology presupposes a theoretical and methodological three-fold matrix of world knowing with epistemology and representation. This matrix splices the embodied knowledge practices of Indigenous knowledge domains, where life-affirming storytelling ensures that ontological attributes are also embodied knowledge practices whose value is presented in situ. Installing the primacy of being through questions of universalism and pluriversalism occludes the long-lived grounds of place and appears both recolonial in theory and inimical to Indigenous practice. I am not Indigenous but a stranger to place (Pākehā-Taiwi in Aotearoa New Zealand), but also have a story to tell about the theoretical conspiracy of the one and the many.

Salmond, Anne. 2012. "Ontological quarrels: Indigeneity, exclusion and citizenship in a relational world." *Anthropological Theory*, 12(2): 115-141.

Stephen Turner is an Assistant Professor in Media and Culture at the University of Amsterdam. His publications address geo-media in settler colonial contexts, including painting, photography and film, and the architecture and infrastructure of university environments. His creative writing includes collaborative projects with artists Dane Mitchell and Ann Shelton. He has co-edited a book with Tim Neale on the challenge of Indigenous law, *Other People's Country: Law, Water and Entitlement in Settler Colonial Sites* (2019), and is currently working with Sean Sturm on a book about the university and dissent.

15:30-16:30 (Doelenzaal)

FILM SCREENING: Dreams and Fragments: From Amsterdam to Palestine
Aylin Kuryel (*University of Amsterdam*), **Deniz Buga** (*Artist*) & **Firat Yücel** (*Artist*)

Chair: **Abdulkerim Pusat** (*University of Amsterdam*)

In 2024, Amsterdam became one of the cities where people rallied against the systematic destruction of Palestinian lives and livelihoods. Numerous actions emerged in solidarity with Palestine, calling for the university to sever ties with Israeli institutions and entities, all while a genocide unfolded in Palestine. “Dreams and Fragments: From Amsterdam to Palestine” is a collective video diary capturing everyday moments of resistance, solidarity, and conflict, following the student encampments in Amsterdam during May 2024 and the various subsequent actions. The video explores a landscape filled with bodies, slogans, cobblestones, and dreams, while engaging with questions such as: How do we link ‘here’ and ‘there’? How do we create a sense of shared space and time when remaining silent is not an option? How do we archive and mobilize images for ongoing collective action? These questions align with the workshop’s focus on exploring potential commonalities and forms of solidarity during a time of heightened nationalism, colonialism, and militarized practices. The screening of the documentary, followed by a conversation with the filmmakers during a 45–50-minute session, focusing on contemporary forms of colonization, complicity, and solidarity, could provide a productive foundation for a collective reflection on the unfolding present. Additionally, one of the documentary’s aims is to explore the various methods of resistance and the archiving of resistance itself, which would further expand on the workshop’s emphasis on coexistence and Pluriversality.

Aylin Kuryel is an Assistant Professor in Literary and Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam. Her research areas are nationalism, image politics, aesthetics/resistance, and the politics of emotions. She is the (co-)editor of “Utanca Bakmak” (*Looking at Shame*, Cogito, 2023), *Sıkıntı Var* (*Essays on Boredom*, İletişim Press, 2020), “Türkiye’de Yahudi Olmak: Bir Deneyim Sözlüğü” (*Being Jewish in Turkey: A Dictionary of Experiences*, İletişim Press, 2017), “Küresel Ayaklanmalar Çağında Direniş ve Estetik” (*Resistance and Aesthetics in the Age of Global Uprisings*, İletişim Press, 2015), and *Cultural Activism: Practices, Dilemmas and Possibilities* (Rodopi, 2010). She has been involved in projects as an artist and makes documentaries.

Firat Yücel is a documentary maker and film editor based in Amsterdam and Istanbul. He collaborates with Aylin Kuryel under the name Image Acts to produce essayistic documentaries and curates video-series for Altyazı Fasikül: Free Cinema in Istanbul. "Only Blockbusters Left Alive" (2016), "Audience Emancipated: The Struggle for the Emek Movie Theater" (2016), "Heads and Tails" (2019), "March 8, 2020: A Memoir" (2020), and "Translating Ulysses" (2024) are among his documentaries. The anthology film for which he served as artistic director, "Seen Unseen: An Anthology of (Auto)Censorship", premiered internationally at the 54th International Film Festival Rotterdam and was screened at MoMA Doc Fortnight, as well as CPH:DOX.

Deniz Buga, Istanbul, 1982, currently lives in Amsterdam. His film, video, and photography work primarily focus on urbanism, minority politics, and queer stances. His work was presented at various film festivals and museums including the San Sebastian Film Festival, Oxford Modern Art Museum, Centre Pompidou, and C/O Berlin. Buga was a resident artist at Rijksakademie, Amsterdam.

Abdulkerim Pusat is a refugee sociologist from Kurdistan and a Hestia junior researcher at ASCA, Faculty of Humanity of the University of Amsterdam, where he is part of the IMAGINART group project. He received a master's degree in Secondary Education. During this time, he wrote about culture, society, ethics, music, and other topics for various magazines, websites, and newspapers. Abdulkerim is deeply preoccupied with ethical issues. He has been living in the Netherlands as a refugee since 2016 while regularly writing columns for Kurdish newspapers and websites.

16:30-17:00 (Doelenzaal)

CLOSING REMARKS: Jaap Kooijman (*ASCA Director, University of Amsterdam*)

Jaap Kooijman (Amsterdam, 1967) is an associate professor in Media Studies and American Studies and academic director of the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA) at the University of Amsterdam. He is the author of *Fabricating the Absolute Fake* (AUP 2013) and *De muziekfabriek* (Mazirel 2024), and co-editor, with Glyn Davis, of *The Richard Dyer Reader* (BFI 2023). His articles on American pop culture and politics have been published in journals such as *The Velvet Light Trap*, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *The Journal of American Culture*, *Post Script*, *Celebrity Studies*, *Popular Music and Society*, *Cinema Journal*, *Critical Studies in Television*, and *VIEW Journal of European Television History and Culture*, as well as in edited collections such as *Unpopular Culture* (AUP 2016), *A Companion to Celebrity* (Wiley 2016), *Revisiting Star Studies* (Edinburgh UP 2017), *Music/Video: Histories, Aesthetics, Media* (Bloomsbury 2017), and *Beyoncé: At Work, On Screen, and Online* (Indiana UP 2020). His audiovisual essays have been published in *[in]Transition: Journal of Videographic Film & Moving Image Studies*, *NECSUS: European Journal of Media Studies*, *16:9*, *Collateral*, *tecmerin: Journal of Audiovisual Essays*, and *zfm: Zeitschrift für Medienwissenschaft*.

17:00-19:00 (Doelenzaal)

ASCA BORREL & ASCA AWARDS

All the ASCA Workshop participants, ASCA Members and Friends are all very welcome to join the ASCA Summer Drinks on May 28, 2025 at 17:00 in Doelenzaal, Singel Library. Drinks and snacks will be provided by ASCA with plenty of time for mingling, and the 2025 ASCA Awards will also be announced!