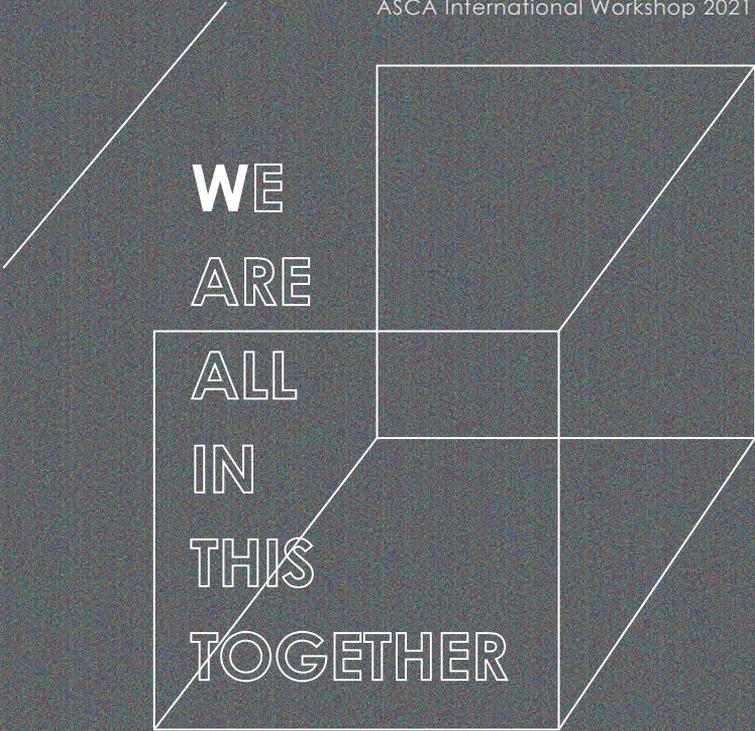


ASCA International Workshop 2021



**WE  
ARE  
ALL  
IN  
THIS  
TOGETHER**

**I C A T I N  
CONNECTIVITY & COMMUNITY IN  
I S U L A I I U N**

23 June - 25 June  
2021



# Table of Content

Welcome	
Organizing Committee	3
“We are all in this together” – Connectivity and Community in Isolation	4
Timetable	6
Practical Information	9
Program Panel Presentations	10
Keynote Speakers	13
Artistic Interventions	16
Contact List	56

# Welcome

On behalf of ASCA, we warmly welcome you to the ASCA International Workshop 2021. This is the very first time for us to organize a workshop online. Due to the continued global crisis and the pandemic, we have had to overcome many kinds of distancing and barriers to make this workshop happen. During the preparation and the modification of the workshops, we have explored different ways to keep us connected, communicated and open to exchange our works and knowledge. As we are embracing and negotiating with the new normal, we opted for a slower and lighter workshop this year. The workshop will be spread out over three afternoons, with 3 panels, 1 keynote presentation and 1 artistic intervention per day. We hope that you will have an inspiring and fun-filled time at this very special workshop. Last but not least, we thank all the keynote speakers and panellists again for contributing their insights and being with us together in these three days.

## Organizing Committee

***Yvette Lok Yee Wong,***

Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis, University of Amsterdam  
Contact: [l.y.wong@uva.nl](mailto:l.y.wong@uva.nl)

***Jori Snels,***

Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis, University of Amsterdam  
Contact: [j.snels@uva.nl](mailto:j.snels@uva.nl)

As our global crisis continues, it seems that the social order and our sense of self is changing. We celebrate family birthdays via Skype, demonstrate for social justice on Instagram, and visit art exhibitions in Animal Crossing; meanwhile, we are condemned to living twenty-four hours a day with our partners, roommates or alone, in a home turned office, habituated to uncertainty and fear. Through this experience, we have become keenly aware of both digital technologies' previously untapped potentialities for connecting us and their seemingly unbridgeable boundaries; we are learning to live in and with entrapment, experiencing both unprecedented distance and closeness.

**We  
are  
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in  
this  
together**

How can we mourn, how can we protest, how can we engage deeply, when we cannot show up with our bodies, when we cannot step out of our homes? As David Harvey stated in 'We need a collective response to the collective dilemma of coronavirus': "I am in a frustrating position of personal isolation, at a moment when the time calls for collective forms of action."

We want to use this moment to start thinking about how to overcome or reconfigure distancing and isolation from the perspective of embodied connectivity and the embodiment of connectivity. Bennett and Segerberg's (2012) studies on social connectivity shed insightful light on people's civic and political participation with digital media as organizing agents. In today's

world, apart from mass protests, connectivity pervades our everyday practices. More than a logic to organize and coordinate online actions, it is increasingly intertwined with our offline world, including our affectivity and bodily experiences. As Van Dijck has stated (2013), the layer of platforms influences human interaction on an individual and a community level, as well as on a larger societal level, as online and offline worlds are increasingly interpenetrating. How does embodiment, in its entanglement with connectivity, prompt us to rethink ourselves and our societies for the future 'new normal'?

## **Connectivity and Community in Isolation**

In the 2021 ASCA workshop, we seek to interrogate the notions of connectivity and community in all facets of society in order to reimagine power structures, technological infrastructures, and social systems, and to explore what we may learn from the creative forms of embodied connectivity and embodiment of connectivity we encounter as we move into the future.

# Timetable

**Day 1**  
**Wednesday**  
**23 June 2021**

**12:30-13:00**

**Opening Address**

Prof. Esther Peeren (University of Amsterdam)

**13:00-14:00**

**Keynote Lecture**

*Connectivity and Community in Isolation:  
Technology, Creativity and Embodiment*

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Prof. Lance Bennett (University of Washington)  
& Dr. Alexandra Segerberg (Uppsala University)

**14:00-14:15**

Break

**14:15-15:45**

**Panel Presentations**

Panel 1 *Continuous Screen Culture*

Panel 2 *The Online, Emptied, and Connective  
Cultural Communities*

Panel 3 *Online Affective Activism*

**15:45-16:00**

Break

**16:00-17:00**

**Artistic Intervention**

*Workshop Interpersonal Fictions and Imagined  
Choreographies*

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Sabrina Huth & Ilana Reynolds  
(Advance registration necessary.)

# Timetable

**Day 2**  
**Thursday**  
**24 June 2021**

**13:00-14:00**

**Keynote Lecture**

*Desktop Documenting: A Creative Humanities Perspective*

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Prof. Iris van der Tuin (Utrecht University)

**14:00-14:15**

Break

**14:15-15:45**

**Panel Presentations**

Panel 4 *We Are Not All Human*

Panel 5 *To Make Our (Digital) Histories*

Panel 6 *Activism without Place*

**15:45-16:00**

Break

**16:00-17:00**

**Artistic Intervention**

Film Screening

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Dr. Aylin Kuryel: *The Balcony and Our Dreams*

Bo Wang: *The Wangs*

# Timetable

**Day 3**  
**Friday**  
**25 June 2021**

**13:00-14:00**

**Artistic Intervention**

Creative Talk: *When in Doubt, Take a Walk*  
Sampson Wong

**14:00-14:15**

Break

**14:15-15:45**

**Panel Presentations**

Panel 7 *Sonic Connections with Isolations*

Panel 8 *Togetherness in Arts and Literature*

Panel 9 *Zooming into Beauty, Intimacy, and Bodies*

**15:45-17:00**

Break

**16:00-17:00**

**Keynote Lecture**

*Life in Corona Times: Making Sense with Words,  
Making Data of Senses*

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Prof. Sally Wyatt (Maastricht University)

# Practical Information

## Zoom Details

The entire workshop will take place on Zoom. You can find the Zoom links and ID's below. (Please be aware that for the Workshop Interpersonal Fictions and Imagined Choreographies advance registration is necessary.)

### Plenary sessions

Opening Address, Keynote  
Lectures, and Artistic  
Interventions  
(except Workshop  
Interpersonal Fictions and  
Imagined Choreographies)

### Meeting link

<https://uva-live.zoom.us/j/87287496125?pwd=aExzNHlyRDh4cG52T1BlbENVdGMwQT09>  
Meeting ID: 872 8749 6125  
Passcode: 368137

### Workshop Interpersonal Fictions and Imagined Choreographies

<https://uva-live.zoom.us/j/88680379447?pwd=MGxUdkp2dXJTZjlCOCsOT2RmRmQ0Jldz09>  
Meeting ID: 886 8037 9447  
Passcode: 290180

### Panel Sessions

Panels 1, 4, 7.

<https://uva-live.zoom.us/j/87431483311?pwd=OE03N3U5VTVKM2dwajg3NmRnYnZOZz09>  
Meeting ID: 874 3148 3311  
Passcode: 158107

### Panel Sessions

Panels 2, 5, 8.

<https://uva-live.zoom.us/j/85405345778?pwd=VIRGYXprWlNrVXdYSEFKbkhnT2RRUT09>  
Meeting ID: 854 0534 5778  
Passcode: 900414

### Panel Sessions

Panels 3, 6, 9.

<https://uva-live.zoom.us/j/87166333855?pwd=VTd6VXRiZDZlUmVmT3Bxc2dhdEM5QT09>  
Meeting ID: 871 6633 3855  
Passcode: 295153

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## Accessibility

If you have any accessibility requests, please do not hesitate to email us at: [ascaworkshop2021@gmail.com](mailto:ascaworkshop2021@gmail.com).

# Program Panel Presentations

## Panel 1 Continuous Screen Culture

Chair: Lok Yee Wong

**Nuno Atalaia.** Resonant machines: Voice assistants and interfacial therapy

**Bjorn Beijnon.** Capitalism in contemporary screen cultures: From human machines to brain-screens

**Simpson Tse.** Blurring, lagging, looping: Thinking through the aesthetic of video conferencing

**Hadis Ashrafi.** Revisiting Foucauldian panoptic of Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* (1966): An ethical pathologisation of technologies in times of COVID-19

## Panel 2 The Online, Emptied, and Connective Cultural Communities

Chair: Eszter Szakács

**Jori Snels.** Connectivity in times of crisis: An analysis of online art exhibitions in China during the COVID-19 pandemic

**Anna J. M. Luyten.** Listening to the voices of the empty seats

**Felicia Cucuta.** Community-building and ethics of care in Wajdi Mouawad's *Pandemic Performances*

Courtney Helen Grile. Creative connections: An arts-based approach to engaging online

## Panel 3 Online Affective Activism

Chair: Esther Peeren

**Barbara Cueto.** The influence of digital activism on contemporary art in East Asia

**Hyeisoo Kim.** Monster-Demonstrator: Towards a new postcolonial subjectivity

**Ruthie Ginsburg.** Three photographs, three demonstrations, and the spectacle

**Simon(e) van Saarloos.** The spread of a mo(nu)ment": Counterhistories and embodied commemoration in public space during lockdown

**Panel 4 We Are Not All Human**  
Chair: Marc Farrant

**Mümtaz Murat Kök.** We the earthbound.

**Aldo Kempen.** Zoommaterialism

**Alice Breemen.** Pandemic dramaturgy. The audience as co-designer in the Anthropocene against the background of COVID-19

**Panel 5 To Make Our (Digital) Histories**  
Chair: Nadica Denić

**Eleni Maragkou.** Blackboxed solidarity: On the platformization of activism

**Lea Beiermann.** Historians for future: Caring for digital environmental histories

**Florin Constantin Serban.** The challenges of automation and AI for journalists working in Hong Kong

**Panel 6 Activism without Place**  
Chair: Irene Villaescusa Illán

**Poon Hiu Lam Hannah & Monica Baptiste Gouffray.** Staying on the streets: Dilemmas of activism in the COVID-19 pandemic

**Giovana de Souza Possignolo.** Disputes for the logic of the periphery from the digital activism of peripheral women in Brazil

**Hanne Stegeman.** The matter of online political participation: A new materialist experiment on emerging adult participatory practices in the United Kingdom, Ireland and The Netherlands





**Panel 7 Sonic Connections with Isolations**  
Chair: Jaap Kooijman

**Li Chung Tai.** No handshake during the epidemic: Japanese idols and their COVID-19 transformation

**Jeroen de Kloet, Chow Yiu Fai, Leonie Schmidt.** Sonic connections – On the trans-regional lives and afterlives of the Hong Kong band Tatming

**Hannah Bosma.** How to preserve travelling musical practices in an online collaborative network archive

**Panel 8 Togetherness in Arts and Literature**  
Chair: Jori Snels

**Yvette Lok Yee Wong.** The scraps in return: Flowing wenyi (poetic and cultural) protests in Hong Kong

**Emily Shin-Jie Lee.** Publication as worlding practice

**Layla Durrani & Liza Prins.** Tinctures and togetherness: Generating on and offline entanglements

**Panel 9 Zooming into Beauty, Intimacy, and Bodies**  
Chair: Shola Adenekan

**Inge van de Ven.** Virtual attentions: Doing intimacy digitally with ASMR girlfriends and TikTok boyfriends

**Anindita Shome.** Redefining female body narratives in the pandemic: An analysis of body positive virtual spaces.

**Ann Christin Keune.** The real, the virtual and the ugly

Alex Thinius. Trans in digital communication: Conceptualizing dialectic aspects of sharing

# Keynote Speakers



## Prof. Lance Bennett & Dr. Alexandra Segerberg

*Connectivity and Community in Isolation: Technology, Creativity and Embodiment*

The COVID-19 pandemic threatens citizen health but also social and economic well-being. Even for those fortunate to have jobs, shelter, family and friends, lockdowns have disrupted taken-for-granted ways of connecting at work, school, the pub, the gallery and theatre. Breakdowns in normal social routines and infrastructures can reveal, amplify, obscure or distort things we may have taken for granted. The workshop invites us to consider how embodiment, in its entanglement with connectivity, prompts us to rethink society and self under these conditions. This talk traces embodied entanglements with emotional, material, spatial, and temporal dimensions through: (a) shifting roles of devices and their relation to physical, social, and institutional space; (b) innovative refiguring of work, art, music and alternative socialities; (c) political and social expression that still called for embodied action and transgressive occupation of public spaces; and (d) sharing lifestyles and intimacies in and about isolation. An underlying theme is how uncertainty and risk can feed these connective imaginaries.

**Lance Bennett** is Emeritus Professor of Political Science and Emeritus Ruddick C. Lawrence Professor of Communication and Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Journalism, Media & Democracy at the University of Washington, Seattle. He has lectured internationally on the role of media in public life. Research areas include: press-government relations; communication and social movements; transnational activism; citizenship and youth civic engagement, digital media and political participation, and the organizational uses of information technology. Current work focuses on aligning ideas about the economy, democracy and the environment to build more equitable and sustainable human systems.

**Alexandra Segerberg** is Associate Professor in the Department of Government and Fellow at the AI4Research initiative at Uppsala University. She is co-Editor-in-Chief of PRX, the flagship open access journal of the European Consortium for Political Research. She currently works on issues to do with technology and politics; communication as organisation; communication in movements; and visual politics.

## Prof. Iris van der Tuin

### *Desktop Documenting: A Creative Humanities Perspective*

This lecture transposes the artistic practice of the desktop documentary to the desk life of scholars in the “algorithmic condition” [1,2]. Our desk life has intensified during the global COVID-19 pandemic that had, and still has us glued to our screens in the home office. Approaching academic desk life from the perspective of the “creative humanities” [3,4] renders what happens behind, on, and through the desk and the desktop analyzable as a practice of thinking, making, and doing “in being” [5]. What does such knowing in being teach us about the very possibilities for criticality and creativity today? In this lecture, I will mobilize three concepts for the creative humanities – “interface”, “surface”, and “glow” [4] – as a way to not only read academic desk life through desktop documentaries, but also to diffractively approach (as) creative humanities projects such diverse projects as Camille Henrot’s encyclopedic video *Grosse Fatigue* (2013), Sissel Marie Tonn’s live desktop collage *Becoming a Sentinel Species*(2020), and all of the online lecturing and workshoping that scholars and educators do these days as to inter- and intra-act with students and colleagues.

**Iris van der Tuin** is Professor of Theory of Cultural Inquiry in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Utrecht University and Director of its School of Liberal Arts. Iris is interested in humanities scholarship that traverses the ‘two cultures’ and reaches beyond the boundaries of academia. As such, she contributes to the new and interdisciplinary humanities and to the Scholarship of Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning (SoITL). She initiated the research group *Subjects in Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching (SILT)*, a theme under the umbrella of the research initiative *Transmission in Motion*, and coordinates the special interest group *AI in Cultural Inquiry and Art: Thinking and Making in the Algorithmic Condition*, a SIG of the focus area *Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence*. With Nanna Verhoeff, she recently initiated the *Creative Humanities Academy*: an infrastructure for collaboration between academic scholars and creative professionals, post-academic teaching, and consultancy on humanities theories, methodologies, and pedagogies.

## Prof. Sally Wyatt

### *Life in corona times: making sense with words, making data of senses*

In early 2020, the covid-19 virus started to take its toll around the world, on people's health and daily lives, on healthcare systems, and on the economic well-being of individuals, companies, sectors and countries. People's work, education, cultural and political engagements changed dramatically, often overnight. Despite some of the claims that viruses do not respect social positions, it soon became clear that 'we' are not all in this together. The health and economic consequences of covid-19 are very unevenly distributed across most of the usual markers, including age, ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status.

During this closing keynote, usually the last event between participants and drinks or traveling home, I will reflect on two extracurricular activities undertaken over the past year that have helped to keep me connected to myself, to others and to the ongoing changes.

The first relates to data. During the pandemic, many of us tried to make sense of excess mortality, reproduction numbers, absolute numbers of infections, percentages of those tested, reported numbers, and calculated numbers. We were confronted with different kinds of visualisations, including trend lines, bar charts, and maps, often deployed for political ends. I will take a different approach to data and their visualisation and will share 'touch data', an activity done with colleagues in the Netherlands and Canada, during the summer of 2020.

The second relates to words. During the first lockdown, I put together a collection of poetry and artwork created by students and staff at Maastricht University. Some were created by multiple authors and artists, and created new forms of connectivity and community – limericks co-authored over Twitter, exquisite corpses mediated as a round robin letter.

Warning: This session may involve audience participation in the form of drawing and/or writing poetry. Bring coloured pencils, other drawing implements and blank paper.

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Sally Wyatt is Professor of Digital Cultures at Maastricht University (<https://sallywyatt.nl>). Wyatt originally studied economics, but then moved into the more interdisciplinary field of Science and Technology Studies (STS). Wyatt has conducted research about the digital divide and what digital technologies might mean for the work of humanities and social science scholars. She is currently working on a project about the use of artificial intelligence in image-based clinical decision making. During the first lockdown, she co-edited (with Paul Stephenson, John Parkinson and Eva Durlinger) a collection of poetry and artwork produced by her colleagues in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, called Quarantine Spring.

# Artistic

## **Sabrina Huth & Ilana Reynolds:** *Interpersonal Fictions and Imagined Choreographies*

Dance artists Ilana Reynolds and Sabrina Huth share the methodologies behind their choreographic approach Imagined Choreographies. Since 2018, they have been researching how conditions of physical absence build creative potential for the mind and body to explore layers of imagination and fiction of another person.

The movement-based workshop aims to stimulate new creative practices dealing with a sense of being-with whilst being physically apart: What are the analog practices we use whilst being physically remote next to or in addition to the digitally mediated forms of communication like Skype, WhatsApp etc.? The workshop participants are given creative tasks and practical exercises sourced from the approaches Ilana and Sabrina have developed in their artistic research. For example, writing a letter to an absent other or experimenting with telepathic movement scores. Together we will explore and reflect on these practices to see how they invite imagination and fiction to inform our sensorial system and other kinds of physicality and senses of connection to others.

The workshop is open for everyone with or without dance/movement experience.

For more information, please visit <https://imaginedchoreographies.com/>.

**Ilana Reynolds** and **Sabrina Huth** are freelance dance artists who have never physically met. They have been, however, collaborating since 2018 when they were meant to meet for a joint residency. Keeping the constraint of never meeting 'in the flesh' has led to a three year artistic research project called Imagined Choreographies which questions how to encounter the presence of someone who is in fact absent. Ilana has a master's degree in contemporary dance education from the Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts (2017). Sabrina completed her master's degree in Artistic Research at the University of Amsterdam in 2019.

# Interventions

## Screening

### *Aylin Kuryel: The Balcony and Our Dreams*

The Balcony and our Dreams is a short documentary that brings together the dreams I collected during the pandemic in Turkey, juxtaposed with the footage I shot from the balcony of a house in Izmir, where I spent several months under partial lockdown. Increasingly vivid dreams have been one of the common emotional responses to the pandemic, reportedly compensating for the lack of bodily and social encounters. Dreams are also quite capable of reflecting past/present political and cultural issues, desires and traumas, which the film reflects upon. Alongside the sound of the dreams, the images reflect the life in a central neighborhood in Izmir during partial lockdown, including new forms of interaction between neighbors through movement and sound, various function of the balconies as semi-public spaces, the refunctioning of masks as an everyday item, emergence of new street vendors such as newspaper sellers, the daily applause actions, the 1st of May demonstrations and the usual systemic police violence. The ways in which this short film reflects upon how we deal with isolation and distance, as

well as how film can become a tool for reflecting upon and archiving crises, will hopefully resonate with the framework of the workshop and the questions it raises.

**Aylin Kuryel** is a lecturer at the Literary and Cultural Analysis department at the University of Amsterdam. Her areas of interest are nationalism, image politics, aesthetics/resistance, and politics of emotions. She is the co-editor of *Cultural Activism: Practices, Dilemmas and Possibilities* (Rodopi, 2010), *Resistance and Aesthetics in the Age of Global Uprisings* (Iletisim Press, 2015), *Being Jewish in Turkey: A Dictionary of Experiences* (Iletisim Press, 2017) and *Essays on Boredom* (2020, Iletisim Press). She has been involved in projects as an artist and is working as a documentary filmmaker. Among her documentaries are *Taboo* (2009), *Image Acts* (2015), *Welcome Lenin* (2016), *Heads and Tails* (2018), *CemileSezgin* (2020), *The Balcony and Our Dreams* (2020), *A Defense* (2021).

## **Bo Wang, *The Wangs***

The World Wang Clan Association was about to have its 12th convention in Nov 2015 in Chongqing, China. As the most common surname in ethnic Chinese all over the world, it was estimated to comprise around 15% of the population in Mainland China. The clan identity thus has become difficult to define due to its universality. This documentary followed the 12th World Wang Clan Convention, trying to observe how such kind of community was perceived and imagined, while how meanings were generated out of meaninglessness.

**Bo Wang** is an artist, filmmaker and researcher currently based in the Netherlands. His art and film works have been exhibited internationally, including venues like Guggenheim Museum and Museum of Modern Art in New York, Garage Museum in Moscow, IFFR in Rotterdam, Visions du Réel in Switzerland, Ural Biennial in Yekaterinburg, DMZ Docs in South Korea, BOZAR in Brussels, among many others. He received a fellowship from the Robert Flaherty Film Seminar in 2013, and was an artist-in-residency at ACC-Rijksakademie 2017-2018 as well as NTU CCA in 2016. He is currently a PhD candidate at ASCA, UvA.

## **Sampson Wong**

### ***When in Doubt, Take a Walk***

In October 2020, Sampson Wong, with videographer Eric Tsang, has launched a YouTube channel, titled "When in doubt, take a walk", to publish videos of individuals wandering in the city (especially in Hong Kong). This becomes a timely project not only in the highly politicized Hong Kong, but also in different places. Having a walk, became a precious practice to have fresh air, sunlight and look at the urban built environment that we love during the overwhelming pandemic times. Here, in this workshop, Sampson Wong will share with us his experiences, embodiment and experiments in the project, as well as in the city.

**Sampson Wong** is an artist, independent curator, academic and urbanist based in Hong Kong. He is currently Lecturer of General Education at The Chinese University of Hong Kong teaching. He engages in art-making, curatorial practice, teaching, research and writing, and sees them as intellectual means exploring issues about urbanism, space, power and freedom. His projects focus on emerging 'publicness' and critical creativity.

## PANEL 1 **Continuous Screen Culture**

### ***Resonant machines: Voice assistants and interfacial therapy***

This presentation gives an analysis of two products developed by Alphabet-Google and Amazon, powered by their respective voice-user-interface (VUI) services. The first is Google's Nest Home, a part of the Nest series of products, aimed at designing smart homes powered by the OK Google voice assistant. The second is Amazon's Echo Loop, a voice activated ring which allows users to access the voice assistant Alexa in any place and at any time. I frame these two products as paradigmatic of an ongoing inclusion of the voice as an interface. The voice is becoming a central access point between users and the platformed services of tech companies.

Drawing from Benjamin Bratton's writings on interface design and Hartmut Rosa's theory of resonance, I claim that these products mark a shift in interface aesthetics. Rather than providing a sense of computational transparency, VUI systems aim to trigger an experience of resonance between users and machines. Resonance is framed as a therapeutic answer to the growing alienation interfaces themselves cause by their permeation of our environments. The affective capacities of the voice are instrumentalized by tech companies, providing them with an axis of resonance in both public and domestic spaces.

My position towards these new resonant interfaces is a critical one. By relying on sound rather than sight, freed from surfaces and inhabiting the air, VUIs manifest what Gilles Deleuze called a continuous interface. This continuous interface is layered onto the perception of our environment, steering us into a techno-aesthetic regime of ubiquitous engagement and surveillance. I argue that a radical reappraisal of the voice and its powers provides us with new conceptual tools to better negotiate the affective potential of these platformed voices.

**Nuno Atalaia** is a Portuguese researcher, musician, and artistic director of the international ensemble *Seconda Prat!ca*. His research and artistic work center around the voice and its history, combining academic and practice-based research. He has completed two MA research programs in Cultural Studies (Leiden University) and Historically Informed Performance (Royal Conservatory of The Hague). Currently, he is a PhD candidate at the RICH institute of Radboud University, as part of the ERC funded project "Platform Discourses". Supervised by Niels Niessen and Anneke Smelik, his doctoral project is titled: "Resonant Interfaces: Voice and Agency in the Age of Speaking Platforms".

## ***Capitalism in contemporary screen cultures: From human machines to brain-screens***

This research examines how the presence of – and interaction with – digital screens in neoliberal cultures is affording new ways of controlling subjects in capitalist societies. Departing from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's conception that humans are living in an ecology in which any object and process has an inert desire to connect and produce meaning, this research aims to dissect how screen technologies are sustaining the success of capitalism in these ecologies through their quantification of interactions with humans.

Due to their ubiquity and congruency to capital, screens seem to have become indispensable in the lives of many people living in capitalist cultures; imagining a world without screens or capitalism seems nearly impossible. This research will, on the one hand, demonstrate with the help of the black mirror episode fifteen million merits how screens are expediting current forms of capitalism conform neoliberal ideology and making humans comply to the functioning of a system that is built on cash flows. On the other hand, this research will also interrogate how Deleuze's proposition, that the human brain is also a screen on which the unity of ecology for the subject is formed, might help to understand screens as entities that are external machines with which humans connect.

Overall, this research suggests that contemporary screen cultures are reducing the production of subjectivity of humans in neoliberal cultures to the quantitative logic of capitalism, which is empowering what Deleuze would call a society of control. Understanding how subjectivity is consolidated through the same rationale as screen technologies, this paper offers a philosophy of resistance towards the dominant practices of capitalism in contemporary screen cultures. In the end, this research proposes to study screen technologies as neuro-images through schizoanalysis to examine how human machines could break from the constraints of the capitalist machine.

**Bjorn Beijnon** is a PhD candidate at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis, University of Amsterdam, and a lecturer at the Institute for Communication, HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht. His interests lie in digital subjectification by big tech companies through attentional capturing. He has published articles on numerous topics, varying from the visibility of consciousness to the appliance of smartwatches. Through cultural analyses, Deleuzian theory and media ethnographies, he currently studies how digital platforms subjectify their users in contemporary surveillance cultures, with a focus on online conspiracy theories on Facebook and techniques of resistance by DuckDuckGo users.

## ***Blurring, lagging, looping: Thinking through the aesthetic of video conferencing***

During this exceptional year of partial lock-down, our spatial association and sense of time has become out of joint. My room is a workplace, a gym, a library, and also a cinema and its foyer, now occupied not by a crowd but by audio transmissions from other rooms in the city and further afield. I remember that during the World Cup, a joke circulated that Amsterdam could be at risk of being flooded at half-time because most viewers would go to the toilet and would flush at the same time. For city-dwellers, we often take organisation and safety for granted, but these preconceptions are actually riding on a thin line. What makes us feel safe? Why do you feel safe? Who gets to be safe? Philosopher Slavoj Žižek cautiously pointed out that the embracing of working-from-home as an act of liberation is “class distinction at its purest.” Depending upon where you live and work, not all of us can afford this self-contained way of life and for this to function properly, the others will have to be at the upkeep, on our behalf. For those whose conditions are more permitting, our working schedules have been saturated by different video conferencing applications. In February 2019, the telecommunications application Skype introduced the background blur

option, in which the webcam picks out the surroundings of a human body and applies a gaussian filter, to create a mute sense of privacy and safety. Since then, it is in this blurry virtual space where stay-at-home workers spent most of their working and sociable hours, re-enacting forms of normalcy and productivity, enduring the lack of corporeal presence and the occasional frozen screens, catching up with repeated questions and dialogues. To think further with this newly induced field of vision (by both humans and non-humans) and its technological glitches, the research paper *Blurring, Lagging, Looping* set out to instigate a deeper reading into their shifting meanings arose or resurfaced during the pandemic.

**Simo Tse** (b.1984, AUS) is a designer and researcher whose practice focuses upon the notions of care and exploring different scenarios of affective labour. He utilises his background in graphic design as an entry point into socially relevant domains and different collaborations with art workers and makers. He is a recent graduate from The Commoners' Society, one of the temporary masters' programmes at Sandberg Instituut (2018–2020).

**Revisiting Foucauldian panoptic of Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* (1966): An ethical pathologisation of technologies in times of COVID-19**

Digital technologies, CCTVs, and distance tracking applications are the bedrock of epidemic response dealing with the pandemic and are heralds to an effective way of containing Covid-19. Although technologies could play a useful role in traversing Covid-19 and hampering infections during emergencies, but surveillance is a core function of all public health system. This paper examines in detail to shed lights on significant ethical pathology by public surveillance which are in contact with Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* (1966), to illuminate aspects of control under the gaze of power. With this goal in mind, we take advantage of ethical theory in social concept, theorized by Emmanuel Levinas (1978) and Michael Foucault (1975) in particular. The governing contention of this paper is that during Covid-19 pandemic we have been witnessing a similar systematic of Foucault's panoptic, underlying process of the tracking applications and pandemic technologies. It also explores that the increasing social control and

surveillance repeatedly were shown in Pontecorvo's movie as policing and power controlling to accentuate Levinas' concept of Otherness in society. Basing these theoretical thrust, consideration is given to how such panoptic and public surveillance in time of Covid-19 may effect on taxonomy of social identity, including self-regarding, Other-regarding, and Other/Other-regarding identity.

**Hadis Ashrafi**, third year PhD candidate in English Literature and Media Studies researcher at University of Amsterdam (ASCA), who is interested in the intersection of Literature, Ethics, Cinema, and Philosophy. Her main area of research is interdisciplinary studies including cultural analysis, cinematic adaptations, video games, mass media, and philosophy that in particular contribute to reflect peace aesthetics, cosmopolitanism, morality and ethics, anti-racism, anti-war and non-violence studies. Analyzing Emmanuel Levinas' ethical theories, Gandhi's non-violence, Emmanuel Kant's Perpetual Peace, and Dalai Lama; she believes that to achieve a peaceful world and arriving at that goal a self-refinement is needed to discard personal, national, and ideological issues.

## PANEL 2 *Continuous The online, emptied and connective cultural communities*

### *Connectivity in times of crisis: An analysis of online art exhibitions in China during the COVID-19 pandemic*

"From museums to art fairs, we tried to find forms of solidarity and generosity as a temporary vaccine," wrote Victor Wang, artistic director of Chinese art museum M WOODS, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. As Chinese museums and art institutions went into lockdown, many of them developed creative online exhibitions as a way to still connect with their audience.

In this paper, I research how Chinese online art exhibitions during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic fostered inter-human connectivity and reimagined the future of the Chinese and global art world. I analyze three different Chinese online exhibitions: 1. WE=LINK: Ten Easy Pieces by Chronus Art Center; 2. Art Is Still Here: A Hypothetical Show for a Closed Museum by M WOODS; and 3. The One Minute Series: The Power of Transparency by independent curator Minhong Yu.

I studied these shows using visual and discourse analysis and combined these with interviews with the curators of these exhibitions. I will show how these online art shows employ digital technologies that

were already fully integrated into Chinese society to sustain and encourage inter-human connectivity. I analyze how these exhibitions reflect on mundane experiences of living through the COVID-19 pandemic and reimagine a different cosmopolitan art world that offers resistance against future crises – be they related to health, politics, or the environment.

**Jori Snels** is a PhD candidate at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis of the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. She is working on a research project funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO), titled 'Gazing Ahead: China's Imagined Futures in Digital Art' in which she researches how contemporary Chinese digital art reflects on the possibilities and challenges of life in a digital society. She has published 'The politics of aesthetics, space and community. An analysis of Same Old, Brand New by Cao Fei' (2018) in the peer-reviewed journal *Art and the Public Sphere* and 'Collaborations between dissidence and obedience. A new perspective on alternative art practice in the GDR' (2017) in the peer-reviewed journal *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*.

## ***Listening to the voices of empty seats***

The silence in the theatres was so hard that an artist could polish up a whole life on it.

During the pandemic it became clear how the sense of self of the actor changed. No words, no applause, no embodied pleasure, no power of physical proximity. What is an actor without a live audience? And how to approve proximity without touching?

During all these months of the pandemic I teamed up with several colleagues and artists and handled these questions in three ways.

Firstly, in an educational context. We set up a personal theatre delivery service in an asylum centre, an elderly house, a Vinex neighbourhood. Students made outdoor one to one performance for people who they got to know very well by starting intimate conversations on WhatsApp and zoom. Inspired by the stories of the normally 'invisible individual' they made a unique live performance for another person. Relational aesthetics (Bourriaud, 1998) became in a digital era a way of cultural activism, a plead for the necessity of proximity and a way of bringing honour to the creativity of everyone.

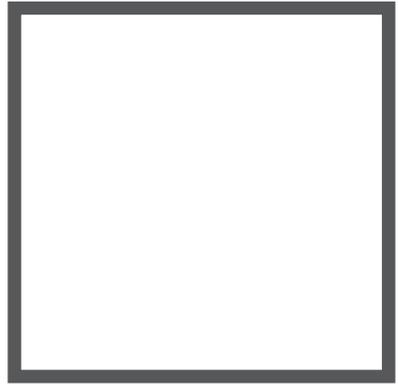
Secondly, in a philosophical and environmental context: I worked with

master students of Ghent, London and Maastricht on wandering assessments to learn to walk into the unknown, literary and figuratively.

Thirdly, in an institutional context: together with the Antwerp based theatre 'het Toneelhuis' and some of the actors, I worked on a podcast and radio program to give the missing audience a voice. By conducting in-depth interviews with elderly, blind, lonely and regular theatre visitors, theatre makers became aware of who the people are who are seated in the theatres. The tragedy of the pandemic led to connectivity between audience and actors as never before.

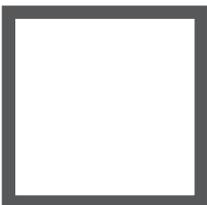
**Anna Luyten** studied at the University of Ghent and the Antwerp University and holds the master in philosophy, Applied Literature Science and Theatre Studies. She is a writer, performer and radio- and television maker. She is lecturer in Philosophy, Aesthetics, Dramaturgy and Artist Writing at the Toneelacademie Maastricht, Institute of Performative Arts and School of Arts, University College Ghent. She is co-coordinator of the artistic research group Wandering as a discipline. An investigation into the function of attention and participation in performance art, art pedagogy, artists texts, writing and thinking practice' at the School of Arts Ghent, and preparing her PhD.

***Community-building and ethics of care in Wajdi Mouawad's pandemic performances***



As Wajdi Mouawad's most famous tetralogy (*Incendies*, *Littoral*, *Forêts*, *Ciels*) has lent itself to generous readings in the field of migrant writing, Canadian and performance studies, I turn away from his well-established oeuvre and focus instead on the corpus the artist created during the Covid-19 pandemic. My paper explores how Mouawad as director of the French National Theatre La Colline has been able to maintain the connection with both the local and the global communities during the lockdown through a series of creative initiatives and projects that expanded beyond the Francophone world. Echoing the political and cultural realities Lebanon and its diaspora experienced in the

aftermath of the Civil War, the explosions that shattered Beirut in August 2020 marked the diasporic voice in confinement of the Francophone artist born and raised in Lebanon. Through an analysis of Mouawad's recent performances, I also explore the ways in which this event challenged his approach of care ethics, from global community-building initiatives to concentrated diasporic efforts for his country of origin. Bringing together diaspora studies and care ethics through a hauntological framework, my paper argues that Mouawad's artistic strategy to unsilence the present as part of his pandemic ethics of care is in fact a ritual of unsilencing the past, while the "we" in "We are all in this together" shifts from universal to diasporic connotations.



***Felicia Cucuta*** is a PhD student in Romance Languages and Literatures (contemporary Francophone literature and theatre). She works on cultural and performance studies, as well as playwriting and the intersections of theatre and digital humanities.



### ***Creative connections: An arts-based approach to engaging online***

What does it mean to stay connected and engaged in a time when we are all encouraged to socially distance and stay-at-home? While theatre practitioners have been experimenting with new artistic forms via online platforms for some time, the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly hastened this innovation. Ever since the lockdowns began in March, socially-engaged practitioners who work with communities through workshops using applied drama praxis have been actively investigating how to maintain the embodiment of practice, collaboration, and connection with participants via platforms such as Zoom. Applied drama praxis uses the tools of drama/theatre in order to explore ideas and create meaningful dialogue amongst workshop participants. The sub-fields of Drama in Education, Theatre for Social Change, Process Drama, Theatre for Development, Theatre of the Oppressed, Prison Theatre, and more all fall under the umbrella of applied drama/theatre. Informed by personal experience in the field as a practitioner

and participant, as well as personal collaborations/conversations with fellow practitioners, this paper investigates how socially-engaged theatre artists have advanced and expanded the practice in order to achieve a sense of community and engagement with participants online during the pandemic. Additionally, this paper will reflect on what has been learned through the process, as well as what is gained and lost by moving from working with an in-person approach to a fully online one.

***Courtney Helen Grile*** is a theatre practitioner and PhD Candidate at Trinity College Dublin and an Early Career Researcher in the Trinity Long Room Hub. She holds a BFA in Media & Performing Arts from the Savannah College of Art & Design and an MFA in Theatre (emphasis in Theatre for Young Audiences) from the University of Central Florida. She has worked in the United States and Ireland as a theatre administrator, adjunct instructor, teaching artist, performer, facilitator, and director. Her passion is for using applied drama techniques to work in community settings.

PANEL 3

# Online affective activism

## ***The influence of digital activism on contemporary art in East Asia***

This essay explores the imprint of digital activism on contemporary art practices to reveal the formation of new digital political imaginaries and modes of collectivity. This artistic research explores the tumultuous last twenty years in East Asia through protest movements and civil actions in Hong Kong, South Korea and Taiwan. These countries share stories of development and progress, and histories of colonisation, uprising and resilience. These introduced a process of compressed modernity (Chang 2015), where social inequality and oppressive political regimes prompted a chain of moments of civil unrest, where digital activism became the driving force in the organisation of the movements. As the terrain of the struggle has spread out onto the digital, immediate connectivity and affective connection created powerful movement not united by identity politics or representation constructions, but through shared goals and values (Melucci 1980). Activists appropriated digital technologies as their means of persuasion and mobilisation, which unravelled a sense of kin brought by mesh working (Escobar 2008).

Borrowing the term from digital technologies, meshwork function as local network topology where the infrastructure nodes connect directly, dynamically and non-hierarchically to self-organize and self-configure. Likewise, this organisation structure is embedded in everyday of the dissent network, raising awareness and coordinating the protests, bringing endurance to the movement onsite. Artists emulate these practices: they work on a mesh using peer-to-peer collaboration, online participation, or crowdsourcing their materials. Their shared prefigurative capacity activates novel forms of being together, whereby artistic projects reach out of the art institution to turn into process-oriented socially engaged actions, which encompass the same mindset and tactics of the movement.

This artistic research is based on the exhibition I curated at Asian Cultural Centre (ACC) in Gwangju, South Korea, in November 2019. Understood as a repertoire (Taylor 2003), the show delves into a new artistic language that speaks of protest and denotes the creative power of a new generation that understands of politics and poetics anew.



**Barbara Cuelo** is a curator and researcher interested in the intersection of activism, new technologies and contemporary art. She has convened and curated projects internationally at institutions like MMOMA Moscow for the 6th Moscow Biennale for Young Art in Russia, Asian Culture Centre in Gwangju and Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Seoul in South Korea, La Casa Encendida in Madrid, Bétonsalon in Paris, De Domijnen in Sittard, Marres in Maastricht, Impakt Festival in Utrecht, and de Appel arts centre in Amsterdam, all in the Netherlands. Currently, she is a PhD candidate at the University of Amsterdam, and she is on the Editorial Board of the Dutch Journal of Gender Studies. She is alumna of curatorial programme of de Appel in Amsterdam, and holds a MA in Arts Management from the University of Maastricht (NL), and a BA in Journalism from the Complutense University of Madrid (SP).

### ***Monster-demonstrator, towards a new postcolonial subjectivity***

Through an analysis of Hanmin Kim's 'Letters against Separation' (e-flux, 2020), this essay explores how the Covid-19 crisis foregrounded South-Korea's postcolonial condition. The letters of Hanmin Kim, writing from Seoul, respond to the situation he finds himself in during the pandemic. Firstly, I discuss Hanmin's criticism on the pervasive national pride regarding Korea's successful measures towards the virus, and how his observations are made from the point of view of a postcolonial subject (Jabri, 2012). While the mediatized national pride of Korea comes from a complex position related to the post-war period, US presence, and contemporary Korean imperialism. Each of these are locally experienced within an ethnocentric frame, an experience that runs counter to Hanmin's global outlook. Secondly, I articulate an alternative postcolonial subjectivity by applying the concept 'willfulness' of Sara Ahmed (Ahmed, 2014). In doing

this, the text embraces the complexity of 'others' within fluid and nonlinear ways by reflecting on the Black Lives Matters movement and Eileen Huang's 'A Letter to the Chinese American Community'. In conclusion, the close reading of the Hanmin's letters are the wider scope of the argument that asks us to reconsider the debate between liberal subjectivity and post-colonial subjectivity. This paper enables concepts like, transparency, mask, double-consciousness, and waywardness to emerge as a way to reconceptualize activism and mobility under postcolonial conditions.

**Hyeisoo Kim** is currently following the Research Master in Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam. She focuses on the intersectionality of race, sexuality and class in context of postcolonial media theory and feminist practice, partly in reflection on her own immigration experience. Hyeisoo is also an artist and she has worked with a variety of different forms and media. At her show <Souvenir of a Specter City> 2018, a film collection of non-specific events that were taken following her eyes, ears and feet were shown in a non-linear way using a computer generating program. Currently she is working on a series of films about appropriating other cultural form such as graffiti, rap music or tattooing through performance.

### ***Three photographs, three demonstrations, and the spectacle***

This presentation offers a visual culture assessment on the local wave of demonstrations since the Covid-19 pandemic eruption. By comparing photographs from different demonstrations, I show the civil protest's political logic as it was demonstrated in the visual images and the technological practice. Using the term 'Spectacle', I seek to capture the current nature of the interplay between the protests and its visual manifestations.

During the lockdown, the restrictions on movements and crowding, demonstrations probed the public space's civic role. The first lockdown in Israel on March 16 did not deter people from going out and protesting adopting creative ways of assembly, which produced unique images. The pandemic outbreak was when the public distrust in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu leadership integrity was at its peak. Following the lockdown, the social and economic crises it unravelled, citizens' demands for compensations became part of the protest's demands. The risk of infection caused by physical closeness and contact, provided the screened visual images a central role in mediating social, familial, and political relationships. All these elements and the seclusion of people in their homes had an accumulating mental and emotional effect. Therefore, even if expressing civic anger

towards policymakers in unorthodox and creative ways at protests is not new, the coronavirus eruption and the dissenters need to flow government instructions created unexpected forms of demonstrations that were prominent not less than their content. In this presentation, I focus on three photographs from different protest: a photo from "Black Flags" demonstration at Rabin's square, an image depicting a zoom demonstration screened on the house of the Israeli government treasury CEO of "(Women) Breaking the Walls" and "Can2Kam" groups, and a photograph from the demonstrations next to Netanyahu's official residency at Balfour. By comparing these photographs, I show the connection between the visual imaging and the political protest and the influence of the technological constellations on the representation and presentation structure, which also involve the response or non-response to the present needs.

**Ruthie Ginsburg** is a research fellow at the Minerva Center for Humanities, Tel-Aviv University. She teaches in Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, and Ha'midrash-Art College, Beit-Berl. Ginsburg's interdisciplinary research combines several areas of investigation, focusing in particular on the visual practices of human rights organizations working in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The research on Palestinian women participation in the Camera Project of B'Tselem was funded by Fritz-Thyssen Foundation. Other parts of the research were published in *Current Sociology and Theory*, *Culture, and Society* journals.

***“The spread of a mo(nu)ment” – Counterhistories and embodied commemoration in public space during lockdown***

In this informal artist talk, I will share three different art projects that started during the Covid pandemic. All of the ongoing art works and collaborations deal, in one way or another, with the closure of public space. Political uprising against erasure, policing, gentrification and economic marginalization, informs these three art projects. At the “We are all in this together” conference, I will share these three projects as soft examples of resistance – both by questioning the boundaries of the ‘we’, as well as by passionately caring for an abstract or digital space of togetherness.



**1. The Spread of a Mo(nu)ment**

In April 2020, I initiated an art project on memory and surveillance in collaboration with TAAK, a research collective on art in the public domain and alternative ways of commissioning. In May 2020, we launched an open call. Initially, I planned to perform the submissions in front of surveillance cameras in the city of Amsterdam, functioning 24/7 but with nothing to monitor. This way, I hoped to create a collection of submitted monuments, questioning the false promise of governmental policies focused on controlling or taming the virus. We did receive submissions, but soon after the launch of the ‘open call,’ George Floyd was murdered in the US and the city of Amsterdam became busier as we gathered for Black Lives Matter protests, while statues of colonial figures were toppled. The urgency of the project changed, especially when the project received art funding. Who has time and space to create art in crisis time? What does collective commemoration mean when public spaces are ‘closed’? Instead of following through with the Open Call, we redesigned the project, aimed to ignite a direct circulation of art funding.

## 2. Cruising Gezipark

In October 2020, Kübra Uzun and I go for nightly walks in Istanbul's Gezi Park, creating an oral history narration. In the audio installation *Cruising Gezipark*, Kübra shares her teenage cruising memories, while also discussing her presence at the mass uprising and protests in 2013. Uzun's stories are both nostalgic and full of present-day fire: gay and queer sex is still happening, resistance is still happening, people are still gathering – even during the Covid pandemic. But the public toilets are monitored by cameras and the few standing trees are not enough to create dark spots—big lights illuminate all corners of the park.

## 3. Through the Window

Between May 2020 and September 2020, *Through the Window* functioned as a platform and exhibition for and by queer artists between Turkey and the Netherlands. In direct response to the sudden closure of art spaces and nightclubs, *Through The Window* was initiated to financially support queer artists and to foster community building in isolated times. At the start of 2021, *Through the Window* started its second iteration, hosting conversation between activists, academics and artists, online parties with DJ's and launching an online exhibition.



**Simon(e) van Saarloos** (1990, Summit, New Jersey) is a writer and artist based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. They published several books in Dutch, including a novel and a collection of columns, as well as the English translation of their book *Playing Monogamy*. Their most recent book, *Herdenken herdacht*, is a non-fiction work about queer forgetfulness, whiteness and embodied commemoration. Van Saarloos is currently the guest curator of the *Abundance* exhibition at Het HEM, Zaandam (May 2021 – October 2021). They teach a theory research seminar at the Ecology Futures MA at AKV | St. Joost. In the fall of 2021 Van Saarloos starts their PhD at the Rhetoric department at UC Berkeley.



PANEL 4

## We are not all human

### *We the earthbound*

This paper directly addresses the title of the workshop and asks following questions: Who are “we”? What does this “togetherness” denote? What is “this” in which “we” are supposed to be together? These questions are raised following the remarkable literature on the posthuman ethics and especially of Rosi Braidotti. In order to explore these questions, I will focus on “cosmic pessimism”.

I will take up this concept from two perspectives. First, I will look at the work of Eugene Thacker who recently worked with the concept and proposed it in an organized way as a philosophy. Thacker explored and developed cosmic pessimism through several works over a decade. I will approach Thacker’s cosmic pessimism critically and will argue that despite of his apolitical posture, Thacker’s cosmic pessimism is dangerously political. I characterize it as “dangerously political” precisely because of the many crises the human world face now which can be abbreviated under “the Capitalocene”. As I will argue, drawing heavily from Arthur Schopenhauer and Emil Cioran,

Thacker’s conformist and misanthropic cosmic pessimism can be made to serve as the metaphysics of eco-fascism.

Against Thacker’s cosmic pessimism, I will propose another cosmic pessimism. I will show that, contrary to Thacker’s claim, this kind of cosmic pessimism is indeed prevalent in Western philosophy from Leopardi to Nietzsche, from Russell to Deleuze & Guattari. I will show that the common denominator of these cosmic pessimisms is an acknowledgment of the insignificance and the vulnerability of the planet on which life absolutely depends on in a different and hostile cosmos. Moving from these cosmic pessimisms and informed by contemporary planetary thinking I will argue for an ethics of solidarity for all of “us” who “are not all Human” and who are “not the One and the Same”.

**Mümtaz Murat Kök** was born in Ankara in May 6, 1989. He had his bachelor’s degree at Izmir University of Economics in 2008. There, he studied International Relations and European Union. After completing his undergraduate education as an honor student in 2012, he was admitted to Ege University for master’s study. He graduated from Ege University in 2015. In 2017, he attended the IFIS PAN/ Lancaster University Joint MA Program at the Graduate School for Social Research where he studied sociology. Since 2018, he is a PhD candidate at the GSSR and studying philosophy.



### ***Zoommaterialism: Thinking with and as technology***

The near permanent explicit technological mediation that we have inhabited for the past year has highlighted our far-reaching dependence on technologies. However, this dependence that we now experience so vividly, is not the end-stadium of a process of alienation if we follow the logic of recent post-humanist scholarship. This growing body of work states there is no pre-dependent or autonomous state, proposing a narrative of an 'always already' — a form of monism, of immanence where the mental is always already embedded within more than human materialities and technologies. Since this workshop works through the entanglements of connection and isolation, I want to look with this lens to these recent ontologies of immanence. In this paper, I argue that connection and isolation form a constitutive tension through which we can analyse these ontologies. As this emerging field is rich and diverse, I narrow it down for the current paper to two authors that are representative of two currents within this field. I will delve deeper into Karen Barad (and her seminal book *Meeting the Universe Halfway* (2007)) and will contrast this with the work of Adrian Johnston and his book *Adventures in*

*Transcendental Materialism* (2014). For this paper, I build on Deleuze's thinking regarding concepts. For him, ontological concepts are not neutral vessels but active constructing agents in our dynamic and differing world. Ontological concepts are thus tools for creating, seeing and judging worlds. Seeing ontologies as tools allows us to ask what do these tools allow for, what kind of worlds do they create, build? And on the flip side, what do they disallow for, what do they foreclose, disable? Through juxtaposition the above two ontologies through the lens of isolation and connectivity, this paper will trace the affordances (in both negative and positive sense) of these ontologies.

**Aldo Kempen** will start with his appointed PhD in Philosophy at the Open University in the Netherlands in January 2021 after completing his research project at the Nationale Denktank. His PhD aims to develop a critical evaluation of New Materialist scholarship through the lens of contemporary French philosophy. Previously, Aldo completed his MA in Cultural Analysis at ASCA and an MPhil in Film and Screen Studies at the University of Cambridge. Besides academia, Aldo is a public speaker and cultural programmer at various institutions such as de Rode Hoed, Felix Meritis and Pakhuis de Zwijger.



### ***Pandemic dramaturgy: The audience as co-designer in the Anthropocene against the Background of COVID-19***

The performance series DYING TOGETHER by Dutch theatre collective Building Conversation researches events in which people, things, ideas and ecosystems suddenly die at the same moment. In the last part titled DYING TOGETHER / FUTURES, the COVID-19 pandemic is the central theme. Taking place in the period between the two lockdowns – with 1.5 m distance between the participants -the physical performance confronted the participants with constellations of actors that are all connected in a future scenario for life and death in and after the pandemic. The participants embody these actors, becoming part of a dramaturgy of entangled human and nonhuman positions and interests, reflecting collectively on the pandemic. As such, the audience is extended into co-designer of possible connections, enacting the statement that “‘we’ may be in this together, but we are not all human and we are not one and the same” (Braidotti 2020).

In this paper, I investigate how the lens of theatricality can create an understanding of the pandemic dramaturgy of the Dutch performance DYING TOGETHER / FUTURES, and argue that this performance confronts us with a scenario for living after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Two aspects of the concept of theatricality are particularly crucial in the analysis of a pandemic dramaturgy: theatricality as an epistemological tool (Röttger 2012, 43) and the ontology of theatricality as medium (Lavery 2020; Weber 2004). Their combination positions theatricality as both a shift in perspective that can extend to possible future scenarios and at the same time as the medium of the here-and-now, connecting live bodies with materials in theatrical space of the absolute present. Analysing how the dramaturgy of DYING TOGETHER does both presents an example of a future scenario that confronts participants with their own position in a network of human and nonhuman actors (Tsing 2015). This analysis shows that the dramaturgy assesses underlying problems and (in)equalities that were already present in the Anthropocene and have become magnified in the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Alice Breemen** graduated in Theatre Studies and Media and Performance Studies (Utrecht University, 2009 & 2011) and Philosophy (Tilburg University, 2013). Currently she is a PhD researcher at the University of Amsterdam (Theatre Studies, ASCA), working on her thesis titled *New Dramaturgies for (after) the Anthropocene*. Theatricality, Climate Change and Future Scenarios, in which she researches how contemporary theatre makers create new dramaturgies that engage with climate change, analyzed through the lens of theatricality. She presented her research at conferences in Paris, Dublin, Amsterdam and online.

## PANEL 5 *To make our (digital) histories*

### ● *Blackboxed solidarity: On the platformization of activism in times of crisis*

This paper discusses the implications of the platformization of digital activism, particularly since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and taking into account the waves of protests galvanized by racist police brutality, including the murder of George Floyd by Derek Chauvin in 2020. The pandemic did not halt the momentum of protesters; in fact, it has also offered novel opportunities for users to harness the affordances of social media platforms in order to raise awareness about systemic inequities. From curated infographics to the much-discussed Instagram #BlackoutTuesday (Heilweil, 2020), digital activism has seemingly been rejuvenated but has also invited older criticisms regarding its effectiveness and honesty. It has also been arguably standardized and even professionalized, processes which must be viewed in the context of the broader phenomenon of platformization, which is defined as "the penetration of economic, governmental, and infrastructural extensions of digital platforms into the web and app ecosystems" (Nieborg and Poell, 2018, p. 4276). Mark Carrigan (2016) writes that social movements have always relied on communication technologies, which, while facilitating 'an ease of assembly' (p. 210), also have 'the unintended consequence that movements will tend to fail to develop the organisational capacities to negotiate their

changing environment and hence exhibit what will be characterised as "fragility"', while the factors which produce these fragile movements concurrently produce 'distracted people' (Carrigan, 2016, p. 209). Furthermore, the digitalization and subsequent platformization of activism arguably renders it more susceptible to monitoring and surveillance, as well as the extractivist logic that views expressions of sociality as data to be expropriated. I therefore argue that, while platforms enhance the ability of users to participate in activism on a global scale in times of crisis, they also compel them to play into platform logics, which often prioritize self-promotion, aesthetics, and digestible content over nuance. Considering that imagery of pain circulates within a broader 'visual economy of distant suffering' (Kurasawa, 2014) and with a focus on Instagram, a visual platform, I seek to address the following questions: Does this wave of platformized activism contribute to an aestheticization of politics? How can we imagine the politicization of aesthetics in the platform context, while maintaining a connection to material conditions?

**Eleni Maragkou** is currently completing a research master's in Media Studies with a focus on new media and digital culture at the University of Amsterdam, where she is also working as a research assistant. Her research interests lie at the intersection of cultural and platform studies, with a focus on identity formation, conspiracy theory dissemination, and vernacular creativity. Previously, she interned at the Institute of Network Cultures and worked as a journalist in Greece. She holds a BA in Communication and Media Studies from the University of Athens and is based in Amsterdam.

## ***Historians for future: Caring for digital environmental histories***

The Corona pandemic was perhaps the most acute, but not the only global crisis in 2020. While the Black Lives Matter protests alerted us to the persistence of systemic racism and its deadly consequences, Australia and the US saw the most devastating wildfires in a generation, and the Fridays for Future movement promoted the hashtag #FightEveryCrisis to prevent the climate crisis from slipping out of view. Their hashtag also reminded us of the interconnectedness of these crises, each of them a result of sustained exploitative practices.

To support the climate movement, several historians founded a Historians for Future (H4F) group in early 2020. The group faced the double challenge of wanting to develop activist strategies while not being able to meet in person or protest in the streets. Moreover, the pandemic exacerbated the precarious position of many of its members. Still, H4F members managed to collaborate on digital platforms, writing a statement on the role of history in dealing with the climate crisis and initiating outreach projects.

The group's disembodied collaboration remains a challenge and may be a fleeting achievement. However,

this paper argues that getting together digitally has opened up new opportunities not only to build an activist community but also to care for our planet. Over the past few years, STS scholars have started to pay more attention to care and how it can be enacted through digital technologies. This paper seeks to enrich STS accounts by drawing on concepts of care in the study of history, which has always cared for people and objects of the past. Building on Maria Puig de la Bellacasa's concept of radical care, I explore to what extent we can enact environmental care by historicising the climate and biodiversity crisis in digital spaces.

**Lea Beiermann** is a PhD candidate at Maastricht University and a founding member of Historians for Future, an activist environmental group of historians. She holds a BA in Creative Writing and an MScRes in Cultures of Arts, Science and Technology. Her NWO-funded PhD thesis explores the material culture of microscopy in the nineteenth century and draws on data crowdsourced through a citizen science project. Lea was awarded the 2020 Singer Prize by the British Society for the History of Science. Her prize-winning essay looks at how nineteenth-century microscopists worked together remotely, a topic that in 2020 became timelier than expected.





## ***The challenges of automation and AI for journalists working in Hong Kong***

The understanding of technological developments is seen as crucial to the success of contemporary media workers who deal with automated technologies in their daily tasks (Diakopolous, 2019). Recent literature describes algorithms and natural language generation (NLG) technology – the automatic creation of text from structured digital data – to play an increasing and influential role in the social, economic, and cultural spheres (Dörr, 2016; Bucher, 2018). While journalists see automation as a way to gain autonomy from political and economic pressures, the implementation of these new technologies is not widespread yet (Wu, Tandoc, Salmon, 2019).

As the processes of media production and consumption are becoming more algorithmically driven and automated (Napoli, 2014), these technological developments can be both empowering and disturbing to the everyday work of media professionals (Carlson, 2018). There is growing evidence in the literature that media professionals in Hong Kong are gradually more affected by the automation process and they feel anxious about the transformations this development will bring to their career development (e.g. Li & Yu, 2018). In other parts of the world, this technology proved to change the nature of work and not necessary to supplant human practices (Diakopolous, 2019).

This early-stage research analyses how algorithms and automated technology impact the journalists' wellbeing and how they go about their media production operations - newsgathering, production practices and dissemination. Methodologically, in-depth serve as the basis of this research as they help identify the key problems about technology for journalists in Hong Kong. Subsequently, case-studies will be employed to key and relevant newsrooms. These case-studies will provide depth to our understanding of the problem and will allow the researcher to gain contextual evidence. This research aims to make a significant contribution to ongoing debates on automation and artificial intelligence in the field of journalism studies.

**Florin C. Serban** is a Lecturer in the Department of Communication at Hong Kong Baptist University. He received his PhD in communication from Hong Kong Baptist University with a dissertation on the professional boundaries of legacy and digital-only journalists who work in Hong Kong. His main areas of research are media sociology, artificial intelligence and its impact on professional identities, and public participation. Before joining Hong Kong Baptist University, he has taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses on media and globalization, technology and society, and critical perspectives on international news at The University of Hong Kong and at City University of Hong Kong. Florin has received his MPhil in media and performance studies from Utrecht University.



**PANEL 6**  
**Activism**  
**without**  
**place**

start to seek creative ways to maintain connectivity between those who share the same cause, which largely takes online forms of social networking, deliberation, and digital striking. On the other, while social connections in many aspects of our lives have moved online since the pandemic, it would be mistaken to assume that the pandemic also makes bodily protests disappear from the street. In fact, protests have been staged in 2020 not any less than in 2019 (Press & Carothers “Worldwide Protests in 2020”). In view of that, we want to address the new dilemma faced by activists under the pandemic to stage embodied movements, the concern for public health and the legitimacy of police suppression. Looking at the relations between digital activism and social movements, we want to interrogate what makes embodied connectivity and its public visibility still a norm and preferred form of activism during a time of urgency in social isolation.

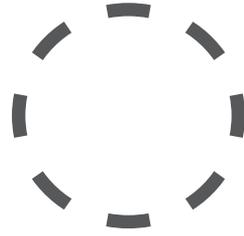
***Staying on the streets: Dilemmas of activism in the COVID-19 pandemic***

Protests have been the conventional way of staging a common and redistributing the sensible – what is seeable and sayable – established by institutions (Rancière 3). Connectivity embodied in the visibility of the disruption of public space and time is a powerful political technology to demand social changes. What is limiting embodied connections during the pandemic has two folds. The first, there is the need for social distancing based on a shared concern for public health. Meanwhile, this need is used by the government as a way to police dissident voices and oppositions in places like Thailand and Hong Kong. When a public concern is politicalized as a means for oppression, the target of the activist also turns into a struggle of two folds: the struggle to reclaim urban space in a corona-safe way and the struggle to counter oppressive power of the government excused with public health concern. On one hand, people



**POON Hiu Lam Hannah** is a second-year student of the Research Master's in Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam. With a multidisciplinary background in cultural studies and political philosophy, her research interests are media culture, aesthetics, and politics of identity in relation to activism, particularly in the context of Hong Kong. Previously, she worked as a research assistant on a film history project for a Professor from the Hong Kong Baptist University, a programme assistant to several film festivals, and an editorial assistant for an art and cultural magazine in Hong Kong.

**Monica Baptiste Gouffray** is a second-year student of the Research Master of Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam. Her research has been focused on understanding the way we use media and culture to make sense of traumatic experiences, especially in the context of Latin America, and working with critical theory and decolonial studies. She is currently working as a RA for the research priority area of the University of Amsterdam: Global Digital Cultures. Previously she worked for two years as a film producer & content creator in Colombia, focused on developing documentary films and series.



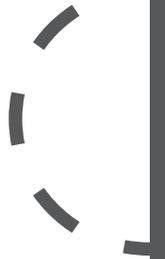
***Disputes for the logic of the periphery from the digital activism of peripheral women in Brazil***

This paper proposes to introduce the analysis of the logic of the periphery from the perspective of digital activism of peripheral women. The general question reflects on the possibility to situate the urban periphery as a metonym of coloniality. First, I situate ongoing pandemic situation in Brazil as an illustration of neglecting urban peripheries within spatial politics and connecting colonial historical process. Second, it presents how decolonial feminism and border epistemology contribute to replacing the periphery from the digital activism of peripheral women. Third, the empirical approach tries to grasp what means being peripheral women living on the edges of the city. To this aim, it analyses some material produced by the collective “Nós, mulheres da periferia” [We, women from the periphery] through its podcast program called “Conversa de Portão” [Gate Talk]. Finally, it proposes to intertwine everyday histories

and common experiences from the perspective of peripheral women through the exercise of listening to their speech. By looking at the logic of the periphery from the perspective of these women, I argue, it reveals and denounces existing racial hierarchies that subjugate peripheral community and their subjectivity through their practices of re-existence.

***Giovana de Souza Possignolo*** is a Ph.D. student in Sociology at Justus Liebig University Giessen and a graduate fellow at the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (GCSC), Germany. She received her B.A. in Law, studied Philosophy and a M.A. in Political Science, all from University of São Paulo (USP), Brazil. She was a visiting researcher at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Groningen (2019), Netherlands. In her doctoral project, she departs from border epistemology to understand the positionality of peripheral women from the edges of São Paulo city (Brazil) concerning practices, knowledge and their subjectivities.





***The matter of online political participation: A new materialist experiment on emerging adult participatory practices in the United Kingdom, Ireland and The Netherlands***

Our interactions with online spaces are invisible and abstract (Reichert & Richterich, 2015, p. 5), yet simultaneously online practices are impactful in 'physical' environments in very real, material ways. Online activism and offline activism intersect and overlap in material impact. As the Internet has become a central aspect of politics on a global scale and online political participation correlates with offline political participation (Bakker & de Vreese, 2011; Banaji, 2013, p. 464), spheres of engagement increasingly merge with one another. However, these two types of participation have been discussed as separate too often, and causal relations between the Internet and political engagement have hardly been researched (Boulianne, 2015, p. 536; Willems, 2019, p. 1192). This paper builds on New Materialisms and a 'politics of things' perspective to make the theoretical case for the unification of various participatory practices. It engages with the question of causality by undertaking an experiment rooted in the materiality of online spaces. A sample of 183 emerging adults took part in this experiment, during the first wave of the covid-19 pandemic. Results show

that distinguishing between different types of participation is indeed no longer productive. Moreover, findings highlight the causal relationship between social media spaces and willingness to engage in certain political activities. Based on this, the case for a unification of the online and offline spheres of participation and the materiality of the Internet is supported. These findings highlight questions about the ways in which political practices are influenced by design decisions

**Hanne Stegeman** is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research in the project 'morals, markets and mass intimacy'. This project investigates the opportunities, risks, and profits that are created and to be navigated in the online webcam sex industry. Research interests are, amongst others, online markets and labour, digital embodiment, intimacy and activism. Hanne holds an in MSc Media and Communications (Research) from the London School of Economics and a BA in Media Studies and a BA in English Language and Culture from the University of Groningen.

## Sonic connections with isolations

### **No handshake during the epidemic: Japanese idols and their COVID-19 transformation**

Contemporary Japanese idol group has established the norm of boosting the sales of music records by means of handshaking events ever since AKB48. These events offered "a novel solution in the form of structured idol-fan interaction" (Galbraith and Karlin 32), that have created media spectacles that celebrated the consecutive success selling over a million records. In addition to heterosexual desires (e.g. "reverse host club", Galbraith and Karlin 39), various desires including "parental gaze" (Kakin 220) were identified from studies of fan communities. It is in line with what Anne Allison observed, idols serve a similar function like maid café, pet café that attempts to provide a sense of hope, cure and "prosthetic sociality" (101), supplementing the existing family structure that has been compromised with burdensome expectation of achievement covering all family members required by neoliberal economy.

However, prolonged epidemic led to the interruption of this event of intimacy and immediacy. Contrary to some other countries that have announced multiple lockdowns to curb the pandemic, Japanese government imposed two times of call for "self-restraint" (自粛) that covered major cities including Tokyo and Osaka, with only the first time

succeeded in controlling people's movement. For the entertainment industry, the post-lockdown period become merely an extension of the lockdown. It was deemed inappropriate to hold any live events that attract crowds, despite the alleviation on the attendant quota in the recent emergency call.

The study attempts to uncover the ongoing transformation of idol-fan interaction, particularly the virtualization of handshaking events (namely online meet-and-greet events) and concerts, with heavier dependence on traditional media. This virtualization also entails further changes in terms of the format and contents of the events. For example, the contents address the fan community as comrades in face of the headwind brought by COVID-19, without very clearly addressing the pandemic. This article also attempts to identify how this factor further shapes the ongoing experience of a broken community.

**Li Chung Tai**, Kris is a first-year Ph.D. student in Chinese Languages and Societies at Osaka University. He received his MPhil. from Hong Kong Studies, School of Modern Languages and Cultures from University of Hong Kong in 2017. His prospective PhD project investigates the community wished to be Japanified in Hong Kong who are considered as the heavy consumers of Japanese popular culture. He currently works on the media ecology of Japanese idols and its fan community. Li published extensively on cultural criticism on CUP Magazine and Sample.

### ***Sonic connections – On the trans-regional lives and afterlives of the Hong Kong band Tatming***

The Hong Kong electronic duo Tatming Pair has been creating music since 1985 that yields commercial success, music awards, and critical acclaim for its timely engagements with social and political issues – the very engagements that rendered the duo relevant but unwelcome in mainland China. They were not allowed to connect.

Thus, in a way, the duo has been operating for years already in relative isolation, as they are banned in mainland China. In our paper, we engage with what we like to term professional fandom of Tatming, that is: cultural intermediaries, cultural producers and key opinions leaders (incl. for example the indie band My Little Airport). All these actors have been juggling with the question on how to overcome the isolation the band has been facing since Anthony Wong's vocal support of the umbrella movement in

2014. We will show how these actors all help to further open up a space for Tatming's politics, especially cross border towards China. Despite the ban, it is through such indirect route, often enabled by digital technologies, that their influence is still felt, for example on a Friday night in a bar in Beijing, when DJ Funkie plays a compilation of their music for a queer crowd, or on the platform douban, when fans eagerly share their views on Tatming. We argue that it is through the numerous afterlives and cultural translations, both online and offline, that the politics of Tatming bleeds to other localities, to other moments, to other people. We thus show how music is more than music, and how one band in a rhizomatic way connects, lives on, has both effect and affect.

**Jeroen de Kloet** is Professor of Globalisation Studies and Head of the Department of Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam. He is also a professor at the State Key Laboratory of Media Convergence and Communication, at the Communication University of China in Beijing. He co-edited *Boredom, Shanzhai, and Digitization in the Time of Creative China* (with Yiu Fai Chow and Lena Scheen, Amsterdam UP 2019) and *Trans-Asia as Method: Theory and Practices* (with Yiu Fai Chow and Gladys Pak Lei Chong, Rowman and Littlefield, 2019).

**Yiu Fai Chow** is Associate Professor at the Department of Humanities and Creative Writing, Hong Kong Baptist University. His publications cover gender politics and creative practices, including *Caring in times of precarity: A study of single women doing creative work in Shanghai* (2019) and *Sonic multiplicities: Hong Kong pop and the global circulation of sound and image* (co-authored, 2013). Chow is also an award-winning writer in lyrics and prose.

**Leonie Schmidt** is Associate Professor in the Media Studies department of the University of Amsterdam. Her research interests cover the fields of post/decolonial studies, ecomedia and green cultural studies, popular culture & religion, and elemental media. Leonie is the author of *Islamic Modernities in Southeast Asia: Exploring Indonesian Popular and Visual Culture* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017). In her NWO Rubicon & Veni-projects, conducted at SOAS in London (2016-2019), she analyzed how in Indonesia an 'Islamic counterterror culture' has emerged. Her research shows how popular culture negotiates and contests 'Islamic radicalization', while complicating simplistic views of 'radicalization'. Her current research explores how religious movements in the Global South use media to combat climate change and creatively contribute to sustainable solutions. Leonie has been teaching a wide variety of courses in the Media Studies department since 2009. Leonie supervises several Ph.D. students and currently directs the Television and Cross-Media Culture master. She is also a member of the Amsterdam Young Academy.



### ***How to preserve travelling musical practices in an online collaborative network archive***

Traditionally, the notion of the archive is strongly attached to a place, an arkheion (Derrida 1995). Recently, this notion is extended with the percipience that knowledge and information are not only stored in archived documents, but also in living human beings, in (the use of) instruments and other objects, and in social practices such as tradition, education

and collaboration (e.g., Taylor 2003); this is particularly relevant for music, especially performance based, improvised and experimental music. Both conceptions imply the need to travel, for constructing, maintaining and accessing an archive – to visit an archive, to meet people, encounter things, observe performances and experience living practices. Travelling has become significant for contemporary music archiving in another respect as well – as in the case of STEIM, the 50-year-old studio and network laboratory of electro-instrumental

music and sound art in Amsterdam: STEIM's "friends", musicians and artists collaborate internationally, have a residency at STEIM, develop musical-artistic instruments and practices at STEIM and take these with them to use and develop these further elsewhere. A consequence of this is that a substantial part of STEIM's activities is scarcely represented in STEIM's archive, but that related documents, objects, information, knowledge and memories are elsewhere, in various places, far away. Thus, I consider STEIM's archive a "network archive". At the





festival to celebrate STEIM's 50th birthday in autumn 2019, STEIM's "friends", former artistic directors and artists in residence, came to perform together, to give workshops and to recollect memories. Such a festival may be considered an alternative form of archiving. The physical travelling that is essential for these various conceptions of archiving has become highly problematic during the Covid-19 pandemic. As an alternative, we started to develop an online collaborative network archive. In this presentation I will reflect on our pilot study (funded by the Mondriaan Fonds): the digital tools we explored, the collaborative processes, the relations and gaps between the physical and digital archives, and the fundamental question: what are these musical practices that we try to document and preserve, and how does the archival process feed back into these practices?

**Hannah Bosma** is a postdoc researcher at the University of Amsterdam (Musicology, ASCA) for the NWO funded Veni research project Preservation as performance: Liveness, loss and viability in electroacoustic music (2019-2023). STEIM is one of the case studies. She is also co-ordinator and lecturer of the interdisciplinary MA-course Archiving Art (UvA Humanities, Arts & Culture) and received a grant from the Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies to include student projects with external arts/archival organizations. Other projects include the conference The Art of Voice Synthesis (UvA ASCA 2016) and The Electronic Cry: Voice, gender and electroacoustic music (PhD UvA ASCA 2013). <https://www.uva.nl/en/profile/h.m.bosma>



**PANEL 8**  
***Togetherness in  
arts and literature***

***The scraps in return: Flowing wenyi (poetic and cultural) protests in Hong Kong***

In addition to ravaging the 'one country, two system', the tyranny of the Chinese Communist Party led to the threats to wenyi circle in Hong Kong protests. Whilst writing this research, the national security law has been implemented for almost a year. Far before the implementation of the law, the wenyi circle has been already threatened by the escalating violence and the political uncertainties during the ongoing protests. Differed from what had happened in the Umbrella Movement with 79 days of occupation, there was no room for poetics to work in today protest sites. While the government is now continually removing the traces of the protests, apart from the social upheavals, today wenyi workers are fronting the tensions between art and politics among their wenyi circle.

Therefore, this lured me to open this research. Empirically, as guided by field observations, I decided to study how these wenyi qingnian were detaching, or in a way failing, in the protests. Informed by these wenyi qingnians' experiences, I attend not only the artistic practices but to a more open understanding of how and why their artistic practices are not applicable in the

protests. This will follow with a discussion with mainly two questions: first, how they 'fail' in practicing wenyi in the protests? And Second, with the close reading of their narratives, I aim to reflect on how they again fit themselves in the political picture after all the failures?

While some scholars avoid delving into the failure of Umbrella Movement in 2014, I argue to include 'failure' as significant phase in political artistic practices. I view this chapter as a modest attempt to document these wenyi qingnians' views of "what happened" through an ethnographic account situated in this biggest pro-democracy protests and political conjuncture of Hong Kong.

***Yvette Lok Yee Wong*** is a PhD Student at the University of Amsterdam. She received her MPhil from the Department of Humanities and Creative Writing at Hong Kong Baptist University in 2017. Her PhD project builds on her Master's project to investigate wenyi qingnian in Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China. Next to her academic work, she is a pop lyricist, writer and cultural worker in Hong Kong herself. She has published pop lyrics since 2014. Her writings are published on Ming Pao, Zihua, City Magazine and Hong Kong Literature House.


## ***Publication as wording practice***

How do we come together in a world that divides us? In this practice-based research, I draw inspirations from critical posthumanities and feminist theories to discuss about the ways in which the making of the publication *Art for a Citizen Scene: A Look at Five Art Practices in Asia* allow new forms of connectivity and being together in (post-)pandemic times.

Co-produced by WdKA and Framer Framed, the publication invites five pair of participants from Asia to have a conversation about their empirical practices. The objective is to exchange transcultural insights on artistic practices for a citizen scene. Since all participants are located in different parts of the world, the making of the physical publication took place entirely through virtual platforms, encompassing a wide variety of digital applications. The variant artistic practices, in particular activities organized during the epidemic peak of COVID-19, exemplify the creative capacities of turning negative situations into affirmative acts. The practices also suggest new ways of preserving, nurturing and enacting sustainable cultural ecosystems.

This presentation closely examines both the different methods of reconstituting communities summoned forth by the participants, and the collective process of making the publication itself. In so doing, I wish to elicit three aspects manifested through the publication. First, the 'materialization' of the unknown and indeterminacy that facilitate open spaces for understanding knowledge. Second, the reconsideration of art from a relational and post-autonomous perspective, which offer ways to step outside of preset frameworks and notions of practicing art. Third, the proposition that art can return to its most humble yet hopeful form – a giving of imminence that propels in partaking in world building.

***Emily Shin-Jie Lee*** is a cultural practitioner from Taiwan currently enrolled in rMA Art Studies at University of Amsterdam. She previously worked at galerie nichido, a Japanese gallery specialized in modern and contemporary art in Asia. She is member of Lightbox, a public photo library and center for contemporary photography. She is co-founder of Hide & Seek Audiovisual Art, a multidisciplinary collective focusing on cultural mediation. Her interest lies in decolonial practices in the field of art and anthropology, and the ways in which these disciplines relate to critical posthumanities and new materialist perspectives that engage in deeper understanding of entangled human-world relations.

***Tinctures and togetherness: Generating on and offline entanglements***

In Flevopark, we gather Nettle, Yarrow, Queen Anne's Lace, Mallow, and Dandelion roots together; we are not able to meet at our homes. So started an artistic collaboration, grounded in local entangled landscapes. The plants we gathered together soaked in alcohol for seven weeks, sitting in jars which we split custody of -- a socially distanced communal effort. As the plant matter fused with the alcohol to produce herbal tinctures, so too did the interweaving of our artistic practices. A focus on feminized labor and textile fused with a focus on multispecies relationships. Along the way, the urge grew to map practices of healing and research that go beyond our local experimentation. As our tinctures brewed, we turned our focus online. Firstly, to a website created in the late 1990's where women shared herbal contraceptive and abortifacient advice with each other. We hope to

elaborate further on how this website created togetherness in separation and continues to bind women and their narratives across time. Working together on a video re-reading the site, we began to discuss the pertinence of online community, no matter how locally grounded we remain.

We began work on a print publication that brings together 20+ artists, thinkers, makers, herbalists and writers who are immersed in subversive healing practices, such as herbalism, sewing, and more. In this paper, we hope to explore how, through these projects, we are living in a reality beyond dichotomies, that is both local and online, grounded and cyber, tangible and ephemeral and how we're oscillating between the seemingly-contrasting poles during this pandemic. A reality in which we are empowered to soothe ourselves, through tinctures and togetherness, against the precarity we find ourselves in in the cultural sector, heightened by the pandemic.

**Liza Prins & Layla Durrani** see and celebrate the value of collaborative practices that have been neglected and violently minimized under profit-driven narratives of neoliberalism. They believe collaboration is more-than-human and is a form of resistance, healing and empowerment. Through their works and workshops, they aim to embody collective learning processes that connect and create community. Recent work together includes facilitating a Zine Publication Workshop on embodied plant knowledge at the TXT department of the Rietveld Academy. In the near future, their work will be shown at Het Wilde Weten, Rotterdam, Reneenee, Amsterdam, and Art Rotterdam.

**Liza Prins** is an artist, researcher and writer based in Amsterdam. After studying fine arts at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, she graduated cum laude with a Masters in Artistic research in 2017. Her thesis focused on New Materialist methodologies (diffraction) in artistic research practices.

Prins' writings have been published on several academic and non-academic platforms. Her works have been shown, among others, in Nieuw Dakota, Amsterdam (2017), Stedelijk Museum Bureau, Amsterdam (2016) and Hotel Maria Kapel, Hoorn (2016). She was a Mondriaan Fund emerging artist grant recipient in 2019/2020.

**Layla Durrani**, born and raised in San Francisco, works and lives in Amsterdam. Her work focuses on community, including creating time-based collage videos for a night of Women of Color and Queer DJs in Amsterdam as well as creating banners and posters for the Transgender Health Clinic and Wellness Community Space @ Tom Waddell Health Clinic in San Francisco. After studying Art History in New York at Skidmore College, she graduated cum laude with a visual and written ethnographic Master's thesis focused on multispecies relationships between plants and San Francisco herbalists at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. She now works there as a Research & Teaching assistant in addition to her artistic practice.

## PANEL 9 *Zooming into beauty, intimacy and bodies*



### ***Virtual attentions: Doing intimacy digitally with ASMR girlfriends and TikTok boyfriends***

Under neoliberal conditions in an always-on culture, connective media are often seen as simultaneously cause of, and solution for, societal problems. Loneliness, distraction, and isolation are such problems, which some of us then tend to solve by generating intimacy and a simulacrum of personal attention and affective proximity by way of screen media. What can such digitally mediated forms of intimacy teach us about contemporary habits of relating and connecting?

Through a lens of mediatization theory, I analyse two relatively recent genres of technologically mediated intimacy: ASMR Girlfriend Experience videos on YouTube and TikTok Boyfriend POVs (with a corpus of research materials produced and uploaded during the COVID-19 crisis). Both offer predominantly heteronormative virtual relationship simulations, featuring a single performer in close bodily proximity to a camera and microphone who devotes 'personal' attention to the viewer. The differences between the two genres and the scenarios they enact are informative as their digital intimacies are gendered in quite specific ways, offering

the consolations of a return to traditional distributions of care in distressing times. The popularity of POV and roleplaying videos is indicative of new temporal and spatial ways of structuring co-presence, which comes to the fore clearly in times of social distancing. Situating these media objects on a larger continuum—ranging from video calls in long distance relations to dating apps to VR and sex robots—helps us conceptualize digital intimacies beyond notions of the virtual or hyperreal, by considering the effects of parasocial relations on real, material, everyday lives.

***Inge van de Ven*** is assistant professor at Tilburg School of Humanities & Digital Sciences, and Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellow at UC Santa Barbara (project TL;DR on reading and attention). She was a Core Fellow (2018-'19) at the Institute for Advanced Study in Budapest. She holds a PhD from Utrecht University, where she also completed postdoctoral research on creativity in education. Articles appeared in journals such as *European Journal of English Studies*, *Medical Humanities*, *Narrative*, *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, *Celebrity Studies*, and *Journal for Creative Behavior*. She wrote a monograph titled *Big Books in times of Big Data* (Leiden UP, 2019).



***Redefining female body narratives in the pandemic: An analysis of body positive virtual spaces***

Representation of the female body has been a matter of contestation and deliberation in every culture. The unrealistic portrayals of the female bodies across different forms of traditional media have reflected and strengthened the gendered expectations of women and their bodies. Images of female bodies in the media range from a smooth skin without a hint of body hair, to a perfectly proportioned figure, to the denouncing of female bodies that are “too fat” or “too skinny”, to the perfect shade of accepted skin tones, and so on. Intense debates on women breast-feeding in public or taking pregnancy pictures still ensue in various cultures, as the accepted norms around female bodies have less to do with women’s agency and more to do with the political renderings. Jennifer S. Mills and et al asserts, “Body image is a multidimensional construct that refers to one’s perception of and attitudes about the size and shape of one’s body (2017). With Covid-19 and the ongoing lockdowns, the virtual spaces have witnessed individuals maintaining “perfect” bodies. This paper aims to analyse how these images extend the unrealistic demands of “perfect female bodies”, and how selected

virtual spaces contest these notions, and act as alternate spaces of dialogues, debates, and inclusion, especially in these trying times. Whereas in the traditional forms of media, there were one-sided communication, the social networking platforms have made it possible for users to engage in conversations regarding the content posted. This paper would consider selected Instagram pages, such as- BBC BodyPositive and a few more, and analyse how these are redefining and challenging accepted female body constructs. This paper plans to collect and critically analyse the selected online content to understand how meanings are being made through the online posts, and how, further meanings are being constructed through the comments of other users in response to the posts. An intersectional approach would be employed to understand how gender and digital media are creating new narratives of positive body images for women, and understand how these selected virtual spaces represent diversities.

**Anindita Shome** is a Ph.D. Candidate at the UGC Centre for the Study of Indian Diaspora, University of Hyderabad, India. Her research interests lie in the literary and socio-cultural aspects of the South Asian migration and diaspora, be it in pre-modern times or the contemporary era. She takes a keen interest in the areas of Youth Studies, Digital Humanities, and Transnational Studies.



### ***The real, the virtual and the ugly***

A lack of direct eye-contact, no possibility of touch and – most importantly – not sharing the same air: These days it seems that our social life is less visceral than most films. The sensory deprivation of Zoom has become isolating to many, and a nostalgia for the “real” social life is ubiquitous. Remarkably, we seem to have forgotten that, for children, we find such deprivation healthy and important. We want them to use their creativity and imagine the faces and smells from a book’s story, even when they tell us that they’d rather watch the film. In 2020, the score to our own life was gone and the images we saw of each other had significantly lowered resolution than usual – to loud disapproval. It is time to examine how flawed the definition of what is allowed to be called “real” social life or “real” education has been all along. Did you even study if your masters was online only? Can you be a cinephile if you don’t go to the movie theatre? Physical co-presence still has an unfought monopoly on “the real”. From the perspective of a person with a chronic illness and disability, I have what could be called a longstanding expertise

in both immobility and, simultaneously, an active social life. And from this point of view, there is indeed something childishly naive about the mainstream reaction to the prostheses of zoom, strolls and masks. That naivete is not limited to people fighting Covid measures, but starts, for everyone, with questions of “the real”. Drawing on the work of Susan Sontag and Vivian Sobchack, I will argue that ableist assumptions of what makes life “real”, have underpinned isolation as a phenomenon in 2020.

***Ann Christin Keune*** is a curator based in Berlin. In addition to her own short films, she has been part of the German mumblecore scene and worked on feature films like “Tiger Girl” (2017). Simultaneously, she has taught film to students at her alma mater, the University of Hildesheim, where she used to hold the Minerva Scholarship. Since 2020, she is a programme assistant for the Into The Wild Mentoring Programme, advising a selected class of upstart female filmmakers from leading German film schools. She is also currently finishing her Master’s thesis in the Film Studies programme at the UvA.



***Trans in digital communication:  
Conceptualizing dialectic aspects of  
sharing***

It is well known that common spaces, offline as well as online, are particularly important for queer folks. In particular during the first decades of the 21st century, we have seen the specific way in which people living trans\* and not cis gendered ways of existence have contributed to a reinterpretation of their own lives, as much as to what it means to be not cis gendered. The digital dimension of globalization has played a crucial role in this development.

In this paper, I propose one way how to conceptualize how this is the case. Specifically, I look at the affordances of digital media of communication for stabilizing trans\* categories and community.

I build on Jean-Luc Nancy's conception of inoperative community (dynamic sharing, or being in common) as well as on Alison Stone's notion of practical reinterpretation. This will allow us to understand two aspects of the transition of the genderscapes that are centered around the Global North: First, we will understand how the digital space of

appearance allows marginalized existences to counter this marginalization by providing a context for each other across their local context and with relative independence of their current immediate social embodiment. Second, we will understand how within this sharing there are new centers of dominance forming, e.g., when the "ever expanding trans\* signifier" (Chatterjee) gobbles up and erases other ways of existing that do not comply to the conception of two gendered kinds of people.

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