

# AESTHETIC RELATIONS

**Denise Ferreira da Silva  
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& Michael Nebeling**

**University of  
Copenhagen**

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The conference is organized by  
the New Carlsberg Foundation  
research centre Art as Forum at the  
Department of Arts and Cultural Studies.

# WELCOME BY THE ORGANIZERS

The global pandemic has caused unprecedented regulations of the choreography of our everyday lives. Attention has been drawn to the intimate relations we form with people and things; to the delimitations of public spaces; and to the very air we breathe. In parallel with the threat of viruses and the constraints of lockdowns, the protests of Black Lives Matter along with anti-racist movements overthrowing statues of colonial and imperial history, have shown the necessity of reconfiguring spatio-temporal relations – also within the aesthetic field. Today, as we continue to be faced with a global pandemic that challenges established social forms and reinforces inequities of classed and gendered hierarchies and imperial racism, the complicity of aesthetic representations powering such structures is becoming increasingly obvious. On this backdrop, we have asked accomplished colleagues from across disciplines to reconsider the concept and power of **aesthetic relations**.

Aesthetic reflection and cultural studies are founded on the more than 200-year-old tradition of continental aesthetic theory. Here, the disinterested judgement of the spectator as a universal liberal subject has been pitted against the instrumental interests and conflicts that determine the fields of politics and economics. Although this persistent depoliticization of the aesthetic domain has been challenged again and again throughout the history of art as we know it, it seems that we have now reached a point where aesthetic theory and cultural studies can no longer reclaim its lost innocence.

In light of this, we want to ask how aesthetic practices and technologies shape our conception of subjectivity, temporality, scale and geographical belonging. Such questions are not only pertinent in relation to the making, curation and distribution of cultural productions by and to certain bodies, they also relate directly to the regulation, transportation, punishment and even disposal of other bodies that co-inhabit our global world.

Consequently, when we speak of aesthetic relations, we want to think – not merely about the way art and cultural practices shape our interaction with the world, within the “gated communities” provided by cultural institutions – but also about the wider political and social implications of sense relations as they establish connections and divisions both inside and outside of the arts.

## **Three days – three foci**

While most of us are experiencing increasing restrictions due to the global pandemic, we find ourselves confined to our individual private spaces of habitation. Thus, our opening day **“Safe at home? Restrictions in and reconfigurations of the domestic zone”** will depart from this immediate proximity, as contributions will question both the privacy and safety of the home, investigate the altered choreography of living in the face of crisis and not least, initiate a disentanglement of the inequities and the violence inherent in historical instances of housing politics and aesthetic regulations of residential space – the

latter of which has found its vehicle in recent legislation put forward by the Danish government.

Under the headline, **“Subjugating continuities and decolonizing aesthetic relations,”** the second day will see contributors present a range of different approaches to questions of coloniality, raciality and sensibility. Revisiting the entangled relations of colonial heritage and their correspondence to current structures of power, these approaches highlight alternative conceptualizations through which strategies of resistance and repair can be posed and treatments of collective trauma can take place. From this point of view, aesthetic theory must renegotiate its own history and its production of subjectivity in the larger socio-political context of post-colonial studies. The presented papers revise colonial continuities in institutions of critique, sense relations and memory production, and suggest new approaches to epistemological infrastructures.

With the headline **“Infrastructures of technology, regulation and co-implication in the arts,”** the closing day will address how art and aesthetic practices – in old as well as new media – are regulated by, embedded in, and co-constructing the technological and (im)material infrastructures that undergird our societies. If the point of infrastructure is to support and enable, it seems pertinent to ask exactly *what* is being supported, constructed and enabled, as this is far from always apparent. This involves a closer look at the ways in which bodies, places and material objects, as well as affects, attachments and relations are being distributed and organized by material and immaterial infrastructures of cultural circulation. And at how these may shift across location, context and time. Focused on sounding art and literary practices, respectively, the contributions investigate the distribution of agency alongside forms of solidarity and attachment in the arts. Thus, they also move beyond the transcendental subject of aesthetic creativity as well as the disinterested judgment of the individual listener, reader or spectator, to discover how such entities are often rooted in bodies but not necessarily tied to the individual.

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Exploring the questions of aesthetic relations from such different angles we hope to engage in three days of challenging and renewing debates around the constitution and distribution of the sensible at this particular historic moment in time.

All the best,

from the conference organizers of Aesthetic Relations, Art as Forum 2021

**Solveig Daugaard**, Post Doc Art as Forum, external lecturer at the University of Malmö, [solveigdaugaard@gmail.com](mailto:solveigdaugaard@gmail.com)

**Rasmus Holmboe**, Post Doc Art as Forum and Museet for Samtidskunst, [holmboe@hum.ku.dk](mailto:holmboe@hum.ku.dk)

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# PROGRAM

January 20-22, 2021

## DAY 1

**“Safe at home? Restrictions in and reconfigurations of the domestic zone”**

**Zoom link** [registration needed: <https://eventsignup.ku.dk/aestheticrelations> ]

9 - 9:30 Welcome by the organizers from the Art as Forum research center, Solveig Daugaard (SD), Rasmus Holmboe (RH), Mathias Overgaard (MO) and Cecilie Ullerup Schmidt (CUS)

9:30 – 9:45 Greeting from Christine Buhl Andersen, chairperson of the New Carlsberg Foundation

[BREAK 15 MIN]

10 - 11:30 Keynote 1 *Mons Bissenbakker and Michael Nebeling* Holes in the map. The affective spatial politics of the ghetto (moderation RH)  
Zoom link to webinar <https://ucph-ku.zoom.us/j/64020719246>

12 – 13 LUNCH BREAK  
*Nadir Souirgi and Jonathan Bonnici* Birding the Anthropocene  
[podcast performance walk, see page 25]

13 - 14:30 Paper session 1: “Ghetto” (moderation SD)

*Aysha Amin, Nadia Mansour, Alexander Muchenberger, Marta Padovan-Özdemir* Welfare Aesthetics in the ‘Ghetto’ – a scientific-aesthetic montage of sound, visuals and critical perspectives on the homed regulation of racialized migrant lives

*Birgit Eriksson* Public art projects in ‘exposed’ social housing areas  
*Ziyu Yuan and Thomas Eastaugh* The cultural great wall: Sign and signifier in London’s Chinatown

[BREAK 30 MIN]

15 - 16:30 Paper session 2: “Public regulation of the private” (moderation MO)

*Johanne Gormsen Schmidt and Amanda Grimsbo Roswall* Classics in the Time of Crisis: Reading During COVID-19

*Maja Willén* The new home in a world of crisis

*Christa Holm Vogelius* Jacob Riis and Housing Reform: A Case Study in Public History

## DAY 2

### "Subjugating continuities and decolonizing aesthetic relations"

Zoom link [registration needed: <https://eventsignup.ku.dk/aestheticrelations> ]

9 - 11 Paper session 3: "Temporal representations and strategies of repair"  
(moderation RH)

*Florian Goettke* Aesthetics of Debasement: Grotesque Performances and the Democratic Paradox

*Lene Asp* Colonial (dis-)appearances through reconstructed sites and sound: Frederiksgave Plantation in Ghana vs. the Danish West-Indian warehouse in Copenhagen

*Katrine Dirckinck-Holmfeld* Entangled Archives

*Lucie Tuma and Kiran Kumar* Temporality of suspension as a tool for channeling non-modern knowledges

[BREAK 30 MIN]

11:30 - 12:30 Parallel sessions (in breakout rooms)

Submitted panel A: *Amalia Fonfara, Mads Siegenfeldt, Signe Meisner Christensen* Approaching Collective Trauma (moderation MO)

Submitted panel B: *Jasmina Metwaly, The Rojava Film Commune (Sevinaz Evdike), Maj Ørskov, Anika Marschall* Afterimages of Revolution. Imaginaries of Alternative Futures (moderation CUS)

12:30 - 13:30 LUNCH BREAK

*Nadir Souirgi and Jonathan Bonnici* Birding the Anthropocene

13:30 - 15 Paper session 4: "Concepts of critique" (moderation SD)

*Frida Sandström* The disintegration of objectivity

*Tue Andersen Nexø*: Observing the harmonious relations of the city.

Aesthetics and images of London in *The Spectator* (1711-1714)

*Carson Cole Arthur* At their word: Forensic Architecture's renouncement and re-announcement of police testimonies in the investigation into the killing of Mark Duggan.

15 – 15:15 Yoga for shoulders and neck with Johanna Chemnitz

[BREAK 15 MIN]

15:30 - 17 Submitted panel C:

*Julia Schade, Leon Gabriel, Stefan Hölscher and Ruth Schmidt* Elements matter: New Relationalities in Colonial Modernity (moderation MO)

[BREAK]

19 - 20:30 Keynote 2 *Denise Ferreira da Silva* Tangible Possibility (moderation CUS)

Zoom link to webinar <https://ucph-ku.zoom.us/j/64198215892>

### DAY 3

#### **"Infrastructures of technology, regulation and co-implication in the arts"**

**Zoom link** [registration needed: <https://eventsignup.ku.dk/aestheticrelations> ]

9 - 10:30 Keynote 3 *Nishant Shah* Who contrives the moment of fakeness?  
(moderation SD)  
Zoom link to webinar <https://ucph-ku.zoom.us/j/61987902767>

[BREAK 30 MIN]

11-12:30 Paper session 5: "Literature, utopia and agency" (moderation SD)  
*Divya Nadkarni* The Lyric We: A Pragmatist Approach to the Politics of Poetry  
*Ragnild Lome* Casting of Agencies  
*Iben Engelhardt Andersen* The utopia of consent: sex and care in contemporary Scandinavian literature

12:30 – 13:30 LUNCH BREAK

*Nadir Souirgi and Jonathan Bonnici* Birding the Anthropocene

13:30 – 15 Paper session 6: "Sounding practices" (moderation RH)  
*Marcel Zaes* Other Beats for 2020  
*Kristoffer Raasted* New Connections: Queering the Radio Voice  
*Vadim Keylin* I Make Noise Therefore I Am: Sonic Experimentation in Participatory Culture

15 – 15:30 Closing remarks, Frederik Tygstrup from Art as Forum research center

# ABSTRACTS & BIOS

## Day 1

10 - 11:30 Keynote 1

### **Michael Nebeling & Mons Bissenbakker**

*Holes in the map. The affective spatial politics of the ghetto*

In 2018, the Danish government introduced the so-called "Ghetto Law" designated to eradicate ghetto areas through a radical process of gentrification, including the eviction of tenants and the molishing of buildings containing social housing. "The ghetto" is closely aligned to formations of class and ethnicity as the official governmental definition conceptualizes "a ghetto" as an area of non-profit social housing in which "the proportion of immigrants and descendants from non-western countries exceeds 50 percent" and in which, "compared with the country as a whole, residents in the designated areas will generally have a significantly lower educational level, a weaker connection to the labour market and the educational system, a lower income, or have committed more criminal offenses" (Ministry of Foreigners and Integration 2018 [L231], 23).

In this talk, we use the official Danish ghetto politics as an example to analyse the Ghetto Law as a specific form of affective bio-politics (Foucault). Drawing on the affect theoretical approaches of Sara Ahmed, Jasbir Puar, Lauren Berlant and others, we examine how the Ghetto Law functions as a way of managing cities as affective spaces and attachment to the nation as emotional orientation. However, we also point to the counter strategies of the unruly tenants function as a way of countering affective bio politics through radical passivity.

Michael Nebeling Petersen, Associate Professor, PhD, Centre for Gender, Sexuality & Difference:  
<http://koensforskning.ku.dk/> NorS, Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen.

Mons Bissenbakker, Associate Professor, PhD, Centre for Gender, Sexuality & Difference (Director):  
<http://koensforskning.ku.dk/> NorS, Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen

13 - 14:30 Paper session 1: "Ghetto"

Mansour/Amin/Muchenberger/Özdemir: Welfare Aesthetics in the 'Ghetto' - a scientific-aesthetic montage of sound, visuals and critical perspectives on the homed regulation of racialized migrant lives

This paper presents an experimental montage of the aesthetic relations unfolding in a collaborative of the art platform Andromeda 8220 based in Gellerup Aarhus and the research project, Making it home: An Aesthetic Methodological Contribution to the Study of Migrant Home-Making and Politics of Integration.

Empirically, the montage builds on recordings and notes derived from an interactive Roundtable (McAvinchey 2014) with invited stakeholders, activists, and public audience consuming a conversation menu of welfare, urban development, and integration. It also draws from the collaborative's personal-professional archives of research and cultural productions connected to the homed regulation of racialised migrant lives. Accordingly, this archive constitutes a shared reservoir – based on the collectors' orientations as well as informed serendipity. Among other things, this reservoir contains stored fragments in the form of photos, notes, sound recordings, policy excerpts, NVivo-coding matrices, speeches, posts, screen dumps, art and film fragments.

Aysha Amin, artist, facilitator. Co-initiated the cultural platform Andromeda 8220, Denmark. She collaborates with local, national and international actors in art, music, culture, architecture, literature, research and DIY scene. Her practice is multi-disciplinary, critical and curious within the intersections of interaction/documentation/mappings of power dynamics / structures / identity / education / empowerment and urban development.

Nadia Mansour, Ph.D., Assistant Professor at VIA University College and Director of Culture Ways. Nadia's research is on multicultural literature and culturally responsive teaching. Her research focuses on multicultural literature in a Danish context, and on how these texts can be used in the Danish public school to develop students' cultural competences and include minority voices.

Alexander Muchenberger, Interaction Designer, Cand.Design. As a core member of the collective Bureau Detours, he collaborates with different people and professionals about developing concepts, processes and workshops, with a focus on storytelling and social layer.

Marta Padovan-Özdemir, Ph.D., Senior Associate Professor, Head of Research Programme for Society and Diversity, VIA University College, Denmark. Her research centres on racialisation in welfare work with migrants as well as possibilities of subversive practices. She works at the intersections of historical-sociological analysis and ethnographic intervention exploring critical-creative methods and socially sustainable collaborations between researchers and communities



## Birgit Eriksson: Public Art Projects in 'Exposed' Social Housing Areas

Based on ongoing research in art projects in four Danish social housing areas in the urban margins, the paper asks: Why are cultural policies increasingly interested in targeting these neighborhoods? What kind of socio-aesthetic relations can the projects establish in the political context of the highly controversial Danish 'ghetto-package'? And how can they avoid taking part in the stigmatization of the neighborhoods, and offer alternative relations and models of change?

Birgit Eriksson is Professor in the School of Communication & Culture, Aarhus University. Her research deals with participation in arts and culture; cultural taste and communities; social impacts of arts; aesthetics and politics. She is co-director of the research program in Cultural Transformations at AU and co-leading two projects about citizen involvement in cultural centers and art projects in deprived social housing areas. Recent publications include *Engaging Knowledge: A Theoretical and Practical Framework* (2020, co-author), *Cultures of Participation* (2019, co-edit.), *Cultural participation, social media affect and art* (*Conjunctions*, 2019, co-editor), *Kunst, kultur og deltagelse* (2019, co-edit.), *Ny kulturteori* (2019, co-edit.).

## Yuan/Eastaugh: THE CULTURAL GREAT WALL: Sign and signifier in London's Chinatown.

Chinatown exists as a spatial integration of migrant culture in London. Our understanding of 'foreign' culture in Europe is constrained by the processes by which we consume products from said cultures. We aim to examine the aesthetic gaps between how Chinese culture is consumed and understood in London's Chinatown, examining the way in which shopfronts and signage in the area appeal to different consumers in different ways.

Ziyu Yuan is a PhD student in the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies at Copenhagen University, with a strong research interest in the interplay of urbanism and Chinese culture. She is an accredited landscape architect, who also works as an independent artist, creating watercolours of shopfronts in Denmark.

Tom Eastaugh is an MSc graduate of Urban Studies, currently working as a freelance Technical Translator & Researcher with a focus on urban projects in Tokyo. He has 6+ years of research experience, primarily regarding linguistics and critical theory as applied to Japanese cultural output.

The two writers have worked together on previous research projects in four different European cities: Brussels, Vienna, Copenhagen and Madrid.

15 - 16:30 Paper session 2: "Public regulation of the private"

Schmidt/Roswall: Classics in the Time of Crisis: Reading During COVID-19

When asking readers what and how they read during COVID-19 two recurrent themes come up: Classics and Time. Why and how is reading classics a way of coping with a time of global emergency? Taking up the example of Jane Austen and drawing on Michel Serres' idea of time, the paper reflects on the ways time comes up as a subject matter in the juxtaposition of literary sociology and literary criticism: the classic's air of timelessness; the time invested in the act of reading; the time implied by narrative structure, and the exceptional time of the pandemic.

Johanne Gormsen Schmidt holds a PhD in Danish and Comparative Literature from SDU and is now a postdoc in the Department of Engerom at UCPH. Her research is devoted to the sociology of literature. In her dissertation, she investigates writers, readers, and other actors involved in making literature.

Amanda Grimsbo Roswall holds an MA in Comparative Literature from UCPH and is currently working as a Research Assistant in the Department of Engerom at UCPH. She has a special interest in French and English literary history and is keen on combining this experience with insights from the sociology of literature.

Maja Willén: The New Home in a World of Crisis

During the past year, the pandemic situation has forced people around the world to stay at home working and as a consequence making them re-arrange both material and social functions in their homes. In this presentation I will focus on how this situation of working from home has created new definitions of home and are choreographing our everyday life in order to function within this new reality and on the same time changing the way we socially relate to our home, to ourselves and to our surroundings.

Maja Willén is an Art Historian focusing on contemporary cultural and social aspects of urban housing and dwelling. She is currently working as a researcher and lecturer at the Department of Culture and Aesthetics at Stockholm University.

Christa Holm Vogelius: Jacob Riis and Housing Reform: A Case Study in Public History

This paper argues for the contextualizing of historical reform projects, both in the contexts of their contemporary environments and their historical afterlives, as a social obligation of public history. I take the example of documentary journalist and reformer Jacob Riis, who photographed housing conditions in immigrant neighborhoods on the Lower East Side in New York at the turn of the twentieth century, as a case study.

Christa Holm Vogelius is a Mads Øvilsen Fellow in Art History in the Comparative Literature Department at the University of Copenhagen, where she is working on a project on Jacob Riis and housing reform. She works and has published on 19C and 20C American literature and visual culture, including most recently an introduction to a new edition of Nella Larsen's *Passing* (Macmillan, 2020), an essay in a new edited collection on Henry David Thoreau (U of Massachusetts Press, 2020), and a forthcoming essay on Jacob Riis in an edited collection on photography (University of Leuven Press, 2021).

## Day 2

9– 11 Paper session 3: “Temporal representations and strategies of repair”

### Florian Göttke: Aesthetics of Debasement: Grotesque Performances and the Democratic Paradox

The making, parading and violent destruction of effigies is a wide-spread form of political protest. When derived from carnival traditions, it stages the playful punishment of the politically responsible and celebrates change. Often, though, it is enacted in the traditions of popular justice to enforce the dominant order. The paper will relate the two modes of effigy protest to different forms of violence, and show how these highlight the conflict between two principles of Western liberal democracy: the exercise of majority rule versus the rule of law and individual rights.

Florian Göttke (PhD "Burning Images: Performing Effigies as Political Protest," University of Amsterdam) is a visual artist, researcher, writer, and educator at the Dutch Art Institute. He investigates the functioning of public images and their relationship to social memory and politics, combining visual modes of research with academic research.

### Lene Asp: Colonial (dis-)appearances through reconstructed sites and sound: Frederiksgave Plantation in Ghana vs. the Danish West-Indian warehouse in Copenhagen

My work takes a media ecological approach by addressing colonial environments (in this paper particularly cultural heritage sites) as multi-layered historical archives. Through this framework I set out to interact with landscapes (buildings, gardens, ruins) as globally entangled ecologies to demonstrate the complexity of a history comprised of multiple protagonists, narrators and material agencies.

Lene Asp developed the digital humanities project Mapping a Colony ([mappingacolony.org](http://mappingacolony.org)) in 2017 with funding from Europeana. She is now undertaking research about colonial environments from a media-archaeological and ecological perspective at the University of Linköping.

### Katrine Dirckinck-Holmfeld: Entangled Archives

The colonial archive, which Denmark removed from the US Virgin Islands in 1919, two years after Denmark sold the Danish West Indies to the United States, has been an agent of entanglement between histories (connecting the colonial experience across USVI, Ghana, Greenland, India, and Denmark-Norway), while at the same time it also disconnected the communities affected by colonialism and produced a radical cut between these communities and their creative expression. In this presentation, I explore how the birth of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Denmark, was deeply entangled with the colonial matrix of power (Quijano), and how artists and cultural

workers today engage in reparative critical practices in response to situations “beyond repair” (Scott), through the triple engagement with:

- Temporality of repair: Temporal collapse
- Rematerialisation: Critical fabulation
- Creating infrastructures: Alternative spaces

Katrine Dirckinck-Holmfeld (PhD “Time in the Making: Rehearsing Reparative Critical Practices”, University of Copenhagen, 2015) is a visual artist and researcher. She co-founded the bar and cultural venue Sorte Firkant, Copenhagen in 2016 and is part of *Uncertain Archives Research Collective*. Her current project *Entangled Archives* continues to explore the reparative critical practice in relation to the colonial archives.

### Kumār/Tuma: Temporality of suspension as strategy for channeling non-modern knowledges

This presentation proposes temporal suspension as a methodological contribution in the field of artistic research. Temporal suspensions prolong the interval of attributing meaning, sense and recognition within processes of knowledge production. We propose that stretching the interval of sense-attribution and postponing the moment of differentiation allows us to engage in modes of deep listening that suspend our (collective) cognitive movements upon historically habitual (neurological)highways and therefore avoid reconfiguring their often distorted figures of thought. Drawing from our ongoing conversations we will present a score of raw and ongoing thought processes and materials around:

- a temporality of suspension
- a practice of fabulation
- an aesthetics of speculation and channeling
- an approach toward the occult in the digital.

Kiraṅ Kumār is an interdisciplinary artist, researcher and writer. His work focuses on unpacking understandings of the human body-mind through a trifold practice of dance as art, science and ritual, and on proposals for change that these understandings hold for our contemporary world.

Lucie Tuma works as an artist, choreographer and scholar based in Zurich. Her practice generates time-based sculptures in times lacking time through material-based processes, poetics and critical fabulation.

11:30 - 12:30 Parallel sessions

Fonfara/Siegenfeldt/Christensen: Approaching Collective Trauma

Departing from the project Displacements, a collaboration between Arctic Street Food, Amalia Fonfara and Kunsten, this panel poses the question of how artistic methodologies may function as tools for instigating processes of healing colonial relations. We approach the question from three perspectives: that of social inclusion, that of artistic experimentation and that of institutional and curatorial mediation.

Amalia Fonfara (NO) is a shamanic practitioner and visual artist. She works interdisciplinary within practices of embodied knowledge and the arts. Her work investigates relations and interconnections within technology and animistic systems in contemporary culture and communities.

Mads Siegenfeldt (DK) is leader of the project Arctic Street Food and social worker at The Greenlandic House in Aalborg. His practice as a social worker, engaged in the Greenlandic youth minority in Northern Jutland, is oriented towards community building.

Signe Meisner Christensen (DK) is an art researcher and curator working in interdisciplinary art-based research. She holds a postdoctoral position at Urban Design, Aalborg University and Kunsten, Aalborg Museum of Art. At Kunsten she directs the project Open, a public platform for artistic investigations.

Metwaly/Evdike/Ørskov/Marschall: Afterimages of Revolution, Imaginaries of Alternative Futures

This panel will close-read at least two different case studies from Egypt and Kurdistan and discuss aesthetic practices which put centre stage the question "what comes after political revolution?" In the panel, we focus our readings around the work of the Egyptian artist and filmmaker Jasmina Metwaly and the Kurdish Rojava Film Commune. The readings investigate how these particular aesthetic practices negotiate the exchange of power between the state apparatus and the self in the revolutionary aftermath. The readings will emphasize how the practices stage this exchange of power not as something defined only by larger structures but more so by relations that are continuously acted and reenacted between the state and the self. We suggest that this preoccupation with power relations as opposed to power structures is characteristic for post-revolutionary aesthetics in Egypt and Kurdistan and we further argue that by highlighting the relational aspects of violating systems these aesthetic practices initiate a potential for imagining alternative futures.

Jasmina Metwaly is an Egyptian/Polish visual artist and filmmaker based in Cairo. Following the revolution in Egypt in 2011 which ousted President Hosni Mubarak, Metwaly was a founding member of the video and social-media collective Mosireen and made several works centered around the revolutionary moment. The reading in this panel will evolve around her later film Out on the Street from 2015, made together with Philip Rizk.

The Rojava Film Commune (Sevinaz Evdike) is an artistic collective, founded in 2015 amidst the brutal chaos of the Syrian war. Their art projects deal with the daily struggles in the Syrian civil war, they also represent the history and culture of the local people under oppression, and what it means to build new social organizations. The collective stimulates a local film culture through producing films and curating screenings, as well as educational programmes and discussions. Their claim is that "this Revolution will be televised" and that film-and art making are essential for struggles for independence.

Maj Ørskov is a PhD-fellow at the department of Aesthetics and Culture at Aarhus University. She is working on the project Afterimages of the Egyptian Uprising in which she investigates relations between aesthetic strategies present in contemporary, experimental cinema (films and video works) from Egypt and the political and intellectual history of the country throughout the 20th century up until today. She has previously published in *Global Media Journal* (German Edition) and *Kulturo*. She co-coordinates the research unit *Inquiries into the Political and the Aesthetic (IPA)* and is an editorial assistant at *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*.

Anika Marschall is a Postdoctoral Fellow in Dramaturgy at Aarhus University and held an AHRC fellowship during her PhD research at the University of Glasgow. Her work focuses on theatre and migration, political dramaturgies and institutional aesthetics. She has published about performative interventions and statelessness, the politics of listening, and artworks by Akira Takayama, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Centre for Political Beauty and Claudia Bosse. Since 2018, Anika is editor of the *Scottish Journal of Performance*. Her monograph *Performing Human Rights* is forthcoming with Routledge.

13:30 - 15 Paper session 4: "Concepts of critique"

Frida Sandström: The disintegration of objectivity

This paper will investigate a change in the function and conception of the art critic in particular, and of aesthetic judgment in general. Departing from the writings of critic and lesbian activist Jill Johnston (1929–2010) and philosopher, artist and writer Adrian Piper (1948–) during the 1960s and 1970s, I will discuss how their activities reflect the alteration of the modern concept of art—from formal to conceptual. I understand this alteration as immanent to the art critic's subject and object.

Frida Sandström is a writer and critic based in Copenhagen. She is a contributing editor at Paletten Art Journal and a Ph. d fellow in Modern Culture at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies at the University of Copenhagen.

Tue Andersen Nexø: Observing the harmonious relations of the city. Aesthetics and images of London in The Spectator (1711-1714)

Through an analysis of the aesthetic pleasures of the city in *The Spectator*, I propose to show how these pleasures are at the same time contingent upon the subject's detachment from social relations and promising an opening towards new modes of representing and feeling the same relations. Here, at the beginning of the tradition of aesthetic theory, it turns out that the socially detached spectator is articulated as the starting point for a specific kind of empathy—and for a specific vision of the beautiful and harmonious social order. I will propose to read this double move—detachment; the birth of new, aesthetic conceptions of social relations—as the product of the historic moment of *The Spectator*, that is, the birth of the ideal of the private citizen, living a depoliticized life under the aegis of a modern state.

Tue Andersen Nexø, associate professor in Comparative Literature, University of Copenhagen. Has most recently published the book *20før20* with Kizaja Ulrikke Routhe-Mogensen and Erik Skyum-Nielsen.

Carson Cole Arthur: At their word: Forensic Architecture's renouncement and re-announcement of police testimonies in the investigation into the killing of Mark Duggan

This paper re/views Forensic Architecture's 2020 investigation of the police shooting/killing of Mark Duggan in London 2011. My main argument is that in their dichotomic division of testimony and *techne*, FA allowed for its empirical investigation to renounce its reliance on the accounts by the police yet imperceptibly re-announced the testimonies of the police. Following a deconstruction approach, I will explore in addition the principle and symbolic of



belief as the condition for testimony; moreover, for the police's legal justification for the killing of a young Black person.

Carson Cole Arthur is studying PhD Criminology at the School of Law, Birkbeck, University of London. Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), his research project is on inquests of Black people (African and people of African descent) who have died in UK police custody. With a focus on the Coroner's Courts, he explores how accountability as a form of testimony produces legal narratives and justifications for the deaths of Black people to sustain state racial violence in the UK. His writing has featured in *Social & Legal Studies* and for the Runnymede Trust's blog *Race Matters*.

15:30 -17: Submitted panel C

Schade/Gabriel/Hölscher/Schmidt: Elements matter: New Relationalities in Colonial Modernity

This panel takes into focus elements as scenes of thought in order to contest our colonial, anthropocentric and extractivist modernity: fires of burning fossil fuels, waves of the open sea, shores as the landscape of islands, clouds in the sky and beyond. We suggest that these motifs bear the possibility to examine the problems of our present as well as to develop other, differing and new relationalities.

*The Human as Sensuous Relation in Ludwig Feuerbach*  
Stefan Hölscher

Ludwig Feuerbach thinks the human along the sensuous relations between several "partial beings" and as their simultaneity and interaction with each other. According to him the relationship between I and You is a sensuous opening of subjectivities for others and very different from others as echoes of one's own subjectivity alone. The contribution links this approach to the motif of burning oil fields in the films *Lessons of Darkness* (Werner Herzog, 1992) and *Behind the Sun* (Monira Al Qadiri, 2014).

*The Oceanic as an 'Abyss' of Thought*  
Julia Schade

Édouard Glissant's *Poetics of Relation* opens up with a scene on an "Open Boat" surrounded by the abysmal vastness of a "mass of water". In his writing the oceanic holds a relational temporality and becomes entangled with questions of diaspora, memory, loss and capitalist colonial exploitation. In dialogue with John Akomfrah's "The Sea Is About Us" and "Vertigo Sea" this paper takes up the oceanic as an 'abyss' of thought which troubles linear notions of time and ruptures the episteme of the middle-passage (Sharpe).

*On the Circularity of Landscape: Living on Shores*  
Leon Gabriel

The paper compares the thoughts (and poetics) of Martin Heidegger and Édouard Glissant regarding the notion of 'landscape'. Whereas Heidegger tends towards an essentialization of the soil, the latter refuses to merge the landscape into a standstill and 'thinks with islands', offering a central idea for relationality: circularity as the movement of the shore. This is brought into a dialogue with Anta Helena Reckes' *Die Kränkungen der Menschheit* as 'landscape dramaturgy' (Vujanovic).

*Cloudy Thinking*  
Ruth Schmidt

In European cultural history clouds are a metaphor for the amorphous ungraspable that withdraws from knowing and counting. But seen from planet earth under computation, the cloud is not the unseizable but materialized calculability of everything.

So what does the electrified topos of the cloud hold for conceptions about knowledge, epistemologies, relations? And facing this greatly effective metaphor, do we have to alter it into a cloudy thinking, a practice to acknowledge not-knowing and opacity?

Julia Schade is research assistant at the Institute for Theatre, Film and Media Studies in Frankfurt (Germany). Her dissertation (submitted) and teaching focuses on the representation of history and time, exploring relational, messianic, apocalyptic and decolonial temporalities.

Leon Gabriel is postdoc researcher at the Institute for Theatre Studies at Ruhr University Bochum (Germany) where he co-programs the international lecture series "Theater Forschung Ruhr". In his habilitation project, he works on post-industrial as well as colonial theatrical landscapes and dramaturgies.

Stefan Hölscher is a postdoc researcher in the frame of the Fritz Thyssen project "Collective Realization–The workshop as an Artistic-Political Format" at the Institute for Theatre Studies at Ruhr University Bochum (Germany). His habilitation project deals with Ludwig Feuerbachs thought of the human as relational being, read under a postcolonial perspective.

Ruth Schmidt is research assistant at the Institute for Theatre Studies at Ruhr University Bochum (Germany) with focus on the degree program "Artistic research". She is writing her dissertation on 'poetic contamination' and is also part of the artists collective ScriptedReality, based in Frankfurt.

19.00 - 20:30 Keynote 2

## **Denise Ferreira da Silva**

### *Tangible Possibility*

What framing of the aesthetic becomes possible when sensibility encompasses both the perceptible and the imperceptible? What if, besides what reaches the senses, sensibility also encompassed the whole range of events and elements that enter in composition of every existing thing? In this presentation I speculate on a material approach to what falls under the name aesthetic which does not rest on the formal assumptions that sustains the valuing of the optic over the haptic or the sonic.

Denise Ferreira da Silva. An academic and practicing artist, Professor Denise Ferreira da Silva's work addresses the ethico-political challenges of the global present. She is the author of *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (University of Minnesota Press, 2007), *A Dívida Impagavel* (Oficina da Imaginação Política and Living Commons, 2019), *Unpayable Debt* (Stenberg/MIT Press, 2021) and co-editor (with Paula Chakravartty) of *Race, Empire, and the Crisis of the Subprime* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013). Her several articles have been published in leading interdisciplinary journals, such as *Social Text*, *Theory, Culture & Society*, *Social Identities*, *PhiloSOPHIA*, *Griffith Law Review*, *Theory & Event*, *The Black Scholar*, to name a few. Her artistic works includes the films *Serpent Rain* (2016) and *4Waters-Deep Implicancy* (2018), in collaboration with Arjuna Neuman; and the relational art practices *Poethical Readings* and *Sensing Salon*, in collaboration with Valentina Desideri. She has exhibited and lectured at major art venues, such as the Pompidou Center (Paris), Whitechapel Gallery (London), MASP (São Paulo), Guggenheim (New York), and MoMa (New York). She has also written for publications for major art events (Liverpool Biennale, 2017; Sao Paulo Biennale, 2016, Venice Biennale, 2017, and Documenta 14) and published in art venues, such as *Canadian Art*, *Texte Zur Kunst*, and *E-Flux*.

Currently, she is a Visiting Professor at the Art as Forum research center at the University of Copenhagen, an Adjunct Professor of Fine Arts at Monash University, Australia, and a Visiting Professor at the Social Policy at the University of Pennsylvania. She is also member of several boards including Haus de Kulturen de Welt (Berlin), International Consortium for Critical Theory Programs and the journals *Postmodern Culture*, *Social Identities*, and *Dark Matter*.

## Day 3

9 -10:30 Keynote 3

9 -10:30 Keynote 3

### **Nishant Shah**

#### *Who contrives the moment of fakeness?*

The algorithmic and machinic insistence and overdetermination on verification as an antidote to 'fake' information, neglects the truth that fakeness is not an essential, stable condition of information. Information moves in and out of fakeness, and there are multiple moments – technological, human, temporal, and intentional – that allow for fakeness to be determined and unstuck. I propose that instead of looking at whether digital information is fake or not, it might be better to look at who gets to decide what is 'fake' in 'fake news'. Triangulating the moment of fakeness as a exercise of power, control, and ownership, I examine the new terrains of digital fakery as an entry point to map the gap between 'I don't know this for a fact' and 'I believe this to be the ruth'.

Dr. Nishant Shah is Director of Research & Outreach and Professor Aesthetics and Culture of Technologies, at ArtEZ University of the Arts, The Netherlands. Knowledge Partner for the global art-technology Digital Earth Fellowship. Faculty Associate 2020-21 at the Berkman Klein Centre for Internet & Society, Harvard University. Mentor on the Feminist Internet Research Network. His work is at the intersections of body, identity, digital technologies, artistic practice, and activism, with a specific focus on non-canonical geographies. His current interest is in thinking through questions of artificial intelligence, digital subjectivity, and misinformation towards building inclusive, diverse, resilient, and equitable societies. His new book *Really Fake* is out in Spring 2021 with University of Minnesota Press.

11– 12:30 Paper session 5: "Literature, utopia and agency"

#### Divya Nadkarni: The Lyric We: A Pragmatist Approach to the Politics of Poetry

Current understandings of the political value of poetry can be broadly seen as taking one of two directions: poetry as activism, and poetry as facilitating critique through its formal autonomy. Both share the following assumptions: first, in either view, it is not so much poetry as a whole that has social relevance, but only certain poems dealing with certain issues in a certain way. Second, both have been conceiving of poetry as centered around a subject, with the subject being either outside of politics (autonomist) or inside of politics(activist). However, if politics— as Hannah Arendt has convincingly argued—is what goes on between people, such a focus on the subject in poetry cannot be satisfactory. The question I ask in this paper is, how can we begin to rethink our relationship to poems towards an emphasis on intersubjectivity, solidarity, and sharing, as facilitating political community, rather than simply as individualist instances of expression?

Divya Nadkarni (MA) is a PhD researcher at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA), University of Amsterdam. Divya's research focuses on the value and impact of political poetry today, asking the question 'what makes a poem political'. She obtained her MA in English Literature and Cultural Studies at the University of Mumbai, and an MA in Literary Studies from the University of Amsterdam. She is the editor of *netherquarterly*, a Mumbai based literary journal.

### Ragnild Lome: Casting of Agencies

This theoretical oriented paper discusses the use of literature in order to study changes in conceptions of human and nonhuman agency. It tries to formulate a historical oriented mediaecological approach to literature, inspired by the French thinker Gilbert Simondon. Focus of the paper will be on the Simondonian understanding of alienation in the early information age, and how this relates to the cultural depictions of its time (as expressed in *On the Mode of Technical Objects*, 1958). Stepping stones on the way are the German literary historian Joseph Vogl, who has studied the vague feeling of doubt in literary history (*Über das Zaudern*, 2008), and Mark Seltzer's more historical approach of agency and technological change, expressed in his conception of a melodrama of uncertain agencies (*Bodies and Machines*, 1992).

Ragnild Lome is a PhD-fellow at Linköping University, Sweden, where she writes a thesis about distributed agency and cybernetic anxiety in Scandinavian prose fiction from the 1960s. She is the co-editor of *Sensorium Journal*.

### Iben Engelhardt Andersen: The Utopia of Consent: sex and care in contemporary Scandinavian literature

What form does sexual consent take, who can express it and when does it happen? This paper engages with current debates about sexual justice and gender equality, while examining what consent looks like from the perspective of literary discourse. Analyzing how contemporary works construct collectives around sexual attachments that are at one and the same time un(re)productive, transgressive and connected to notions of care and community, I argue that they place sexual encounters at the center of their utopian visions. Their utopianism, I suggest, consists of commitments to social forms whose future development can neither be known nor written down in advance.

Iben Engelhardt Andersen, PhD. She currently holds a postdoc position in the Utopia Without Future-project at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, UCPH, where she works on utopianism, kinship and ecology. She has recently published articles in *Textual Practice*, *K&K* and *Vagant*.

13:30 – 15 Paper session 6: “Sounding practices”

Marcel Zaes: Other Beats for 2020

“#otherbeats” is a sound arts piece on the web that I made based on a participatory, pandemic archive of sound recordings sent to me by participants from around the globe. My focus is the “sociality” that emerges from musical rhythm defined as moving together in time. With the pandemic, that togetherness is disrupted. “#otherbeats” curates the archive by making connections between scattered rhythms from isolation and thereby resonates with discourses on the politics of deviant rhythm, sidelined rhythm-making communities, and the sonic choreography of four daily routines in isolation.

Marcel Zaes is an artist and researcher currently pursuing his PhD in Music & Multimedia Composition at Brown University. Marcel investigates, in theory and in creative practice, the gap between «human» and «mechanical» temporality and he makes software code that deals with time in surprising ways. His work is regularly presented internationally.

Kristoffer Raasted: New Connections: Queering the radio voice?

Voices change. In their use, voices are reconfigured. From a situated place, artistic thinking seems like a good place to start in approaching the political. How do we become woke? Self-reflecting is proposed as a way of re-organizing art institutions. In opposing dogmatism, listening actively to, and making space for all viewpoints and opinions, nuances the debate. Categories are understood as interwoven on a spectral scale, in a move away from binary and dualistic thinking.

Artist Kristoffer Raasted is educated from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Schools of Visual Arts in 2018 with a supplementary MFA in art theory from the Institute of Artistic Research. Raasted conducts artistic research in the intersectional field between sound, performance and installations and will commence the practice-based ph.d. project at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in September 2020. Post-conceptual considerations on voice and post-gender are central themes to his practice, that is influenced by gender-fluid theory, feminism and decolonial studies.

Vadim Keylin: I Make Noise Therefore I Am: Sonic Experimentation in Participatory Culture

Avant-garde music and sound art are often met with resistance from the general public, rejected as unmusical noise. This resistance, however, disappears when it comes to noises of public’s own making—in the contexts of participatory art or viral internet videos. What makes sonic experimentation unacceptable to audiences in one case, yet enjoyable and welcome in the other? The paper addresses this question by reading participatory sonic practices through the lens of pragmatist aesthetics.

Vadim Keylin holds a PhD in cultural studies from Aarhus University. His research concerns the intersections of sound culture and participatory culture addressed from the perspective of pragmatist philosophy. He has published in peer reviewed journals *Organised Sound*, *SoundEffects*, *Sound Studies* etc.

#### 15 – 15: 30 Final Remarks / Frederik Tygstrup

Frederik Tygstrup is Professor in Comparative Literature at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen. He is the PI of the research project *Finance Fiction* and the director of the New Carlsberg Foundation research center, Art as Forum.



## ART WORK

### **Birding the Anthropocene**

Podcast performance walk by and with Nadir Souirgi and Jonathan Bonnici (30 mins)

Birding the Anthropocene weaves together intersecting histories in order to investigate a few pressing questions of our time: How can the extreme under-representation of non-white birdwatchers and conservationists be interpreted? To what extent are contemporary conservation practices shaped and defined by the legacy of the European slave trade? And what does globalisation have to do with the decline of birds in the European urban landscapes and beyond?

Take a walk with headphones and your binoculars for birdwatching in your neighbourhood.

*LINK PROVIDED DURING THE CONFERENCE!*

The podcast version of the performance walk *Birding the Anthropocene* by Nadir Sourigi has been curated by Cecilie Ullerup Schmidt into the continuous, Covid-19 friendly frame called *Pass it on*, aiming to circulate already made works internationally without travelling, enhancing relations across generations and continents. For the Copenhagen interpretation of *Pass it on*, Jonathan Bonnici has been invited to meet with Nadir Sourigi.

Nadir Souirgi is an artist and educator living and working in New York City. In 2010 Nadir founded the Harlem County Bird Club, a program that introduces elementary school aged children to birdwatching and field science. Souirgi, who also works as a bird guide, affords a unique view into the American bird watching and conservation community. This, along with his biracial and bicultural identity, and his experience working with low income children of colour in Harlem, form the foundations of his artistic practice.

Jonathan Bonnici is a Copenhagen based, London born performer and maker. In 2015 he premiered his first authored work 'TRANS-' in collaboration with the choreographic duo two-women-machine-show. This was followed in 2018 with their 'ALITY' at the Kunsthal Charlottenborg. In 2019 they expanded the collaboration into a new identity by establishing the Institute for Interconnected Realities (IIR) a platform founded on the concept of 'decentralised choreography'. Jon is also a text writer for his own projects as well as for other artists.

Supported by the Danish Arts Council.