

Aesthetic Seminar

Autumn 2021

*All Seminars are held Thursdays 14:15-16:00
at the School of Communication and Culture,
Aarhus University,
Langelandsgade 139, 8000 Aarhus C*

*Aesthetic Seminar are organized by
Anika Marschall (Post.Doc, Dramaturgy), Peter M. Boenisch (Professor, Dramaturgy)
and Karen-Margrethe Simonsen (Associate Professor, Comparative Literature)
for the School of Communication and Culture, Aarhus University*

September 23 - Joana Tischkau in conversation with Zara Julius

Between Afropunk, Vinyl and Roberto Blanco.

Venue: Building 1584/126

Registration required if you want to have potential updates on the seminar sent to you. Please register here: <https://events.au.dk/tischkauandjulius/signup>

But you are also Welcome to turn up at the door.

Joana Tischkau is a German choreographer and performer. Her works uncovers repressive representational regimes by drawing on postcolonial theories, feminist discourse and popcultural phenomena. Her first dancing memory goes back to Kaoma's 1989 hit *Lamabada* which was played at a childrens birthday party. This led her to enroll at her neighborhood dance school for training in Jazz dance, videoclip dancing and Hip Hop. Looking old enough to get in, she continued her movement practice in Clubs, Discos and at urban dance battles, winning twerking competitions long before twerking was even a thing. In 2010 she decided to make it official, left Germany for the UK, to study Contemporary Dance and Theatre at Coventry University, mastering the art of accessing somatic experiences while rolling on the floor and across bodies. She went on to pursue her MA in Choreography at the Institute for Applied Theatre Studies in Giessen, developing her artistic practice into a hybrid mash-up where the the writings of bell hooks meet beatboxing, whiteness is turned into a workout, Youtube tutorials become her only source material and Roberto Blanco is hailed as an Afro-German Hero. She subversively distorts cultural practices, codes and meaning inscribed onto bodies of Colour within the context of western art and dance history. She works as a freelance choreographer, dancer, community dance artist and movement facilitator and has performed her works at the Tanzplattform Deutschland 2020, Künstlerhaus Mousonturm, Danshallerne Copenhagen and Hebbel am Ufer Theater Berlin.

Zara Julius is a multidisciplinary social practice artist, social researcher, and vinyl selector based in Johannesburg, South Africa. With a background in anthropology, religious studies and photography, her work is concerned with the relationship between aesthetics and culture, African futures, and the interplay of identity, faith, religion, urbanity, migration, race, and desire throughout Africa and its diaspora. Working with sound, video, performance and objects, Zara Julius' practice involves the collection, selection and creation of archives through extensive research projects. Concerned with the ethics of representation, Zara's use of co-productive methodologies help ensure her subject areas are triangulated. The bulk of Zara's projects have focused on mapping the sonic and spiritual mobilities of religious rapture and rupture with congregants of syncretic religions, and on (post)apartheid narratives around race and place as they pertain to intimate archiving practices. As a vinyl selector, Zara's sets reflect her desire to travel land, seas and time. Her collection explores organic and bass heavy sounds from Africa and the Diaspora. She selects vinyl regularly in Southern Africa, most notably at The Orbit Jazz Club, MTN Bushfire, Rocking the Daisies, Red Bull Music Festival and AFROPUNK Johannesburg. In 2017, Zara toured London, being hosted by Touching Bass, Balamii radio, Hoxton FM, and Total Refreshment Centre. She has played alongside artists such as Nubya Garcia, Madala Kunene, Shabaka Hutchings, BLK JKS, DJ Kenzhero, Andrew Ashong & DJ Spinna. Zara has also gigged in Cuba and Colombia. In 2017, Zara created KONJO with Paul WaxOn - a recurring live music event where she curates parties with a Pan African focus.

September 30 - Nora Sternfeld

The Para-Museum and the Spectres of Infrastructure

Venue: Building 1584/116

Registration required if you want to have potential updates on the seminar sent to you. Please register here: <https://events.au.dk/norasternfeld/signup>

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A stylish glass box encasing archival materials of the Art Workers' Coalition and its actions at MoMA in 1969 presents the struggle for the rights of artists and political and social justice matters in a display case in the MoMA in New York's new presentation of its collection. The material is carefully presented. But how do we read the thirteen demands on the Museum, including free admission, a section of the Museum devoted to showing work by black artists, and the Museum's convening of a public hearing on the topic of 'The Museum's Relationship to Artists and Society'? The case protects what it displays, but it also draws our attention to its value. What are political demands doing in the display case of a museum of modern art – furthermore, demands addressed to the museum itself? In my lecture, I would like to examine these concrete questions, together with more far-reaching and general questions: What does the relationship of institutions to struggles against institutions mean from the perspective of institutions? If we understand the task of a museum as a critical faithfulness to the material, then how would institutions to be faithful to the materials? Would this really be about protecting the piece of paper on which the thirteen demands had been typed? Or is it perhaps, after all, more about what the sheet is about? Wouldn't an institutionalization that wishes to be faithful to the material have to be faithful to the demands, that is, implement them? And how can something of the conflict be preserved and rendered capable of reactivation and not just neutralized and immobilized?

October 14 – Maaike Bleeker

On Being Implicated

Venue: Building 1584/126

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“I am German, white and Christian, that's a complex starter kit” observes theatre maker Julian Hetzel in a press release for his creation *Schuldfabrik* (2017). Hetzel is well aware of his privileged position and his observation is not a complaint. Rather, it addresses the complexity of being implicated and how this affects his work as critical maker. As Sarah Ahmed points out “We are implicated in the worlds that we critique; being critical does not suspend any such implication.” Ahmed is not the only one addressing the complexities of what it means to be implicated. Media theorist Mark Hansen argues for a phenomenology of implicatedness to account for how human experience increasingly takes shape within networks extending beyond our awareness and operating in ways we do not have access to. Michael Rothberg proposes the notion of ‘implicated subject’ to describe the condition of indirect participation in injustices initiated in a distant times and places, but carrying present consequences. My presentation will look at the potential of theatre and

performance to investigate and question various aspects of being implicated and engage the audience in thinking through the consequences of this condition. I will look at the creative process and work of Julian Hetzel, Dries Verhoeven and others to show what their work helps to understand about being implicated, how this affects agency and responsibility, and what might be the critical potential of material and embodied practices of staging and performance in this condition.

November 4 - Angela Rawlings

Ecopoethics in Action

Venue: 1584/126

Registration required if you want to have potential updates on the seminar sent to you. Please register here: <https://events.au.dk/angelarawlings/signup>

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As a performance-lecture, “Ecopoethics in Action” introduces a rawlings’ twenty-year creative practice through the lens of environmental engagement via language-oriented and interdisciplinary artistic practice-as-research. She engages themes of site-responsibility, more-than-human response-ability, embodiment, and relations. The performance-lecture will include rawlings’ doctoral research in how to perform geochronology in the Anthropocene along North Atlantic foreshores. She will conclude with her current postdoctoral research into deep-ocean sediment, carbon sequestration, and becoming-with whales proximate to Iceland.

November 11 - Heba Y. Amin

Artistic Research: Politics, Technology and Architecture

Venue: 1584/126

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Artist Heba Y. Amin engages with political themes and archival history, using mediums including film, photography, archival material, lecture performance and installation. Her artistic research addresses the convergence of politics, technology, and architecture, and takes a speculative, often satirical, approach to challenging narratives of conquest and control. Amin looks for tactics of subversion and other techniques to flip dominant historical narratives through a critical practice. Amin is a Professor of Digital and Time-Based art at ABK-Stuttgart, the co-founder of the Black Athena Collective, curator of visual art for the MIZNA journal, and currently sits on the editorial board of the Journal of Digital War. She was awarded the 2020 Sussmann Artist Award for artists committed to the ideals of democracy and antifascism, and was selected as a Field of Vision Fellow, NYC (2019). Amin’s work has been shown in numerous exhibitions including The Mosaic Rooms, London (2021), the Böttcherstrasse Prize Exhibition, Bremen (2018), Eye Film Museum, Amsterdam (2020), Quai Branly Museum, Paris (2020), MAXXI Museum, Rome (2018), Liverpool Biennial (2021), 10th Berlin Biennale (2018), 15th Istanbul Biennale (2017), and 12th Dak’Art Biennale (2016), to name a few. Her latest publication, *Heba Y. Amin: The General’s Stork* (ed. Anthony Downey) was recently published by Sternberg Press (2020) and her works and

interventions have been covered by *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *the Intercept*, and *BBC* among others. Furthermore, Amin is also one of the artists behind the subversive graffiti action on the set of the television series “Homeland” which received worldwide media attention.

November 18 – Diana González Martín

Aesthetics of Effect: How to Research What Theatre Provokes in Us and What We Do to Theatre. On Activist Theatre and Clown Interventions

Venue: 1584/126

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Since Plato and Aristotle Western theatre theory has widely focused on the aesthetics of effect. The former was critical with the mimetic behaviour that tragedy would provoke on citizens, unsettling the identity that the state had attributed to them. The latter considered catharsis as an opportunity for audiences to manage affect in a virtuous, ethical way. Relational aesthetics and performance art has pushed this approach to the effects of aesthetic experience over the edge. Contemporary theatre includes lots of strategies to make audiences react, not by means of insulting the bourgeois audiences like the theatre directors of the historical avant-gardes, but perhaps in order to recover social bounds and bring back a forgotten community. Based on Hans-Thies Lehmann’s *Tragedy and Dramatic Theatre* and Jacques Rancière’s *The Emancipated Spectator*, I want to, on the one hand, dig into the question of what an aesthetics of effect can enlighten us or, on the contrary, blind us to the understanding of contemporary theatre practices. On the other hand, I would like to discuss if the traditional separation between stage and audience is a misinterpretation that equally separates eyes and hands, thought and action, subject and object, knowledge and ignorance. I aim that this exercise will lead me (us) to rethink the analysis of theatre audiences, in particular with the activist research I carried out on cultural memory in three locations in Europe, as well as clown interventions in the framework of the peace process in Colombia

November 25 – Mads Thygesen

Art Education and Artistic Research – on the current State of Artistic Research in the Theatre and Dance Institutions of Higher Education

Venue: 1584/116

Registration required if you want to have potential updates on the seminar sent to you. Please register here: <https://events.au.dk/madsthygesen/signup>

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Mads Thygesen will discuss the concept of artistic research and how it relates to higher education, especially in a critical time where most Performing Art Schools in Northern Europe are moving towards a new paradigm for BA, MA, and PhD-programmes. Artistic research can be defined as practice-based, practise-led research conducted by artists, who research within and through the field of art to improve the knowledge about the artistic process and production. In artistic research, artistic methodologies are applied and the end result is presented in a work of art (e.g. a

performance, a concert or an exhibition, a text or a mixture of different media) accompanied by a documentation and reflection of both the process and the result. This notion of artistic research has developed rapidly in the last twenty years and has become a key knowledge base for Higher Arts Education Institutions. Although a vast majority of performing art schools in Scandinavia explicitly embrace a “research attitude” as being intrinsic to their strategic vision of education and art making today many of them struggle to find a clear and common institutional framework for research. In this lecture, Thygesen will discuss the potentials – and the difficulties – of employing different concepts and methodologies of artistic research within performing arts education. He will take a closer look on concrete research projects and discuss how the artistic results can be documented and made available to peers. He will ask how the different politics of artistic education and research, as well as politics for research grants and funding bodies, can be tackled and discuss how the performing art schools can integrate artistic research in the curriculum.

Bios:

Nora Sternfeld

is an art educator and curator. She is professor for art education at the HFBK Hamburg. From 2018 to 2020 she was documenta professor at the Kunsthochschule Kassel. From 2012 to 2018 she was Professor of Curating and Mediating Art at Aalto University in Helsinki. In addition, she is co-director of the /ecm - Master Program for Exhibition Theory and Practice at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, in the core team of schnittpunkt. ausstellungstheorie & praxis, co-founder and part of trafo.K, Office for Art, Education, and Critical Knowledge Production (Vienna) and since 2011 part of freethought, Platform for Research, Education and Production (London). In this context she was also one of the artistic directors of the Bergen Assembly 2016 and is since 2020 BAK Fellow, basis voor actuele kunst (Utrecht). She publishes on contemporary art, educational theory, exhibitions, politics of history and anti-racism.

Maaïke Bleeker

is professor of Theatre Studies in the Department for Media and Culture Studies at Utrecht University. In her work she combines approaches from the arts and performance with insights from philosophy, media theory and cognitive science. Much of her research focuses on processes of embodied and technologically mediated perception and transmission, with a special interest in the relationship between technology, movement and embodied perception and cognition. She is an experienced dramaturg in theatre and dance, served as president of Performance Studies international (2011-2016) and is currently leading the research project *Acting Like a Robot: Theatre as Testbed of the Robot Revolution*. Her monograph *Visuality in the Theatre: The Locus of Looking* was published by Palgrave (2008). She (co) edited several volumes including *Anatomy Live. Performance and the Operating Theatre* (2008) *Performance & Phenomenology*. (Routledge 2015) *Transmission in Motion. The Technologizing of Dance* (Routledge, 2016), and *Thinking Through Theatre and Performance* (Bloomsbury 2019).

Angela Rawlings

is an interdisciplinary artist using languages as dominant exploratory material. Her practice seeks and interrogates relational empathy between bodies—be they human, more-than-human, other-than, non. Meditating on languages as inescapable lenses of human engagement, rawlings’ methods over the past fifteen years have included sensorial poetics, vocal and contact improvisation, theatre of the rural, and conversations with landscapes. rawlings’ books include *Sound of Mull* (Laboratory for Aesthetics and Ecology, 2019), *Wide slumber for lepidopterists* (Coach House Books, 2006), *o w n* (CUE BOOKS, 2015), and *si tu* (MaMa, 2017). Her libretti include *Bodiless* (for Gabrielle Herbst, 2014) and *Longitude* (for Davíð Brynjar Franzson, 2014). rawlings is half of the new-music duo Moss Moss Not Moss (with Rebecca Bruton) and the polypoetry duo Völva (with Maja Jantar). Rawlings holds a PhD from the University of Glasgow where she researched how to perform geochronology in the Anthropocene. In 2021-2, she undertakes postdoctoral research into becoming-with whales in the climate crisis through the H.M. Queen Margrethe’s and Vigdís Finnbogadóttir’s Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Ocean, Climate, and Society. She also teaches at Listaháskólinn in the MFA for Performing Arts. rawlings loves in Iceland.

<https://www.hi.is/starfsfolk/araw>

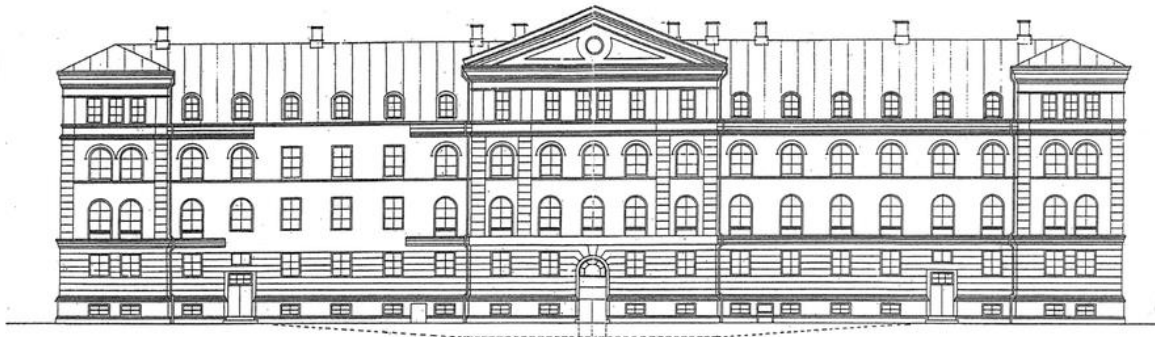
<http://arawlings.is>

Diana González Martín

is Associate Professor in Contemporary Latin American and Spanish Culture, Media and Society at the Department of German and Romance Languages, School of Communication and Culture, Aarhus University (AU), Diana González Martín is specialized in performing arts aesthetics and cultural memory studies. Her current interests focus, on one hand, on exploring social movements and the relationship between activism and institutions in Latin American and European societies, strengthening a cooperation between both regions that is mutually beneficial, and, on the other hand, on delving into methodologies for the societal transformation through the arts. Diana has extensive experience in working in international research groups and conducting interdisciplinary research. Among Diana’s publications, the following are of interest to the *Aesthetic Seminar*: “Going to the Theatre and Feeling Agonistic: Exploring Modes of Remembrance in Spanish Audiences” (2020) *Hispanic Research Journal*; “‘To understand doesn’t mean that you will approve’: transnational audience research on a theatre representation of evil.” In press, chapter co-authored with Hans Lauge Hansen, Palgrave Macmillian; *Emancipación, plenitud y memoria. Modos de percepción y acción a través del arte* (2015) Iberoamericana Editorial Vervuert.

Mads Thygesen

holds a PhD in Dramaturgy. He has worked as a lecturer and manager within the performing art educations since 1999 and has played a central role in the successful accreditation of the performing arts educations in Denmark. In 2010 he was appointed Rector of The Danish National Academy for Playwrighting and was Rector of The Danish National School of Performing Arts in 2015-2021. He was chairman for NORTEAS (Nordplus network for Nordic and Baltic Theatre and Dance institutions of Higher Education) in 2019 and is currently a member of the advisory board for TEAK (Theatre Academy, Uniarts Helsinki).



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