

# *Æstetisk Seminar*

*Forår 2022*

*Medmindre andet er angivet, foregår alle seminarer  
torsdage kl. 14.15–16 på  
Institut for Kommunikation og Kultur  
Aarhus Universitet  
Langelandsgade 139, 8000 Aarhus C  
Bygning 1584, lokale 124  
Alle er velkomne/All are welcome*

*Æstetisk Seminar er arrangeret af  
Morten Kyndrup og Jacob Lund på vegne af  
Institut for Kommunikation og Kultur, Aarhus Universitet*

## **Æstetisk Seminar, foråret 2022**

*Vi tænker os denne gang en lidt mere overordnet problemstilling som bagtæppe for semestrets diskussioner på tværs af forelæsningserne. Men de enkelte forelæsninger står som altid selvstændigt i egen ret.*

### **Kunst og kultur – kunsten i kulturen?**

Al kunst er også en del af kulturen, mens ikke al "kultur" hører til kunstens område. Hvad er i dag forholdet mellem kulturen og kunsten, mellem kulturforståelse og kunstforståelse, mellem kulturvidenskab og kunstvidenskab? Konvergerer de? Er samtidskunsten så gennemtrukket af kulturelle dagsordner, at en særskilt kunstforståelse kommer til kort? Er det særlige ved kunsten inden for kulturen i det hele taget under pres?

## **Aesthetic Seminar, spring 2022**

*This term we propose an overall problem as background for the discussions across the lectures. Each lecture, however, is an independent stand-alone event as usual.*

### **Art and Culture – Art in Culture?**

Any art is also part of culture, whereas "culture" includes phenomena not belonging to the sphere of art. What is the interrelationship between culture and art today, between the notion of culture and the notion of art, between studies of culture and studies of art? Are they converging? Has contemporary art become penetrated by cultural agendas to such an extent that a distinct notion of art is beginning to fall short? Is the particularity of art within culture in general under pressure?

Jacob Lund og Morten Kyndrup



**24. februar**

## **Kunstens nye grænser**

Morten Kyndrup

Der er kunst overalt, men alt er ikke kunst. Kunsten har med andre ord ”grænser”. Men hvordan ser kunstens grænser ud? Hvordan er de blevet til? Hvilke typer af grænser er der tale om? Hvilke funktioner har de? Er funktionerne forskellige, set henholdsvis indefra og udefra? Skaber grænserne særlige overgangszoner med tilhørende anskuelsespositioner, og hvordan ser overgangene selv ud? Hvem regulerer dem, og hvorfor?

Sådan lyder en række forskningsspørgsmål i ”Kunstens nye grænser”, et projekt in progress, som undersøger kunstens grænser med udgangspunkt i, hvorvidt og hvordan grænserne eventuelt ændrer sig i vores samtid. Forelæsningen vil præsentere forskningsprojektet og dets undersøgelsesfelter. Det indebærer bl.a. overvejelser over kunsten som form (til forskel fra kunstens former), over den traditionelle og aktuelle kamp om kunstens såkaldte autonomi – og over æstetikens historiske rolle og placering. Kunsten er i dag under et betydeligt kritisk pres. Der stilles nye krav til dens dagsordner, både positivt og negativt, til kunstnernes identitetsforbundethed med værkerne, til publikumshenvendelsens former. Der sættes overordnet spørgsmålstejn ved kunstens traditionelle placering i kulturen i det moderne. Ændrer eller ligefrem truer disse krav og denne kritik kunstens grænser, dens særlige status og roller inden for samtidskulturen? Og i forlængelse deraf: Forandrer det fordelingen og forhandlingen af forskningsdagsordner mellem kunstvidenskaber og kulturvidenskaber, og i givet fald hvordan?

### **Art’s New Boundaries**

Art is everywhere, but not everything is art. Art, in other words, has “boundaries”. What do art’s boundaries look like? Where do they come from? Which types of boundary do we deal with? Which functions do they have? Are these functions different, seen from the inside and from the outside, respectively? Do the boundaries create liminal zones, including specific positions of perspective, and which kind of transition takes place crossing them? Who is in charge of watching them, and why?

These are research questions of “Art’s New Boundaries”, a project in progress, investigating the boundaries of art, primarily how (if so) these boundaries are changing in our contemporaneity. The lecture will present the research project and its fields of investigation. These include considerations concerning the form of art (as different from art’s forms), concerning the quarrels about art’s so-called autonomy traditionally and contemporarily – and not least considerations concerning the historical role and position of aesthetics. Art today is under a considerable critical pressure. New demands are made to its agendas, positively as well as negatively, are made to the artists’ connections of identity vis-a-vis their works, are made to art’s ways of addressing its audiences. In general, the traditional position of art within the culture of modernity is questioned. Do these demands and this critique alter or even threaten the boundaries of art, art’s distinctive status and roles in contemporary culture? In consequence of this: Does that change the distribution and negotiation of research agendas between the art sciences and other sciences of culture and society? If so, in which way?

**10. marts**

## **The Social Form of Art After 1989: The Beginning of a Research Project**

Josefine Wikström

What has been the stake of art's autonomy in the past thirty years? What is the relation between the way capitalism has changed and the forms of art in this period? Much research in the areas of art theory, sociology, and history the past decade has argued that both the modern bourgeois concept of art and Western capitalism is in crisis. Art's crisis is in this literature most often described as the upheaval of the autonomy of art in relation to such different things such as the diminishment of free speech, financialization of art institutions and the academization of art educations. The crisis of capitalism is mainly understood as an ongoing crisis of capital to uphold democracy and distribute wealth, partly explained with the fact that technologically advanced commodity production pushes away more labour than it can absorb.

In this lecture Wikström will address both these problems as crises of form. She will do so by primarily going to Adorno's understanding of form in art and to the concept of social form in Marx but as it has mainly been reconstructed by more recent thinkers such as Moishe Postone and Patrick Murray. Wikström's argument is that if we are to understand art's social function in contemporary culture in the past thirty years, we need to pay attention to understandings of form in both art and in capital.

**17. marts**

## **Techno-Aesthetics and the Infrastructural**

Kristoffer Gansing

This presentation re-visits the phenomenon known as Post-Internet art, in order to trace the evolution of an aesthetic of infrastructure that has, for at least the past 15 years made itself present in contemporary art and artistic research engaging with digital and post-digital life. Computational infrastructure has in itself become a Post-Internet style that incorporates both images of as well as work about/with data centers, cables and server-racks, bitcoin mining farms as well as trashed hardware such as e-waste. Beyond the representational level, Gansing is interested in the transformative capacities of artistic research into infrastructure, following Simondon's idea of *techno-aesthetics* in which "the technicized landscape also takes on the meaning of a work of art" (Simondon, 2012). In this presentation, Gansing will outline the work of artists who engage with infrastructure in ways that takes us beyond the representational obsession of the Post-Internet moment, and for whom even image production is often only a component in a larger critical and/or speculative inquiry into infrastructures of extraction, digital as well as physical.

**7. april i Kunsthal Aarhus, J. M. Mørks Gade 13, 8000 Aarhus C, kl. 14.30**

## **Witness in Court**

Christina Varvia

This lecture will present two investigations by Forensic Architecture that had significant lives in the Greek courtrooms. The first, the murder of the antifascist rapper Pavlos Fyssas, was a key case in the trial against Golden Dawn which in October 2020, resulted in the indictment of the political party as a criminal organisation. The second, the killing of Zak Kostopoulos, a prominent LGBTQ+ activist, is still litigated in the court in Athens. In both cases, Forensic Architecture's investigations performed a key role in the understanding of the incidents, whether by allowing for a different type of public witnessing through reassembled media, or by being presented as testimony by an expert witness. The lecture will present a brief run-down of the investigations and their lives in court, as well as key reflections on the agency's truthmaking practices that suggest a potential reframing of the question of secondary witnessing.

**28. april**

## **Aesthetics of Production: Theorizing the Laboring Body in the Arts**

Cecilie Ullerup Schmidt

Feminist artworks since the 1970s have called attention to the laboring body of the artist. Works by Mierle Laderman Ukeles and Yvonne Rainer or collectively organized women's exhibitions in the 1970s required a shift of attention in aesthetic theory from the aesthetics of reception to the aesthetics of production: an attention to how art is co-produced by a surrounding sociality and by infrastructures larger than the concept of the genius allows. By shifting the analytical inquiry and theoretical interest from reception to production, from perceiving to making, the cornerstones of aesthetic theory - talent, autonomy and beauty - become peripheral. When we analyse the asymmetries of laboring bodies in the arts, we become aware of their interdependencies. The artist becomes a worker amongst other workers.

An aesthetics of production – formulated in our historical present - requires thinking about and articulating the material, relational and infrastructural conditions of the artist and thus, it demands a certain degree of disinterestedness towards the play of imagination and the gift of talent. If cultural policy, however, is built on the artist as a genius, the artist as an exception worth supporting in society, which consequences will an aesthetics of production have on cultural policy?

**5. maj**

## **Imagination in the Algorithmic Condition**

Iris van der Tuin

This lecture starts from the common ground of Alfred North Whitehead's text "Universities and their Function" from 1928, later extended and published in *The Aims of Education* (1929), and Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* from 1979 (published in English in 1984): the proposal to use the imagination as a source of critical knowledge and creative insights. Whitehead's text was written in response to the first business school appearing on the academic scene. Lyotard responds to the arrival of institutes of technology. In today's algorithmic condition (Colman et al. 2018), we are faced with a combination of both corporatization and computerization, intensified by the replacement of our good-old stand-alone desktop computers and statically wired networks by fully networked ICTs and dynamic machine learning. How to push Whitehead's and Lyotard's analyses and arguments to the here and now? Where do we see imaginative practices today and what do they teach us? One case study that will be discussed in the lecture is the "glossary boom" across the humanities, art, and culture (cf. Van der Tuin and Nocek 2019, Van der Tuin and Verhoeff 2022). Another example pertains to so-called posthuman knowledge production in our contemporary media-technological landscapes (cf. Thylstrup 2018). Other examples will be decided upon collectively and discussed interactively.

## Bios:

**Kristoffer Gansing** is professor of Artistic Research and director of the International Center for Knowledge in the Arts at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. Between 2011 and 2020, Gansing was artistic director of the art and digital culture festival, *transmediale*, in Berlin. Through his research, curatorial activity and writing, Gansing develops transversal and post-digital perspectives and methodologies that aim to both situate and transform cultural practices. His PhD thesis, *Transversal Media Practices* (2013), was published by Malmö University Press in 2013. With Ryan Bishop, Jussi Parikka and Elvia Wilk he edited *across & beyond – a transmediale reader on Post-digital Practices, Concepts, and Institutions* published by Sternberg Press in 2016. His latest publication is *The Eternal Network – The Ends and Becomings of Network Culture* (Ed., INC, 2020).

**Morten Kyndrup** dr.phil., siden 1995 professor i Æstetik og Kultur ved Aarhus Universitet. Leder af forskningsprogrammet ”Moderne æstetisk teori” ved Center for Kulturforskning (1993-98), leder af Akademiet for Æstetikfaglig Forskeruddannelse (2002-2011), direktør for Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies (2012-19). Hovedredaktør af *Æstetikstudier* I-VII (1995-2000). Foruden en lang række artikler og redigerede bind publiceret bøgerne *Realismebegrebet 1-3* (sm.m. C.P. Stæhr 1976/1982); *Dansk socialistisk litteratur i 70'erne* (1980); *Æstetik og litteratur* (1982); *Det postmoderne* (1986); *Framing and Fiction. Studies in the Rhetoric of Novel, Interpretation, and History* (disputats 1992); *Riften og sløret. Essays over kunstens betingelser* (1998); *Den æstetiske relation. Sanseoplevelsen mellem kunst, videnskab og filosofi* (2008).

### Cecilie Ullerup Schmidt

is assistant professor in Performance Studies and Cultural Studies and the deputy director at The New Carlsberg Foundation research centre Art as Forum, based in the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen. Her research is informed by materialist feminist scholarship and she examines how social, temporal and economic conditions both politicize artistic work and shape forms of living, particularly in cases of artists' collectives. Recent publications include *Everybody Counts. The Aesthetics of Production in Higher Artistic Education and Performance Art Collectives* (2019) and “The Fall of Greatness: Toward an Aesthetics of Co-(re)production” (2021).

**Iris van der Tuin** is Professor of Theory of Cultural Inquiry in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Utrecht University, where she is also university-wide Dean for Interdisciplinary Education. In 2021-22 Iris van der Tuin is Novo Nordisk Foundation guest professor in the Laboratory for Art Research, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen and at Aarhus University.

**Christina Varvia** is currently a Research Fellow and formerly the Deputy Director of Forensic Architecture. She was trained as an architect and has taught at the Architectural Association. She is currently pursuing her PhD at Aarhus University, where she has received the Novo Nordisk Foundation Mads Øvlisen PhD Scholarship; she is also a Fellow at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art and an Associate Lecturer at the Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths, University of London. She is a founding member and the chair of the board of Forensis.

**Josefine Wikström** is a writer and researcher working at the intersection between cultural theory and post-Kantian Marxist philosophy with a particular focus on performance and dance in contemporary art. She is currently working on the project "Autonomy, Culture, Action: On Culture's Spheres of Political Action in the Neoliberal Welfare State" (Riksbankens jubileumsfond 2021-2024) based at the department of Aesthetics at Södertörn University (Stockholm). She is an Associate Professor in Dance Theory at Uniarts in Stockholm and completed her PhD in philosophy at the CRMEP (Kingston University) in London 2017. She is the author of *Practices of Relations in Task-Dance and the Event-Score: A Critique of Performance* (Routledge 2021) and the editor of *Objects of Feminism* (2017) together with Maija Timonen and she writes art criticism regularly for *Kunstkritikk* and dance criticism for *Dagens Nyheter*.

