

SEEING WITHOUT A SEER
Friday 21 September 2018

09.00 Doors open / Coffee
09.30 Welcome and introduction
09.40 Lecture by Henk Oosterling + Q & A
10.30 Visual case study by Hiryczuk/ Van Oevelen + Q & A
11.00 Coffee break
11.20 Lecture by Adam Loughnane + Q & A
12.00 Frank van der Stok in conversation with Toril Johannessen & Marjolijn Dijkman
12.20 Lunch
13.10 Visual case study by Alena Alexandrova + Q & A
13.50 Visual case study by Tuula Närhinen + Q & A
14.20 Basje Boer in conversation with Martine Stig
14.40 Coffee break
15.00 Introduction open space sessions
15.30 Open space session I
16.00 Open space session II
16.30 Conclusions open space sessions
17.00 Resume of the day by Ali Shobeiri
17.15 Drinks
18.30 Special screening of *The Invention and Conclusion of the Eye*, an audio play by Toril Johannessen, with an introduction by the artist

Alena Alexandrova (b. 1975) is a cultural theorist and an independent curator based in Amsterdam. She teaches at the Fine Arts and the Photography departments of the Gerrit Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam. Currently she is writing a book titled *Anarchic Infrastructures: Re-Casting the Archive, Displacing Chronologies*. She is the author of *Breaking Resemblance: The Role of Religious Motifs in Contemporary Art* (Fordham University Press, 2017) and regularly contributes to art publications and catalogues. Alexandrova curated a sequence of exhibitions exploring the conceptual figure of “anarcheology” in the practices of present-day artists. She holds a doctoral degree from the University of Amsterdam.

Basje Boer (b. 1980) is a writer and journalist. Having been educated as a photographer, she currently focuses mainly on writing. She has published a collection of short stories, *Kiestoon* (De Arbeiderspers, 2006) and a novel, *Bermuda* (Nijgh & Van Ditmar, 2016). A new novel called *Nulversie* will be published by Nijgh & Van Ditmar in January 2019. Boer writes essays on film and pop culture, mainly for *De Groene Amsterdammer*, and she has worked on several projects combining text and images, with visual artists including Ruth van Beek (at a residency at Kunsthuis SYB), Mariken Wessels and Marleen Sleeuwits.

Marjolijn Dijkman (b. 1978) is an artist based in Brussels. Her interdisciplinary works can be seen as a form of science-fiction; partly based on facts but brought into the realm of fiction, abstraction and speculation. Exhibitions include solo shows at The Munch Museum (with Toril

Johannessen), Oslo (2018); ICA, London (2015); IKON Gallery Birmingham (2011), the Berkeley Art Museum (2010); and international group shows such as the 21st Biennale of Sydney (2018), the 11th Shanghai Biennial (2016) and the 8th Sharjah Biennial (2007). Dijkman is co-founder of Enough Room for Space, Brussels.

Hiryczuk/ Van Oevelen is a collaboration between artists Elodie Hiryczuk (b. 1977) and Sjoerd van Oevelen (b. 1974). Both studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy (Amsterdam) and respectively the Sandberg Institute (Amsterdam) and the AA Architectural Association (London). They experimentally explore how photography influences our understanding of the world. In addition to making art, they write and publish essays on their blog *The Detached Gaze* and in magazines such as *Philosophy of Photography* (UK) and *EXTRA Magazine* (BE/NL). Hiryczuk/ Van Oevelen have had exhibitions at *Unseen Amsterdam* (2017); *Brad Wolff Projects*, Amsterdam (2016); *DordtYart*, Dordrecht (2013) and *Contemporary Istanbul* (2012). They are currently tutors at *AKI ArtEZ Academy of Art and Design*, Enschede. Hiryczuk and Van Oevelen are co-founders of *Radical Reversibility*.

Steven Humblet (b. 1970) is a writer and art critic with a focus on photography. He studied philosophy and Social and Cultural Anthropology at the KU Leuven (BE). He regularly writes for magazines like *De Witte Raaf*, *DW B*, *Ons Erfdeel*, *Etcentera*, *EXTRA Magazine* and *Camera Austria*. Humblet is member of *Thinking Tools*, a research group at the University of Antwerp that focusses on questions like 'how does

'the photographic' manifests itself in contemporary art and photography.

Toril Johannessen (b. 1978) is an artist based in Tromsø (NO). Ways of seeing — and not seeing — are recurring themes in Johannessen's artistic practice. Combining historical records with fiction and her own investigations, her works often contain elements of storytelling in visual or written form. Exhibitions include solo shows at *The Munch Museum* (with Marjolijn Dijkman), Oslo (2018); *AroS*, Aarhus (2017); and *Museum of Contemporary Art Oslo* (2016) and international group shows such as the *13th Dak'Art Biennale de Dakar* (2018); the *13th Istanbul Biennial* (2013) and *Documenta 13* (2012).

Henk Oosterling (b. 1952) is a philosopher and a strategic advisor. He studied philosophy, linguistics and Japanese in Leiden and Rotterdam. Since 1985 he has taught courses in dialectic philosophy, French 'philosophy of difference' and intercultural philosophy and has been Associate Professor since 2001. He is the Secretary of the Dutch-Flemish Union for Intercultural Philosophy, coordinator of the Centre for Philosophy and Arts, and chairman of the Dutch Aesthetics Federation. He is the initiator of several cultural and social projects, including *Rotterdam Skill City*. His latest book 'Waar geen wil is, is een weg' published in 2016, proposes to look anew at the differences and similarities between Asian and Western thought.

Martine Stig (b. 1972) is an artist based in Amsterdam. She studied photography at the Royal Academy of Fine Art (The Hague) and

philosophy at the University of Amsterdam. Photography itself is the locus of Martine Stig's work. The voyeuristic act: photography (verb) and the autonomic product: photo (noun). Whilst using photography she researches the role of the medium in the perception of reality. Her most recent book *Noir* was released in November 2016 (Fw: books, Amsterdam). Her work has been shown at a.o. *Unseen Festival*, Amsterdam (2017); *Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam* (2015) and *Aperture Foundation, NYC* (2015). She is currently tutor at the Master Institute AKV St. Joost, Den Bosch and researcher at Caradt, Centre of Applied Research for Art, Design and Technology at Avans University of Applied Sciences, Breda. Stig is co-founder of *Radical Reversibility*.

Adam Loughnane is lecturer in Philosophy at University College Cork and co-director of the Irish Institute of Japanese Studies. His research and teaching centre on the phenomenological and aesthetic traditions of Europe and Asia. Focusing mostly on French and Japanese philosophies, Adam explores themes relating to phenomenological accounts of motion, perception, and expression, intercultural philosophical methodology, and non-theistic conceptions of faith. He has recently completed a book, «Nishida and Merleau-Ponty: Artistic Expression as 'Motor-Perceptual faith'» (SUNY Press, 2019).

Tuula Närhinen (b. 1967) is a visual artist based in Helsinki (FI). Her works explore the pictorial agency of natural phenomena such as water and wind. Re-adapting instruments derived from natural sciences, Närhinen has developed methods for

letting trees trace the shape of wind on their branches and found techniques that enable the waves of the sea to inscribe themselves on paper. Närhinen holds a Doctorate of Fine Arts (DFA) from the University of the Arts Helsinki. She is a graduate of the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts (MFA), and the Helsinki University of Technology (M.Sc. in Architecture).

Ali Shobeiri (b. 1984) is a visual culture theorist. He is currently Assistant Professor of Photography at Leiden University and lecturer of Cultural Studies at Radboud University of Nijmegen. Shobeiri aspires to propose the notion of 'placial aesthetic' through the triangulation of the fields of philosophy, photography and geography. He functioned as a guest editor for the online journal *Depth of Field* (scherptediepte.eu) at Leiden University, and co-organized the international conference *Animation and Memory* at Radboud University (2017).

Frank van der Stok (1967) is an advisor, writer, tutor and intermediary for artists, institutions and academies. He also works as an editor and producer of artists' books. Van der Stok studied art history in Leiden. He was a staff member at *Fotomania Gallery*, Rotterdam (1989-2000). Van der Stok curated the show *Lest we Forget* at *Zeeuws Museum*, Middelburg (2015) and the festival *To be Continued* for the Dutch Doc Days at Central Museum, Utrecht (2011). He initiated the independent research-programme *The Past in the Present*, which culminated in the show and publication *Questioning History* (2009). Van der Stok is co-founder of *Radical Reversibility*.

Alena Alexandrova
Portraits in Reverse: Few Notes on Empathy and Entropy

The surface of images is always double, and the same counts for visual experience. Photography as a medium is especially attuned to, and capable of creating and reflecting on this double surface. It captures, freezes the world and its visual texture into its perfect semblance and invites a particular kind of empathetic response. But extreme mimesis can also articulate itself into an act of mimicry, of blending with the immediate environment and disappearing in plain sight. The erasure of the distinction between figure and ground entangles our gaze in the effort to make a distinction, to see, to identify, to be certain. From empathy to entropy, from the family photograph and the selfie, to conceptual photography and the way it thinks its own conditions, from surface and pattern, to portraits of sleep, and blindness, the mask, to the photographic archive, and the atlas as its animation; all these photographic gestures articulate forms of visual thinking and invite strange form of empathy with images that simultaneously draw and resist the gaze.

Hiryczuk/ Van Oevelen
Looking with a detached gaze

In relation to Nishida's concept of "seeing without a seer" artist's duo Hiryczuk/ Van Oevelen will present visual case studies from their current research on the detached gaze. They will explore, for example, the relations between San Shui (water-stone) ink paintings from 15th century China and paintings by Cézanne. From a trans-cultural perspective they will also address the ap-

paratus of photography and the system of representation inherent to lens-based media. As an alternative for the often rigid division between subject and object they will propose a way of looking - with media - that allows for new forms of world-making.

Henk Oosterling
Are you refl(a)ctively interested?

In exploring ideas about a "self-seeing world" we cover a vast landscape of 'options', from the religious via the mathematical to the digital by diffusing our gaze on different scales: global/local and mind/body. After presenting very briefly this historical overview Oosterling aims at an intercultural comparison of Eastern and Western options. He relates the core concepts of the 'in between' or 'inter' of French thinkers of difference like Foucault, Derrida, and Deleuze/Guattari to basic Japanese notion of 'basho' and 'ma' as a time/space interval in which agency is defined completely different. Referring to the work of Nishida, who develops a variation of hegelian zennism, and combining this with architectural options of Isozaki and digital options of Derrick De Kerckhoven, the present director of the McLuhan Institute, he will broaden our definition of thinking and seeing as a strictly mental activity by situating this discussion in the paradigmatic shift our culture is entangled in: from a pyramidal, hierarchical focus (topdown/bottomup) to a transversal network orientation (transversal/circular). In arguing that technology has torn apart our perception, he will plea for a medial enlightenment in which seeing is revalued.

Adam Loughnane
«Seeing Without a Seer»
and the Obstructions
of Artistic Motion and
Perception

In this presentation, Loughnane explores the concept «seeing without a seer» by placing it in the broader framework of Nishida's attempt to develop his ontology of "Basho". Doing so affords an expansion of the concept beyond the visual to encompass not just the perceiving body, but also the moving expressive body. Construed as such according to its "motor-perceptual" implications, the concept can be critically evaluated vis-a-vis other philosophical systems influencing Nishida, including the Buddhist and European "Continental" traditions. This encounter discloses limitations of the concept specifically regarding the "obstructions," which impede full realization of seeing without a seer. These obstructions are discussed regarding their potential for informing and expanding the motor-perceptual dynamics of artistic expression.

Tuula Närhinen
Phenomenotechnique
in Visual Art Practice
 – a hands-on approach

Tuula Närhinen's projects examine the inherent visual potential in naturally occurring events. She has constructed visual interfaces that enable us to move beyond the explicit and to grasp the unfurling of a world invisible to the naked eye. Empiric and experimental methods are at the core of the inquiry. Närhinen's talk focuses on tracings and (photo)graphic recordings. She considers the role of various inscribing apparatuses in a process that allows natural phenomena to manifest themselves. The installations showcase the

DIY instruments implicated, encouraging the spectator to participate in the re-presentation of an event.

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