

# CHEurope

Critical Heritage Studies and the Future of Europe\_Towards an integrated, interdisciplinary and transnational training model in cultural heritage research and management

## **Report on the JRS no. 2 “*Doing Critical Heritage: Issues, Methodologies, Challenges*”**

Organized by the Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture  
University of Amsterdam – 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> January 2018

**ESRs:** Khaled Elsamman, Katie O’Donoghue, Lukasz Bugalski, Mela Zuljevic, Vittoria Caradonna, William Illsley, Nermin Elsherif, Maria Lika Hattori, Hannah Smyth, Nevena Markovic, Carlotta Capurro, Marcella Jaramillo, Janna Oud Ammerveld, Moniek Driesse, Anne Beeksm

**Supervisors:** Kristian Kristiansen, Gian Giuseppe Simeone, Rob van der Laarse, Robin Boast, Chiara de Cesari

**Keynote lectures:** Chris Whitehead, Mieke Bal, Rob van der Laarse, Haidy Geismar

**Respondents:** Susannah Eckersley, Ihab Saloul, Chiara de Cesari, Robin Boast

**Panel presentations:** Wayne Modest, Sara Giannini, Annemarie de Wildt, Francesca Lanz, Christiane Bosman, Marlous Willemsen

**Student assistant:** Inge Molenaar

### **Topic of the seminar:**

The Second Joint Research Seminar of the CHEurope project was held in Amsterdam (16<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> January 2018) putting together academics and practitioners from the fields of heritage and museum studies.

The question at the center of this JRS was: What does it mean to ‘do’ critical heritage today? Together with the invited speakers, we reflected on the issues and challenges related to studying and producing heritage, as well as which methodologies can best serve us during our research journey.

During the seminar, the CHEurope PhD candidates attended a range of lectures, seminars, and panel discussions, and visited a number of museums and heritage sites. Through these conversations, they were exposed to key theories and methods in critical heritage studies, approached from diverse perspectives.

## Program

### ESRs presentations:

15 ESRs discussed their current progress in 25 minute slots allocated for their presentations and feedback from the invited speakers.

### Keynote lectures:

The seminar program included 4 key lectures, convened by guest speakers and followed by a discussion with selected respondents and the ESRs.

- 1) Rob van der Laarse, opening keynote on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January on the topic: *“Curating ghostly spaces: campscaapes and cities of loss”*. In his lecture Rob focused on the ‘heritage of loss’ of campscaapes and ‘cities without Jews’, raising the question of what the preservation and historical reenactments taking place in such sites might mean for urban memory in a context of Europeanization and rising populist nationalism.
- 2) Chris Whitehead on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> on the topic: *“Critical, Playful, Plural Heritages: Negotiating perspectives on urban memoryscapes”*. In this talk Chris outlined some recent projects he has worked on in Istanbul. In particular, he addressed the questions of how we can “experience, traverse, read, rethink, and perhaps represent” complex, distributed memoryscapes.
- 3) Mieke Bal on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January on the topic: *“Shocking into Ec-stasy: How to Bring Art to Live (and its visitor with it). Mixing media, chronology, temporality, and material conditions”*. Drawing from her recent experience of guest curator at the Munch Museum in Oslo, Mieke offered her insight on curatorship as a way of ‘mixing modes of being with art’ to, this way, radically change museum culture.
- 4) Haidy Geismar on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January on the topic of *“Five ways to think about Digital Cultural Heritage”*. In her talk Haidy presented five frameworks for understanding digital collections, using them to develop a methodological and conceptual framework to advance our understanding of this complex social, technical, political and material field.

### Panel discussions:

- 1) On Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January Wayne Modest, head of the Research Centre of Material Culture at the Museum of World Cultures (Tropenmuseum Amsterdam), Annemarie de Wildt, curator of the Amsterdam Museum, and Sara Giannini semiotician and independent curator reflected on the meanings and challenges behind the curation of a specific type of difficult heritage, that of colonialism. This panel was chaired by Chiara de Cesari.
- 2) On Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January, the ESRs together with Chiara de Cesari and Rob van der Laarse attended the screening of *“I is Somebody Else”*, artist Julieta Garcia Vasquez’s film about her work in the neighborhood of Woensel West in Eindhoven. The film chronicled the difficult gestation of a project aimed at preserving the memories of the people of this historically working class district scheduled for demolition. Christiane Bosman from the curatorial collective TAAK, Marlous

Willemsen director of the heritage organization Imagine IC and Francesca Lanz from the Politecnico di Milano opened the panel which became a lively conversation after the screening.

**Sites visits and collateral activities:**

1) On Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January, the ESRs were invited to participate in the CoHERE meeting at the Amsterdam Tropenmuseum. CoHERE is an EU-funded Horizon2020 research project that explores the ways in which identities in Europe are constructed through heritage representations and performances. After attending the presentations of the CoHERE Work Packages (WP), the ESRs met as a working group to reflect on the ideas and themes discussed during the meeting, with two tasks: first, to provide a response, to look at “CoHERE from the outside”; second, to relate what they heard to our own research challenges.

2) On Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January the ESRs were led through the collections of the Amsterdam Museum by curator Annemarie de Wildt. During the tour ESRs were able to raise questions, while Annemarie presented her own work and the challenges she experienced throughout the years she has been developing exhibitions for the museum.

3) On Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> the ESRs attended a guided tour of the National Holocaust Museum and Hollandsche Schouwburg.

4) On Friday 16<sup>th</sup> the ESRs along with Kristian Kristiansen and Chiara de Cesari took part in the Black Heritage boat tour, during which Giovanni Finisie and Dienke Hondius (VU University) discussed the presence (and absence) of traces of Amsterdam’s colonial past within the city.