

Æstetisk Seminar

*Æstetisk Seminar er tilrettelagt af Anette Vandsø og Niclas Nørby Jochumsen Hundahl,
Institut for Kommunikation og Kultur, Aarhus Universitet*

Robin James

Good Vibes Only: Phenomenology, Algorithms, and the Politics of Legitimation

This talk attends to the relationship between biopower's quantitative and qualitative dimensions. My previous work demonstrated the ways sound, as a frequency, was used to translate statistical normalization, or the measurement of the most frequent frequencies in a population, into qualitative terms. This book argues that phenomenological orientation or horizon has a similar function in contexts such as recommender algorithms and the density models used in contemporary AI and Machine Learning where probability is modeled as something other than a normalized distribution. Phenomenology is uniquely well-suited to theorize these models that as Amoore, Cooper, Joque, and others have argued, blend hard math with subjective intuition, as (per philosophers like Shiloh Whitney), phenomenology, unlike affect theory, rejects the strict separation between what we can very loosely call "mind" and "body" (cognitive content and felt sense). These mathematical models have been vernacularized as "vibes", which are qualitative categories that everyone from 2020s social media users to music streaming services use to define the same sorts of orientations or tendencies that vectors model mathematically. "Vibes" are a lay term for more or less the same phenomenon philosophers call phenomenological orientations or horizons.

Torsdag den 30. april 2026, Kl. 14:15-16:00

Kasernen, bygning 1584, lokale 124

Alle er velkomne/All are welcome