

Aesthetic Seminar

Spring 2021

*All talks are held Thursdays 14:15-16:00
Due to the Covid-19 pandemic all lectures are transmitted on Zoom*

*If circumstances allow, we will locate them at
Aarhus University or Kunsthall Aarhus as well.
Venues then to be announced.*

*Seminars are organized by Jacob Lund and Jacob Wamberg
on behalf of the School of Communication and Culture, Aarhus University*

April 8 - Sarah Wilson

Sign up link: <https://events.au.dk/aestheticseminar-sarahwilson/signup>

Comparative vandalism: The ambit and ambition of incorrigible Asger Jorn.

April 22 - Ida Bencke

Sign up link: <https://events.au.dk/aestheticseminar-idabencke/signup>

The Art of Care: Regenerative Aesthetics, vulnerability as resistance and the alter-institution

What may it mean to take seriously the entanglements and vulnerability of bodies and ecosystems, and cultivate curatorial and artistic practices concerned with questions of recuperation and care? How to situate and consolidate knowledge within local epistemologies and become response-able to place, while staying with the trouble of the planetary, the ongoing violences of coloniality and global, social injustices? And what does it mean for care to operate beyond the reproduction of the status quo, to become radical, an apparatus of resistance? With this talk, Ida Bencke will discuss the potentials – and problems – of employing concepts and methodologies of regeneration and care within speculative practices. The talk will look at artistic methodologies concerned with encounters between precarity and collectivity, and the nurturing of alliances across knowledges, privileges and bodies. It will ask how we may come to tackle questions of inequity and justice within environmental discourses, and foster an (alter) institutional ethos of solidarity.

May 6 - Lea Laura Michelsen

Sign up link: <https://events.au.dk/aestheticseminarlealauramichelsen/signup>

Queer Masks: On Zach Blas' Art of Disappearing in an Age of Biometric Surveillance

Digital biometric systems are characterized by operating beyond human perception, sub-perceptively, non-sensibly. This presentation unfolds a contextualized aesthetic analysis of various biometric masks created by Zach Blas—masks that, in different ways, *make sensible* and critically challenge the non-sensible operations of biometrics through building what we may understand as queer aesthetic communities with heterogeneous participants. Otherwise invisible forms of surveillance and data processing are drawn within the domain of human perception and cognition, whereby critical contemplation and public debate is potentially engendered. The presentation focuses specifically on Blas' so-called 'fag face mask' and his face cages, which are found in the projects *Facial Weaponization Suite* (2011-14), *Face Cages* (2013-16), and *SANCTUM* (2018) respectively. Blas' work is investigated as *aesthetic practice* in the sense that extra-artistic dimensions of his mask are considered part of the object of analysis. Blas' projects typically materialize in regular artworks while at the same time being

based on broader aesthetic, collective, and often didactic investigations. His masks are therefore explored not only in their exhibited context of multi-media art installations, but also as they travel into and between other aesthetic forms—performance lectures and performances broadly speaking (including public interventions), artistic essays, research articles, conversations, interviews and the like.

May 18 (NB Tuesday) - Anselm Franke

Sign up link: <https://events.au.dk/aestheticseminaranselmfranke/signup>

Contemporary Art and Cosmology

Does modern/contemporary art have a cosmology? Or is the “modern” in modernism defined by its negative and alienated relation to cosmological functions, the latter understood in the anthropological sense as a complex set of beliefs and practices pertaining to the place of the human in the order of the cosmos? This lecture seeks to critically engage with the genealogy of the modern by looking at practices and domains that in the process of modernization have been marked as pre- or non-modern. It will engage with the split between knowledge, belief and art as an isolated sphere and discuss how these distinctions and the discursive rules that uphold them are coming under pressure with the quest for decolonial knowledge as well as the demise of liberalism and its promises.

May 27 - Kim West

Sign up link: <https://events.au.dk/aestheticseminarkimwest/signup>

TBA

Bios:

Sarah Wilson

is Professor of the History of Modern and Contemporary art at the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London. Recent publications include *The Visual World of French Theory: Figurations* (Yale, 2010) and *Picasso/Marx and socialist realism in France* (Liverpool, 2013). She was principal curator of *Paris, Capital of the Arts, 1900-1968* (Royal Academy London, Guggenheim Bilbao, 2002-3) and *Pierre Klossowski* (Whitechapel Art Gallery, 2006), and co-curator of the First Asian Biennale/Fifth Guangzhou Triennale, Guangzhou, China. She was appointed Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres in 1997 and in 2015 received the AICA International award for distinguished contribution to art criticism. Her trip to Aarhus with Guy Atkins at the beginning of her professional career led to her first public lecture on Asger Jorn and Cobra.

Ida Bencke

holds an MA in Comparative Literature. For the last decade, she has worked with experimental publishing, and the self-organized art scene in Berlin, Copenhagen and beyond. Her curatorial work spans experimental exhibition formats, interdisciplinary methodologies and speculative feminist aesthetics. Her recent projects investigate multispecies solidarities, epistemologies of repair and insurgent m/otherhood. Research interests include radical practices of mourning and joy, rest and resistance. In 2020, she co-curated the art biennial alt_cph, *Patterns in Resistance* at Fabrikken for Kunst og Design. She is co-founder of the Laboratory for Aesthetics and Ecology.

Lea Laura Michelsen

is a PhD fellow in the department of Aesthetics and Culture, Aarhus University, Denmark. Her current research project is titled *The Art of Disappearing* and investigates contemporary articulations of disappearance in a context of biometric surveillance within what is broadly conceptualized as *aesthetic practices*. It focuses on various forms of *masks* developed by Hito Steyerl, Zach Blas, and Heather Dewey-Hagborg. Michelsen was a visiting researcher in the Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London in 2019. Earlier, she worked at the Museum of Contemporary Art and at the National Gallery of Art in Copenhagen.

Anselm Franke

is a curator and writer. Since 2013 he has been the Head of the Department of Visual Arts and Film at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, where he co-curated the multi-year program "The Anthropocene Project" (2013-2014) and "Kanon-Fragen" (2016-2019), and conceived numerous exhibitions such as recently *Neolithic Childhood: Art in a False Present ca. 1930* (together with Tom Holert) and *Parapolitics: Cultural Freedom and the Cold*

War (with Paz Guevara, Nida Ghouse and Antonia Majaca). He was the chief curator of the Taipei Biennial in 2012 and of the Shanghai Biennale in 2014. His publications include *2 or 3 Tigers* (2017, ed. with Hyunjin Kim), *Forensis* (2015, ed. with Eyal Weizman et al.) and *Animism* (ed. 2010)."

Kim West

is a critic and researcher, based in Stockholm. He holds a PhD in Aesthetics from Södertörn University, with a thesis on the development of the contemporary exhibitionary complex. He has published extensively in Sweden and internationally, and is an art critic for the Nordic online arts journal *Kunstkritikk*. He is currently convening a collaborative project on the Aesthetics of the Popular Fronts, which seeks to recover a tradition of anti-fascist resistance and experimentation for the present.