

NECSUS Editorial Board

## Editorial Necsus

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## Editorial Necsus

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This year marks the tenth anniversary of NECS (European Network of Cinema and Media Studies), one of the key organisations that co-established and continues to support NECSUS. Founded in Berlin in February 2006, NECS has grown into a large network of media studies academics and researchers in and beyond Europe. The launch of the first issue of NECSUS at the 2012 NECS conference in Lisbon was a key part of the movement to strengthen the connections between media studies academics as well as the different strands in media studies scholarship. We would like to open this issue by congratulating NECS on the occasion of the anniversary and wish the best to the whole community for our continued collaboration.

The Spring 2016 features section contains articles covering a wide range of topics in cinema and media studies, reflecting not only on the objects themselves but also on how the objects change by the way we study them. Clara Miranda Scherffig discusses the notion of the remake using the work of filmmakers Chantal Akerman and John Smith. Volker Pantenburg explores how videographic criticism enables a more detailed examination of camera movements. Robert Sinnerbrink uses two documentaries on Jacques Derrida to argue how these ‘photobiographies’ both – albeit quite differently – render ‘thinking through film’ visible. Wim Staat provides an alternative interpretation of the modern Hollywood classic *The Right Stuff* by perceiving the film through different generic frameworks. The features section also includes two dialogues between media studies scholars. Geert Lovink interviews media theorist Sebastian Giessmann on the history and possible decline of the social network. Catherine Grant and Jaap Kooijman enter a conversation with film scholar Richard Dyer about key themes in

his work and award-winning career. This latter conversation was held in front of a live audience as a special event at King's College London in April 2016.

While big data research centres were becoming a given in the humanities, Sean Cubitt wrote (in the NECSUS Spring 2013 issue) that there are very productive research methods at the other end of the spectrum, and that using '[t]he anecdotal method does not imply abandoning other tools'. We were reminded of Cubitt's words while preparing the special section on 'Small data' for this issue. Cubitt lucidly commented on the famous conundrum of observing the earth by satellite, stating that

the higher the resolution, the less information we have about the location imaged. The extremely high resolution of the anecdotal method provides depth and colour to the generalist findings of methods that deal with multiple instances and large-scale tendencies.

In the light of such big data research we feel it is relevant again to acknowledge the special powers of the small and the anecdotal. As Cubitt suggested:

[a]necdotes test such large hypotheses against the unique qualities of artworks and experiences. The anecdotal method does not abandon the project of making statements about larger, more abstract formations like 'society' or 'cinema' – it grounds them in the specific instance. (see Cubitt's essay 'Anecdotal Evidence')

By focusing on 'Small data' we intend to complement the current, very relevant, and important scientific trend of quantitative research with an exploration and discussion of qualitative analyses of film, television, and new media, which provide research with 'depth and color'. Research in the humanities, from hermeneutics and close reading all the way to ideological analysis and deconstruction, has always relied on a heightened attention to detail – a microscopic attention to the miniscule that is nevertheless foundational for generating meaning.

In the 'Small data' special section Anirban Gupta-Nigam contemplates the philosophical underpinnings of data and not 'fitting in'. Pepita Hesselberth and Maria Poulaki theorize a compact cinematics in their essay, which we are publishing as an exclusive preview of their forthcoming edited anthology on the subject. Valentina Re examines the aesthetics of title sequences in contemporary television series. Anna Wiehl surveys the small worlds of Korsakow documentaries. Finally, Jacek Smolicki and Alberto

Friigo offer a minor data manifesto from the perspective of practicing artists-researchers.

The exhibition review section follows the theme 'Small data' with a contribution by Joo Yun Lee on Ryoji Ikeda's *show micro | macro* and the way the artist utilises data aesthetics in visualizing knowledge. The section is further rounded out by Olivia Eriksson and Adeena Mey with essays on recent exhibitions of Akram Zaatari and Yuri Ann respectively. The festival review section presents Aida Vallejo with a double review of IDFA and CPH:DOX, perhaps the two most significant documentary film festivals in Europe. Sonia Tascón continues with the documentary theme by focusing on a human rights film festival in Birmingham (England). Prince Bubacarr Aminata Sankanu keeps the spotlight on the United Kingdom with his study of Scotland's Africa in Motion film festival. The book review section includes Anne Gre Wabeke with a double focus on recent television studies publications and Najmeh Moradiyan Rizi covering new media studies in Asia and the Arab world.

In the Autumn 2014 issue we introduced an audiovisual essay section edited by Cristina Álvarez López and Adrian Martin. In early 2016 Cristina and Adrian stepped down from their roles as founding section editors to pursue other projects. Their work has been essential for establishing this exciting new section of our journal and we thank them for their significant contributions. Moving forward the audiovisual essay section will be distinguished by the work of various guest editors. We begin this new era in this issue with the film critic and journal editor Dana Linssen as our guest editor. Linssen co-curates the revived Critics' Choice program of the International Film Festival Rotterdam. The new iteration of this festival program is marked by invited critics introducing selected films with an audiovisual essay they have authored for the occasion. For this issue Linssen has assembled a selection of outstanding audiovisual essays from the 2016 edition of Critics' Choice. All of these works are making their online premieres with NECSUS. The essayists include Paula Albuquerque with a piece that deftly repurposes webcam footage, Juan Daniel Molero with a densely-layered montage of film clips, and Hugo Emmerzael with a biographical study on the iconic actor Helmut Berger. The theme of Critics' Choice 2016 was 'Whose Cinema?', in response to the often difficult process that audiovisual essayists must face when navigating and sourcing content that is often controlled by third parties. This theme happens to also be of continuing rele-

vance for NECSUS as we stand committed to open access policies and making our work accessible to *everyone, everywhere*.

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