

# INTERVENTIONS

Wednesday, 31 July 2013  
Corner College  
Kochstrasse 1, Zürich

Interventions is an informal and open symposium that allows scholars and thinkers to present their recently finished work and their work in progress. Interventions thrives on the unexpected juxtapositions and clashes that result from addressing a wide range of philosophical and political issues such as autonomy, economy, finitude, aporias, capitalism, and many more. Interventions does not limit itself to a specific discipline and welcomes all intriguing papers from Switzerland and abroad.

## SCHEDULE

14:30 TBA. *Peter Price*  
15:15 first person view: overserving. imitating. implying. imagining. *Balz Isler*  
16:00 A Bibliography of Emotions. *Deneige Nadeau*  
16:45 Hard Eyes, Myopic Eyes and Weeping Eyes: Cixous and Derrida. *Dennis Schep*  
17:30 Vulnerability as Quotidian Intervention. *Cara Judea Alhadeff*  
18:15 Preparing for the Bottleneck: Wall-E and the Management of Human Finitude. *John Calvelli*  
19:00 and onward: barbecue at Corner College

## ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

14:30  
TBA  
Peter Price

Abstract: to be announced.

*Peter Price is a composer, digital artist, and media theorist. He co-directs thefidget space in Philadelphia, a research laboratory for new forms of art, performance, and media and is a Professor of music philosophy at the European Graduate School in Switzerland. He is the author of Resonance: Philosophy for Sonic Art (Atropos Press, 2011).*

15:15  
**first person view: overserving. imitating. implying. imagining.**  
Balz Isler

“We design and promote our lives digitally in the most desirable way. We establish new realities re-enacting the ideal striving to be unique!”

A massive traffic of images leads to a reorientation of our senses. Images have always influenced our development, yet I question in my observation of today’s personal representation through modern media to

what extend the reality and experiences of others can become one's own without ever having personally experienced whatever represented.

More and more narrations in form of images and videos are circulating, which are told from an “ego perspective”—a first person view. This perspective is among others manifested through documentation with personal mobile devices. In such documentations the producer often stays present and whether or not intentionally, there are references to an arm or a leg of the person documenting. As a viewer it kind of gives me the feeling of being in the body of the other having a “real-time” experience.

In my artistic work I look to this tendency and consult these images trying to understand their analogy in a pictorial context.

*Balz Isler is a thinker, musician, performer and stimulator. Visual and acoustic fragments are rearranged to form new relations through strategies of assembly, repetition and projection. With the application of voice and its digital replica, Balz Isler communicates personal thoughts about the “world behind the world” embedded in the images. His artistic work entangles the physical and subjective experience with the flood of digital images in abstract ideas, which implicate an endlessness of subjective perception, experience and navigation.*

16:00

### **A Bibliography of Emotions**

Deneige Nadeau

“How do we inhabit the histories we inherit?”

— Donna Haraway

How do we inhabit a history of erasure? Of lives lived but not written? As part of a larger exploration/contemplation on the erasure of women, this project seeks to think through/with a politics of emotion, utilizing affect, feminist and queer theories to consider emotions and the erasure/eradication of feeling(s). An exploration of how one might cite theory in our navigation of emotional attachment(s) and how our attachments, always contingent on emotional exchanges, might inform our means of making meaning in the world. This project seeks to make room for/conceive of a visceral/embodied knowledge that transcends reason and the ever fraught relationship of how we think and how we feel, or being an academic and being a body in the world.

*Deneige Nadeau currently resides on the unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, more commonly known as Vancouver, British Columbia. She holds a BFA in Visual Arts from Emily Carr University of Art + Design and is an MA candidate at the European Graduate School.*

16:45

### **Hard Eyes, Myopic Eyes and Weeping Eyes: Cixous and Derrida**

Dennis Schep

The texts of Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida are inscribed in a body of work that questions many of the presuppositions underlying traditional autobiographical writing. Nevertheless, both authors have repeatedly incorporated a discourse of self-presentation in their theoretical and literary works. In my contribution, I will focus on Cixous' short text “Savoir” (in which she discusses her myopia) and Derrida's *Mémoires d'aveugle* (in which he describes his facial paralysis). Considering the central importance of sight in the dominant epistemology of the West, the introduction of a blind or myopic body is not without significance for the

autobiographical subject emerging in these texts, nor for the encompassing theoretical projects. Where autobiography is traditionally understood as self-exposure (often framed in sight-related terms, as in Rousseau's "Je me suis montré tel que je fus"), Cixous and Derrida allow us to grasp the constitutive blindness that first makes it possible to see ourselves. While the limits to self-knowledge are addressed at length in their more theoretical writings, these narratives of blindness perform an epistemological critique that defies strict categorization as either literary or philosophical.

*Dennis Schep (born in the Netherlands in 1985) holds two MA degrees; one in Media and Communications from the European Graduate School in Switzerland, and one in Intercultural Communication Studies from the European University Viadrina in Germany. He is currently a doctoral candidate in Literary Studies at the Free University of Berlin, where he is writing his dissertation on autobiographical fragments in theoretical texts under the supervision of Joseph Vogl. He is the author of Drugs: Rhetoric of Fantasy, Addiction to Truth (Atropos Press, 2011), which examines contemporary drug discourse in relation to the suppression of irrationality in the age of reason. Other research interests include ghosts, metaphor, and the relations between science and literature.*

17:30

### **Vulnerability as Quotidian Intervention**

Cara Judea Alhadeff

The perverse beauty of our biotechnology-addicted digital age lies in its utter ambiguity—a post-humanist roiling of predetermined behavior and unexpected potentialities. My photographs perform the both/and of post-humanism. They inhabit this viscous intermediality precisely because my art practice requires that I use “old-school” photographic technologies (in contrast to the morphogenic capacities implicit in “cutting-edge” technologies—digital utopianism—how we perceive the familiar and unfamiliar now ingrained in institutionalized use of digital technologies). I am not dismissing digital manipulation itself as an art form. Rather, what concerns me is how digital imagery is considered the next frontier, the edge of progress in a vertical hierarchy of imagination—obliterating the infinite possibilities of exploring what already exists, while ignoring both the messiness and the magic of our everyday worlds. My images attempt to perform always-already morphological interventions—incorporating fragmentation as an interventionist modality. Engaging the work of Hannah Arendt, Judith Butler, and Barbara Duden, my essay titled “Vulnerability as Quotidian Intervention” expands a dialectics of pedagogical intervention by reconfiguring our everyday interactions. Ultimately, my intention is to move beyond the question of who is disfigured by whose power, and re-conceptualize that disfigurement as a vibrant and affirmative collaborative social movement.

*Cara Judea Alhadeff is a writer, visual artist, and Iyengar yoga teacher whose work engages embodied theory. Her new transdisciplinary hardcover book, Viscous Expectations: Justice, Vulnerability, The Ob-scene, interconnects critical theory with her photographic imagery. She has published her essays and photographic images in philosophy, art, gender, media, and cultural studies' journals and anthologies. Her work has been the subject of several documentaries for international public television. Alhadeff has exhibited her photographs and performance videos throughout Asia, Europe, and the US. Her work is included in numerous public and private collections. She earned a Ph.D. in Media Philosophy (summa cum laude) from the European Graduate School (EGS) in Saas-Fee, Wallis, Switzerland, and an M.A. in Corporeal Politics from EGS. She lives in Oakland, California.*

18:15

## **Preparing for the Bottleneck: Wall-E and the Management of Human Finitude.**

John Calvelli

The animated film *Wall-E* was released by the Disney Corporation at an auspicious time, one year following the 2007 publication of the International Panel of Climate Change 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report. Even if the the IPCC report was inevitably filtered through the emotional centres of our brains, we were able to understand—possibly for the first time in human history—that the comprehensive management of human endeavour over centuries might lead us toward species extinction. It shouldn't be a surprise: success breeds demise. It is characteristic of the most successful species—like ours—to wipe themselves out through overpopulation, overuse of resources and degradation of their ecosystem.

Humans attempt to manage their relation to the ontic fact of finitude through a multiplicity of diversions, illusions and confrontations. The image, considered both as cognitive construction and visual artifact, is at the core of this process; and the film *Wall-E* is a particularly interesting and illustrative example.

As animation, *Wall-E*'s visual expression is considered and precise, which lends it cognitive power as a mediator of finitude. I'll provide a visual analysis of some of the ways in which this is enabled. Its story—pitting Wall-E, a worker-robot infected by artifacts of human visual and material culture against the luxury spaceship Axiom, whose inhabitants exist in a media-managed ecosystem—uses common tropes of romantic entanglement and heroic victory in order to secure our assent for undertaking the task of meeting our next evolutionary bottleneck.

Among the theoretical frameworks in which *Wall-E* will be discussed will be post-genetic evolutionary theory, Bernard Stiegler's pharmacological critique and Catherine Malabou's philosophical concept of plasticity.

*John Calvelli teaches design history, theory and visual culture at the Alberta College of Art + Design in Calgary, Canada. He received his MFA in visual communication from California Institute of the Arts in 1989 and went on to become the director of The Museum of Modern Art's department of graphic design in New York. He has been teaching since 2002 and is currently pursuing his Ph.D. at the European Graduate School in Saas-Fee, Switzerland. His dissertation is on the image and finitude, under the advisement of Catherine Malabou.*