



International Conference

## **Challenges of Participatory Culture: Methodologies and Perspectives of Research**

**May 12-13, 2016**

### **Paper Abstracts**

*Abigail De Kosnik (University of California, Berkley, USA)*

#### **The Media Crease: Traces of Reuse in Hard and Soft Copies**

My term for the visible traces (glitches, erasures) of the repeated use of a media object is “the media crease.” In this paper, I will examine various forms that media creases have taken in hard and soft copies of media texts. For example, distinct folds in the spine of a paperback novel mark the sections that the book’s owner has re-read numerous times; deepened grooves in a record clearly indicate which songs have been replayed the most.

In digital, or soft, copies of media, repetitious use does not leave a physical trace. But I will argue that the media crease persists in digital culture. Reblogging and retweeting, for instance, constitute relatively new types of traces of repetitious playback and re-viewing. In this investigation of the transformations of the media crease from hard to soft formats, I will argue that media re-use is at the heart of libidinal economies, and that intense and repeated consumptions of media facilitate both opposition to, and critique of, the culture industries – and, increasingly, the capture of users’ data by those industries.

*Mathew Hills (Aberystwyth University, UK)*

#### **The Game is Afoot: Sherlock’s Participatory (and Non-Participatory) Cultures of Transfandom**

As Mizuko Ito has recently noted, “the term ‘participatory culture’ raises the question of what constitutes different levels or forms of engagement” (Jenkins, Ito and boyd 2016: 12). I will explore that very question with reference to the BBC TV programme *Sherlock* (2010—) and its varied fan audiences. Although participatory culture is often assumed to be communal and collective, *Sherlock* has a varied range of UK fans, including those who strongly position the show as an adaptation of Arthur Conan Doyle’s work – acting as “transfans’ who view one fan object though another – and those who view the show as its own distinct narrative universe. Rather than constituting a singular participatory culture, then, such differentiated fandoms contest one another’s (fan-)cultural authority, as well as seeking to mediate their differences. Participation, here, becomes a struggle over what participatory game the “knowing” audience might be playing, or wanting to play – with the possibility of non-participation also arising between these “traditional” and “non-traditional” *Sherlockians* (Stieva 2014).



*Natalia Samutina (IGITI HSE, Moscow, Russia)*

### **Fan Fiction Communities and the Culture of Literature: A Russian Case**

In the paper I am going to discuss perspectives of fan fiction studies, which tend to oscillate between theories of fan fiction as a specific type of literature and studies of particular fan fiction communities, with some examples of textual analysis. I would like to demonstrate the benefits of considering fan fiction writing and reading in the contexts of a broader culture of literature, and argue that fan fiction in different languages is an underestimated source of knowledge about the current specifics of literary cultures in these languages. Taking multi-fandom Russian fan fiction as an example, I will underline several tensions important for the Russian fan fiction and for the understanding of contemporary changes in the Russian culture of literature. The examples include new types of reading and writing, generational gaps and the usage of language, attitude to a romance genre and to the Russian classics epitomized in the figure of “Tolstoyevsky”, zones of deficiency and innovation, etc.

*Ksenia Prasolova (Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, Kaliningrad, Russia)*

### **How to Analyse Audiovisual Translation: Fan Studies Edition**

In my presentation, I will focus on several different dimension of AVT analysis (genre of the source text, mode of translation, organisation of translation processes, quality of the result, competence of the translator), comment on two examples of studies of fan-made AVT, draw clear distinctions between important terms (fan subbing, fan translation, collective/crowdsourced translation, etc.) and propose a methodology for studying audiovisual translation practices in fan communities.

*Abby Waysdorf (Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Netherlands)*

### **I’m ‘Really’ in Hogwarts: Fan Experience in the Wizarding World of Harry Potter**

This paper examines the fan experience of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter (WWOHP) theme park at Universal Studios Orlando. Prior research on theme parks has generally focused on critiques of their form, leading to a limited understanding of their appeal. This article addresses this lack through empirical research, utilizing in-depth interviews with 15 visitors combined with participant observation. I show how WWOHP is understood by its visitors as an adaptation of the series into physical space, via the medium of the theme park, and how the visitor’s experience is shaped through use of ironic imagination. In doing so, I present a new understanding of the immersive media experience of theme parks.

*Mark Duffet (University of Chester, UK)*

### **On the Knowing Field: Cornel West, Curtis Mayfield and Fan Activism**

Most of the discussion about fan activism so far has been led by concepts from fan studies such as moral participatory culture, moral community and cultural acupuncture (see, for example, Brough and Shrestrova 2012; Jenkins 2012). These otherwise useful notions offer a limited view of individual fans in terms of affective motivations and subjectivity. Instead they portray fan bases as relatively uniform groups that act almost automatically, in relative unison, as if a



mobilized as part of anonymous collective. Discussions about politics in celebrity studies, meanwhile, explore and dispute the value of celebrities as political agents (see Corner and Pels 2003; Street 2004; Wheeler 2013). Neither field has offered much attention cases where celebrities have declared their own music fandom in the public sphere. Cornel West is one of America's leading black intellectuals and a prolific contributor to the US national media. Drawing on my concept of fandom as residency on a shared 'knowing field,' this paper considers the way that West has expressed his passion for the soul singer Curtis Mayfield in pursuit of non-violent civil disobedience in aid of human rights.

*Lars Eckstein (University of Potsdam, Germany)*

### **Postcolonial Piracy**

In this paper, I wish to look at participatory culture through the lens of media piracy, with a particular focus on the global South. Piracy, here, is often the only available means of participating in global cultural flows. I will argue how Western discourses on piracy fail to address the complexities of postcolonial media practices. I conclude with a brief analysis of Indian cassette culture to illustrate some of the complexities at stake.

*Alexandra Kolesnik (IGITI HSE, Moscow, Russia)*

### **Warriors of Steel: Russian Heavy Metal Online Communities**

Launched about 15 years ago, the largest Russian heavy metal online platform Mastersland.com had a tremendous impact on the formation of Russian heavy metal communities themselves. Mastersland.com is not focused on a specific rock band or a musician. It is a media platform, where fans discuss their favorite rock bands, post album reviews and concert announcements. Above all, they can communicate with musicians of both new and well-known Russian heavy metal bands. In this context, a discussion on a status of a Russian heavy metal scene and an impact of foreign heavy metal traditions on it became quite remarkable. This long lasting debate largely indicated the borders within the community of Russian metalheads. This paper is focused on the specificity of Russian heavy metal online communities' self-descriptions, based on fans' attitude towards foreign heavy metal music and their communication with Russian heavy metal musicians.

*Anastasia Vyskubina (School of Cultural Studies, HSE, Moscow, Russia)*

### **Music Venues of Moscow: Does Place Matter?**

Popular music has often been promoted as a symbol of fluid and traveling culture. At the same time, however, it is also made within specific local and material settings and it is commonly connected or fixed to a place. Such places may serve as landmarks of specific styles that characterize their audience. In the last thirty years, Moscow has passed through variety of transformations and changes which influenced different spheres of the urban life, including live music. During 90's and 2000's the musical infrastructure and variety of musical spaces were developing within the city. Nevertheless, due to legal, political and economic regulations the majority of such spaces have never been fixed (for a long time). In my case I'm trying to analyze



the process of musical venues' relocation. I'd like to demonstrate how it affects the links between audience, music and place, analyzing the examples of Music and Art Festival "Forma" (Form) and Roadhouse Blues Club (Dom u Dorogy).

*Ellen Rutten (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands)*

### **Sublime Imperfections: Urban Interventions in Post-1989 Europe**

Revamped factories, vintage cafe interiors, glitch art: as advanced digital and production technologies increasingly allow us to perfect everyday life, logic and aesthetics of imperfection thrives across multiple social domains. In fields as varying as design, architecture, literature, (audio-)visual arts, genetics, marketing, psychology, and spatial planning, experts and practitioners today glorify the non-perfected as hallmark for the authentic and sublime.

Sublime Imperfections is an Amsterdam-based research project that examines the current preoccupation with the non-polished. In my talk, I introduce the project, and I use a selection of urban-based 'sublime imperfections' to ask: how can current thinking on participatory and/or post-capitalist cultures help us theorize their status in the cultural economy?

*Fabienne Rachmadiev (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands)*

### **Practice Makes (Im)Perfect: an Introduction to New City-Based Participatory Art**

21st century cities provide artists with a playground for works in which the participation of citizens and time are key elements. Given the varying circumstances these kinds of projects rely on for their fulfilment, they can also 'fail' in their initial intention. In what sense are the unforeseen, the failure, or the imperfect inherent to these practices? In my talk I will give a brief overview of recent art practices that combine these elements of place, time and collaboration. The shifting nature of these art practices calls for new methodological tools, such how does one position an "event" within an art historical narrative, or how does one assess whether an artwork has 'failed'?

*Boris Stepanov (IGITI HSE, Moscow, Russia)*

### **Alternative Nostalgia: Soviet Film Heritage, Internet Communities and New Cinematic Experience**

In the discussion of Post-soviet nostalgia, the set of internet practices which includes the archiving of the Soviet cinema, relevant discussions and user-generated content, seems to be underestimated. Meanwhile we can consider these practices to be an alternative to the commodification of nostalgia in contemporary Russian cinema production (for example, numerous remakes and sequels of famous Soviet films or biographies of Soviet celebrities, such as V.Vysotskiy, V.Harlamov, Yuriy Gagarin, etc.). In this paper I will address the reception of the Soviet science fiction films. My goal is to point out to the frames and practices (archiving, processing, discussion) which determine the new cinematic experience (which in contemporary cinema studies is described as "cult experience" and "cinophilia") of the participants of the internet communities.



*Oksana Moroz (Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, Russia)*

**Direct Action and Other Techniques of Mercy: Animal Rights Detention in Russia**

This report will focus on the transformation of the direct actions techniques, appropriate for Russian animal right activism and borrowed from Western partners. Starting with a small historical reference about post-Soviet state of animal rights movement and relevant modern Russian urban practices, I will use 3 cases to demonstrate the value of digital support this kind of political non-violent struggle is equipped with today. Social and cultural effects (f.e. degree of citizen engagement) of such activity are much more significant and safe, that ones common for former volunteer groups such as bands of mercy. In addition, that activity seems to built types of conflict communication, which in long-term perspective result in increasing of civil culture capacity.

*Oksana Zaporozhets (IGITI HSE, Moscow, Russia)*

**Subway: Loving, Hating and Aging Together with an Iconic Urban Technology**

Being one of the most impressive signs of modernization and urbanization in 20th century, subway still plays an important role in Russian big cities as a means of public transportation, a part of urban imaginary and local identity. Though the subway is a part of various urban experiences, the relations of the urbanites to it is rarely described in terms other than alienation, anxiety or fear. Portraying the subway in “noir style” is not an exception for Urban Studies with their critical attitude to the urban processes. In my presentation I would like to focus on the nuances of “close relationships” between subway and its users, when the subway becomes a part of a spatial biography of urban citizens. I am especially interested in the long-term relationships (more than 50 years), when the changes in personal life are somehow compared to the changes of urban technology. The presentation is based on the ethnographic research conducted in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

*Samuel Merrill (Umeå University, Sweden)*

**BLU Beyond the Buff: From Buenos Aires through Berlin to Bologna**

This paper discusses the recent instances when Italian street artist BLU has buffed and destroyed his own art works in resistance to their commercial re-appropriation and integration with the wider structures of the so-called 'creative city'. It problematizes these instances and the 'lifecycles' of BLU's works by historicising the street artist's relationship with 'the Buff' and digital media, and in relation to the official heritage and museum perspectives that are increasingly calling for the perseveration of street art either in and or out of situ.

*Tykanova Elena (The Sociological institute of the Russian Academy of Science, Saint Petersburg State University, Russia), Khokhlova Anisya (Saint Petersburg State University, Russia)*

**Grassroots Urban Protests: (Non)Participation in Decision-Making on the Futures of City Territories**

This presentation considers two cases of local urban communities in St. Petersburg and Paris struggling against the transformations of urban space: namely against the demolition of



buildings that are of no architectural value but bear considerable historical and commemorative significance for the citizens. Having compared the contestation of these urban territories by local communities representatives, the authors conclude that the course and outcomes of struggle, the extent of citizens participation in the process of urban space fortune and the choice of citizens protests actions depend on the existence or lack of coalitions constituted by construction business and city administration in the structure of urban political regimes and the transformation of municipal political opportunity structure.

*Myrto Tsilimpounidi (Institute for Sociology, Bratislava, Slovakia)*

### **Aesthetics of Crisis: The Streets as Sites of Contestation**

How can we – as social researchers, photographers, flaneurs, activists, and citizens – navigate the streets of a city in a time of crisis? To live in a time of crisis is to be in a constant state of learning about change, and imagining its implications. What, then, is the impact of the crisis on the sociological imagination? What is offered by the visual realm in the move towards different ways of knowing about societies in crisis? In such a context, what is the role of crisis in constituting knowledge, particularly in relation to the constructedness of images? The presentation aims to unpack the complexity of these questions by locating them in empirical investigations in Athens, Greece.

*Margarita Kuleva (Department of Sociology, HSE Campus in St. Petersburg, Russia)*

*Daria Maglevanaya (Department of Sociology, HSE Campus in St. Petersburg, Russia)*

### **Followers or Rebels: Fashion Bloggers between Global Industry and Local Urban Scenes**

The presentation examines the role of fashion bloggers as cultural intermediates in the process of democratization of fashion system. The main research question is whether fashion bloggers as cultural intermediates tend to follow professional community and replicate its hierarchies and choices or rebel against it by creating their owns, and, in this case do they transmit urban communities tastes and styles, and how their choices vary from one city to another? The empirical evidences are based on network data and qualitative content analysis.



## Presenters' Biographies

**Abigail De Kosnik** is an Associate Professor at the University of California, Berkeley with a joint appointment in the Berkeley Center for New Media (BCNM, [bcnm.berkeley.edu](http://bcnm.berkeley.edu)) and in the Department of Theater, Dance & Performance Studies (TDPS, [tdps.berkeley.edu](http://tdps.berkeley.edu)). Her book, *Rogue Archives*, is forthcoming from MIT Press in 2016. She has published articles on media fandom, popular digital culture, and performance studies in *Cinema Journal*, *The International Journal of Communication*, *Modern Drama*, *Transformative Works and Cultures* and elsewhere. She is the co-editor, with Sam Ford and C. Lee Harrington, of the edited essay collection *The Survival of Soap Opera: Transformations for a New Media Era* (University Press of Mississippi, 2011). She and Sam Ford also wrote the annotated bibliography on "Soap Operas" for Oxford Bibliographies Online (OBO).

**Matt Hills** is currently Professor of Film and TV Studies at Aberystwyth University, Wales, although from July 1st 2016 he will be Professor of Media and Journalism at the University of Huddersfield, and co-Director of the newly-formed Centre for Participatory Culture (CenPaC) based there. He is the author of six books, beginning with *Fan Cultures* (2002) and coming up to date with *Doctor Who: The Unfolding Event* (2015). He has published widely on media fandom. Matt is currently working on his seventh book, *Sherlock: Detecting Quality TV*, and is under contract to write his eighth, *Fan Studies*, for Routledge. He is co-editor of the 'Transmedia' book series for Amsterdam University Press.

**Natalia Samutina** is leading researcher at the National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow. She is the Head of the Research Centre for Contemporary Culture at the same institution. During the last few years her research interests have been concentrated on urban popular culture and new media: on fan fiction and online communities, graffiti and street art, popular music, etc.; as well as on the cultural transformations of Post-Soviet city spaces. She is the author of numerous articles and the editor of two books in Russian: *Science-fiction Cinema. Episode One*. M.: New Literary Observer, 2006; *Tsaritsyno: Attractions with History*. M.: New Literary Observer, 2014 (with Boris Stepanov).

**Ksenia Prasolova** is an associate professor at the department of Translation Studies at the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University in Kaliningrad. Her background is in literary scholarship and fan fiction studies, but her long-time passion is audiovisual (read: film) translation. This combination of expertise makes her increasingly frustrated (and equally fascinated) with the gap between the two spheres of knowledge that is most visible in the works on fan subbing/'amateur' translation.

**Abby Waysdorf** is a PhD candidate at Erasmus University Rotterdam, where she is part of the NWO-funded research project *Locating Imagination: An Interdisciplinary Perspective on Literary, Film and Music Tourism*. Her research focuses on film tourism from the perspective of the fan-tourist, looking at the idea of 'being there' in the contemporary media environment. In her spare time she's also interested in sports, television culture, and probably a lot else.



**Dr Mark Duffett** is a Reader in Media and Cultural Studies at the University of Chester where he specializes in researching popular music culture. In 2012 he was keynote speaker at the MARS music conference in Finland. Since then he has presented papers at Oxford University and la Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris, as well as accepting academic invitations to a range of places including Denmark and Hong Kong. Dr Duffett has edited two volumes on music fandom for Routledge: *Popular Music Fandom* (2015) and *Fan Identities and Practices in Context* (2015). He is the author of a forthcoming monograph in the series *Icons of Popular Music* on Elvis Presley (Equinox Press 2017), but is best known for his book *Understanding Fandom* (Bloomsbury 2013).

**Lars Eckstein** is Professor of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures outside of Britain and the US at the University of Potsdam, Germany. His research interests include postcolonial and decolonial theory, literary and cultural memories of empire, and the study of global popular cultures. Among his publications are *Re-Membering the Black Atlantic* (Brill 2006), *Reading Sony Lyrics* (Brill 2010), and a range of edited works, most recently *Postcolonial Piracy* (Bloomsbury 2014, ed. with Anja Schwarz). He is co-spokesperson of the new Research Training Group 'Minor Cosmopolitanisms', funded by the German Research Foundation.

**Alexandra Kolesnik** is a postgraduate student at the School of history and a Research Intern at Poletayev Institute for Theoretical and Historical Studies in the Humanities, National Research University "Higher School of Economics" (Moscow, Russia). Her research interests include history of British popular music, urban cultures and memorial places in Britain and post-Soviet cities.

**Anastasia Vyskubina** is in her 2st Master year of study in the Applied Cultural Studies degree at Higher School of Economics. She earned her Bachelor of Cultural Studies degree from Higher School of Economics in 2014. Anastasia is a participant of student and professional conferences and competitions at Higher School of Economics (2013-2015). Winner (2014) and awardee (2015) of Student Research Competition at HSE. Her current research is dedicated to the various aspects of links between music, space and communities. Academic interests: Music Studies, Music Geography, Memory Studies.

**Ellen Rutten** is professor in Literature, with a special focus on Slavic Literatures, at the University of Amsterdam. She is leader of the research project 'Sublime Imperfections: Creative Interventions in Post-1989 Europe,' which is funded by the Netherlands Scientific Organization. Rutten is author of *Unattainable Bride Russia* (Northwestern UP, 2010), *Memory, Conflict and New Media* (Routledge, 2013, icw Julie Fedor & Vera Zvereva) and *Sincerity After Communism* (Yale UP, in print). She is co-founder and was editor (2008-2015) of new-media journal *Digital Icons*; from January 2016 onwards, Rutten is editor-in-chief of the journal *Russian Literature*.

**Fabienne Rachmadiev** is a PhD candidate on the project *Sublime Imperfections: Creative Interventions in Post-1989 Europe* on the topic of Post-Soviet trash aesthetics, at the Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis. She received her Master's degree in Theory and History of Contemporary Art from Leiden University. Her master's thesis focused on ethics and aesthetics in the representation of violence.





**Boris Stepanov** is a Leading research fellow at the Research Centre for Contemporary Culture, Institute for Theoretical and Historical Studies in the Humanities, National Research University Higher School of Economics. He is also an associate professor of Cultural Studies at the same institution.

**Oksana Moroz**, associate professor (Department of History and Theory of Culture, the Russian State University for the Humanities). In 2012 obtained PhD degree in Cultural Studies, now attention focused on problems of multiple visual representation of authority's cultural memory designing. Academic interests lay in fields of Media/New Media Studies, Trauma and Memory Studies and Digital Humanities. Also acts as Director of Studies in NGO bureau for digital studies "CultLook".

**Oksana Zaporozhets** is a leading research fellow at Poletaev Institute and Associate Professor at Sociology Department, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow.

**Samuel Merrill** is an interdisciplinary researcher interested in questions of urban memory, landscape, heritage, creativity and infrastructure, particularly within the context of a broadly conceived underground (spatial, political and cultural). He has a doctorate in cultural geography from University College London for which he was awarded first prize in the 2014 Peter Lang Young Scholars in Memory Studies Competition. He also has a postgraduate degree in Heritage Studies from The Brandenburg Technical University in Cottbus, Germany and an undergraduate degree in Archaeology and Ancient History from The University of Birmingham, UK. He is currently undertaking postdoctoral research at Umeå University's Digital Social Research Unit that investigates how contemporary social movements mobilise the past through their transnational and digital cultural memories. To date he has published research articles, communications and reviews on themes including World Heritage and International Development, Graffiti, Street Art and Heritage, and the Social Memories and Cultural Landscapes of Subterranean Transport Infrastructures. His first book entitled *Excavating Buried Memories: Networked Remembrance in the Railways Beneath London and Berlin* is planned for publication in 2017 within Peter Lang's Cultural Memories Series.

**Dr. Myrto Tsilimpounidi** is a social researcher and photographer. Her research focuses on the interface between urbanism, culture, and innovative methodologies. She is the author of *Sociology of Crisis: Visualising Urban Austerity* (Routledge, 2016) and the co-editor of *Remapping Crisis: A Guide to Athens* (Zero Books, 2014) and *Street Art & Graffiti: Reading, Writing & Representing the City* (Ashgate, 2016). Myrto is the co-director of Ministry of Untold Stories and a Marie Curie Fellow at the Institute for Sociology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences.



**Margarita Kuleva** (MA Soc) is a researcher at the Centre for Youth Studies and lecturer at the Department of Sociology, National Research University – Higher School of Economics in St. Petersburg; PhD – fellow at the Centre for German and European studies SPbSU – Bielefeld University.

**Daria Maglevanaya** is a 2-year student at the Department of Sociology, National Research University – Higher School of Economics in St. Petersburg.