

## Research Seminar, Imaginary Lab (online, 24 Sep–17 Dec 21)

online / Copenhagen University, Sep 24–Dec 17, 2021

Deadline: Sep 20, 2021

Nicoletta Isar, Copenhagen University. Dpartment of Arts and Cultural Studies

FALL 2021 SEMINAR IMAGINARY LAB 4

A BEING OF SENSATION: A SHIMMERING PRESENCE

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY SEMINAR IN THE ARTS, VISUAL CULTURE, MUSIC AND LITERATURE

“Noon: Time of the shortest shadow.” “Shimmering.” (Nietzsche)

A Being of Sensation is the outcome of the Niezschean drama from his *Twilight of the Idols* *Götzen-Dämmerung*, or 'Twilight of the Gods', where he describes How the "True World" Finally Became Fiction. This event that struck with horror the popular imagination, took place in full light at the Great Noon, at the time of the shortest shadow. The epigram of our Imaginary Lab eloquently captures the stage of the dramatic demise of Western metaphysics. A shift of stage, and a change of the dramatization of light: one moves from Twilight of the gods into a new Dawn of a new world of pure sensible never experienced before. For it is in these circumstances, after the withdrawal of the intelligible, that the sensible is re-invented, opened for the first time to a fundamentally new vision, and a new being – a new sensing body – a Being of Sensation.

This Fall, our Imaginary Lab will examine *La chair du monde* (the flesh of the world) – an intriguing post-Nietzschean Being of Sensation in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological version. As stated in the “manifesto” of our research group, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, a mode of thinking and being that exemplary came to replace metaphysics, is not subject to raw materialism, neither is it implicated as a philosophy of spirit, but as a kind of *Wissenschaft* to explore archaeologically the “pre-theoretical strata.” *LA CHAIR du monde* is not matter, neither spirit, nor substance. It is not a body, but rather a radiant sensation – a shimmering presence.

I suggest that we explore this paradoxical body as a paradoxical topology, the THIRD WAY to understand this new Incarnation of the world. An inverted stream in chiasmic motion, at once visible and invisible. The Imaginary Lab will unfold throughout a series of symptomatic cases and modes of incarnation of image embedded in works of art. We grant priority not only to the visual, but to the poetic as well, and to all imaginative aspects of language, sound, and soma-aesthetics, especially the dance.

Revisiting Lucretius's poem *De rerum natura* through Michel Serres' *The Birth of Physics*, we explore the poet's meteorology and his topology where atoms flow at uncertain places and uncertain times – which we recognize as a paradigmatic *chôra* space of potential visual and poetic images akin to *la chaire*. We test its potential space, as well as its constant virtual movement – the oblique laminar dancing *clinamen* (atomic swerve) borne in the flow of *rythmos* out of turbu-

lence. Chôra, clinamen, chiasmus will help us define a conundrum of space-body and motion that will take us close to this inexorable Being of Sensation. Emblematic will be the chiastic vision of the dancer that melts with her vertiginous dance, suspended between visible and invisible. A tourbillon," a "reversibility in irreversibility." (Benveniste) Rapture: "I was in you, oh movement, outside of all things."

IMAGINARY LAB warmly welcomes this fall the distinguished presence of the scholar-choreographer and dancer ALKISTIS DIMECH to close this seminar, and share with us her imaginative visions and performance.

#### PROGRAM OF THE SEMINAR

24th September 2021 (15.30 p.m.)

SHIMMERING SHINING: "NOON...Time of the Shortest Shadow"

Suggested Readings:

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols, or, How to Philosophize with a Hammer* (German: *Götzen-Dämmerung, oder, Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophiert*), 1889; Richard Kearney, "In the Flesh: Sacramental Imagination" (*A Phenomenology of the Flesh. Merleau-Ponty's Sacramental Vision; Kristeva and The Aesthetics of Sensation*), *Anatheism, (Returning to God After God)*, Columbia University Press, 2010, pp. 85-100 and 204-211; John Sallis, "Adumbrations," "Shades of Time: Monet's Wheats tacks," *Shades – Of Painting at the Limit*, Indiana UP, pp. 1-56.

29th October 2021 (15.30 p.m.)

CHÔRA: THE FLESH OF THE WORLD

LA CHAIRE DU MONDE IN MERLEAU-PONTY'S ONTOLOGY

Suggested Readings:

Françoise Dastur, "World, Flesh, Vision," in *Chiasms Merleau-Ponty Notion of Flesh*, ed. by Fred Evans and Leonard Lawlor, SUNY Series, State University of New York Press, 2000, pp. 27-49; Mauro Carbone, "The Light of the Flesh: Anti-Platonistic Instances and Neoplatonic Traces in the Later Merleau-Ponty's Thinking," *The Flesh of Images. Merleau-Ponty Between Painting and Cinema*, State of University New York, 2015, pp. 63-74; 108-110.

Supplementary:

Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback, "The Eye and the Spirit of Nature: Some Reflections on Merleau-Ponty's Reading of Schelling Concerning the Relationship between Art and Nature," In *The Barbarian Principle*, pp. 307-319.

26th November 2021 (15.30 p.m.???)

CHIASMUS: A TROPE OF REVERSIBILITY – ENVELOPMENT

With the exclusive participation of the world reputed scholar-choreographer and dancer

ALKISTIS DIMECH

“NIGHT OF RADIANT DARKNESS – METAMORPHIC EARTH “

Choreography and dance: Alkistis Dimech

Music by Kevin Muhlen (guitar and electronics) and Angelo Mangini (hurdy-gurdy)

Costume designed and crafted by Katie Pollard

BPS22 Charleroi, Belgium.

21 January 2017.

Suggested Readings:

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “The Intertwining – The Chiasm,” *The Visible and Invisible*, ed. by Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis. Northwestern University, 1968, pp. 130-155; Jessica Wiskus, “Listening for the Voice of the Light: Mythical Time through the Musical Idea”, in *The Barbarian Principle*, pp. 287-306; Nicoletta Isar, “Drops Of Sound – The Tears Of Adams. A Chiastic Sonic Lamentation,” *Elemental Chorology. Vignettes Imaginales*, Leiden, 2020, pp. 228-239.

17th December 2021 (time to be announced to match the availability of the US guest’s talk and the performance)

A TURBULENT CHAOS: CLINAMEN

BEINGS OF SENSATION – ECSTATIC DANCE

Suggested Readings:

Michel Serres, *RETURN TO THE MODEL*. “Turba, turbo” and “Flows and paths,” *The Birth of Physics*, Manchester: Clinamen, 2001, pp. 27-66; Mauro Carbone, “The Philosopher and the Movie-maker. Merleau-Ponty and Cinematic Thinking,” *The Flesh of Images*, pp. 41-61; Jessica Vyskus, “Synesthesia, Recollection, Resurrection,” *The Rhythm of Thought. Art, Literature, and Music after Merleau-Ponty*, The University of Chicago Press, 2013, pp. 114-123; 154-156; Nicoletta Isar, “The Materiality of Passions: The Force of the Elementals: Viola’s Tears,” *Elemental Chorology*, pp. 206-213.

This seminar invites senior scholars, as well as MA and PhD fellows working with a problematic related to that of this Laboratory of research in order to share their own projects and contribute with short presentations and lectures and debates within a large forum of that will be inspirational for all. The intention is also to define the topic of the coming Spring conference in 2022 on a theme within Tropes of Impermanence of the Image. Provisory title: White Chorologies: The Diaphanous in Art. The suggested literature for readings (and more) will be provided upon the registration. Contributions of participation in any form are most welcome.

Please, send them to Isar Nicoletta at [isar@hum.ku.dk](mailto:isar@hum.ku.dk)

<https://artsandculturalstudies.ku.dk/research/imaginary-lab/>

The meetings might be conducted online or in a hybrid form due to the eventual international participation of both students and guest speakers. If there are participants outside Europe, a new time for meetings will be negotiated to accommodate them.

Reference:

CFP: Research Seminar, Imaginary Lab (online, 24 Sep-17 Dec 21). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 10, 2021 (accessed Jan 9, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/34673>>.