Sonsbeek 2026: Sites of Memory (Arnhem, 11 Sep 26)

Rozet, Kortestraat 16, 6811 EP Arnhem, Sep 11, 2026

Sonia de Laforcade, Radboud University

This symposium introduces audiences to scholars' research into memory, as it resonates with the artworks presented in Sonsbeek 2026. How can we fight against repressive acts of erasure and forgetting? How can memory transform the present and shape our imagined futures? Academics will draw from their research to address these questions in conversation with artists participating in Sonsbeek 2026. Together, scholars and artists will explore interconnected sites of memory, including architectural practice, institution building, embodied experience, and living ecosystems. From these various perspectives, they will discuss how practices of memory can respond to forms of colonial, environmental, and gender-based violence.

The Sonsbeek 2026: Sites of Memory symposium is organized by dr. Mette Gieskes and dr. Sonia de Laforcade from Radboud University in conversation with Sonsbeek 2026's curatorial team and in partnership with Rozet.

Program, 11 September 2026, 14.00 – 18.00:

13:30 | Doors open

14:00-14:10 | Welcome by Amira Gad, Sonsbeek 2026 co-curator

14:10-14:20 | Introduction by Sonia de Laforcade and Mette Gieskes, Radboud University

14:20–14:45 | Keynote by Nancy Jouwe: "Walking through a history once hidden"

In her keynote, Jouwe will focus on the Mapping Slavery project that she has been a part of, as an example of how physical spaces in the Netherlands carry memories of colonial history and slavery, and how methods like mapping and walking make these memories come alive.

Part I – Architectural Practice and Institution Building

14:45-15:05 | Chiara De Cesari, University of Amsterdam: "Anticipatory representation: Thoughts on the art of memory"

In this talk, De Cesari will reflect on the entanglement of retrospective and anticipatory representation—the representation of that which does not (yet) exist—in conversation with Jumana Manna's work. In it, glimpses of the future are enabled by memory work, particularly by engaging with minor archives and reimagining rather than reenacting the past.

15:05-15:25 | László Munteán, Radboud University: "The Archaeology of Ground Zero"

While the forensic investigation at the Ground Zero Museum to identify the victims of 9/11 is still underway, the museum has adopted archaeology as an overarching framework for its exhibition. Muntéan's presentation explores the relationship between forensics and the use of archaeology as a rhetorical tool throughout the exhibition. If archaeology is indeed mobilized as such a tool, what purpose does it serve in relation to the World Trade Center and the ongoing forensic investigation?

15:25-16:10 | Roundtable discussion with Elliot Bourne (Forensic Architecture)

Intermezzo

16:10-16:40 | Break and screening of Jumana Manna's film A Sketch of Manners (2013)

Part II – Embodied Experience and Living Ecosystems

16:40-17:00 | Eliza Steinbock, Maastricht University: "Holdings: Creating Space for the Archive of Transgender Feeling"

In this talk Steinbock expands on the concept of 'holdings' from merely referring to the total number and mass of individual objects held by an institution, to also include the capacity for such objects to knit together a collective sense of shared feelings. They will discuss how the curatorial activism of the Museum of Transology project (2015-ongoing) collects the history of the present through amassing personal treasured objects from trans, non-binary, and intersex communities in the UK and Ireland, both urban and rural, and how this connects to Puppies Puppies work in Sonsbeek 2026.

17:00-17:20 | Katja Kwastek, Vrije Universiteit: "Situated Ramifications - Residual Memories"

Starting off from contextualizing Femke Herrengraven's work 'The Evacuated (Memory Machines of Sonsbeek)' within discourses of site-specificity and situatedness, Kwatek's lecture discusses how artists use digital algorithms and visualizations to invite us to reconsider anthropocentric concepts of memory as linear and based upon past experiences.

17:20-18:00 | Roundtable conversation with artist Femke Herregraven

18:30 | Drinks and late night exhibition viewing at POST, Weverstraat 40, 6811 EM Arnhem

Tickets are free for students and educators.
Program with abstracts: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AFaVuu5dZiIA0iGaM_RJvtUaHQHoKvDO/view

Reference:

CONF: Sonsbeek 2026: Sites of Memory (Arnhem, 11 Sep 26). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 9, 2026 (accessed Oct 26, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/54146>.