

Keynotes Mnemonics 2014
Media of Memory (Stockholm, 21-23 August 2014)

Jussi Parikka: “Media Fossils: A Production of an Archaeological Future”

This presentation focuses on the notion of fossils in the context of contemporary media technological culture and waste. It presents the case for a widened media temporal agenda, which engages with questions of memory, futurity, and fossils. Through contemporary art projects by Gregory Chatonsky and Trevor Paglen, issues of deep time, deep space, and a production of a technological future of e-rubbish are addressed and engaged as a form of twisted temporality. The imagining of future fossils is a projection of contemporary concerns of media technological waste and their non-human toxic residue as one sort of a memory—or rather, monument (in Michel Foucault’s sense)—that carries connotations reminiscent of the nineteenth century geological imagination, but also a legacy of digital culture of piles of trash. The presentation asks the question: what would a future archaeologist discover as the remains of a culture of synthetic materials, planned obsolescence and electronic gadgets?

Biographical note

Jussi Parikka is a Finnish media theorist and writer, who works as a Reader in Media & Design at Winchester School of Art (University of Southampton). He is the author of *Digital Contagions: A Media Archaeology of Computer Viruses* (2007), *Insect Media: An Archaeology of Animals and Technology* (2010), and *What is Media Archaeology?* (2012). Parikka is also Adjunct Professor in Digital Culture Theory at the University of Turku, Finland and Honorary Visiting Research Fellow at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge. During Summer 2014 he is Senior Fellow at Leuphana University in Lüneburg at the Media Cultures of Computer Simulation (MECS)-institute.

José van Dijck, “Social Media and the Construction of Memory”

In less than a decade, social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn have come to deeply penetrate our daily habits of communication and socializing. These platforms also affect how individual and collective memory is constructed. This lecture will reflect on how social media have become filters of everyday life: what is the meaning of social activities such as “sharing” personal memories, “liking” certain pictures or “trending” topics in a world dominated by Facebook and Twitter? And what are the implications of the fact that large portions of everyday life are increasingly commercialized and engineered through social media? Facebook’s and Twitter’s algorithms do not simply reflect our behavior, habits and memory, but actively steer and manipulate sociality. At the heart of the social media industry’s surge is the battle over information control: who owns the data generated by online social activities? The lecture addresses the question of user power in the ecosystem of connective media—an ecosystem that has become a distinctive shaper of a new mediatised age of memory.

Biographical note

José van Dijck is a professor of Comparative Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam, where she also served as the Dean of Humanities. She holds a PhD from the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). Her visiting appointments include MIT, UC Santa Cruz, Concordia University Montreal, the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Technology, Sydney. She is the author of six books, three co-edited volumes and some one hundred articles. Her latest book, titled *The Culture of Connectivity. A Critical History of Social Media*, was published by Oxford University Press (2013).

Marianne Hirsch, “Mobile Memories”

This talk attempts to delineate feminist ways of thinking about memory as mobile, mutable, portable, porous and vulnerable—reframing the national and even the transnational paradigms that have tended to dominate memory studies. I would like to discuss the work of several artists who, in different cultural contexts, activate small, fragmentary archives and allow them to travel and migrate, creating diasporic networks of connectivity and potentiality that challenge the monumentalization of traumatic memories of war, violence and exile. The talk will reflect on the different media through which they mobilize these archives. The work of Armenian-Argentinian artist Silvina Der-Meguerditchian and her “Carpet Series” made out of old family photos crocheted together, can provide a template for such a model of memory, as can that of the Jewish-Argentinian artist Mirta Kupferminc, with her etching and video “En Camino” (“On the Way”), or the Polish sculptor Alina Szapocznikow, whose body parts made out of resin carry traces of memory that prove lethal. The suitcases that compose the “Portable Cities” project of Chinese artist Yin Xiuzhen, on the other hand, reflect on memory’s mobility due not to exile and violence but to the migratory pathways of globalization.

Biographical note

Marianne Hirsch is William Peterfield Trent Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University and Professor in the Institute for Research on Women, Gender, and Sexuality. She was President of the Modern Language Association of America in 2013. Her recent books include *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (Columbia, 2012), *Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory*, co-authored with Leo Spitzer (University of California Press, 2010), and *Rites of Return: Diaspora Poetics and the Politics of Memory*, co-edited with Nancy K. Miller (Columbia, 2011).