

## **Abstracts keynote lectures (in the order of the program)**

*Julie Rak*

Paper Lives, Post-Digital Connections

Since the eighteenth century, when Benjamin Franklin created a chart to track his daily attempts to embody thirteen virtues, journaling has been an important way to record on paper the various technologies of the self, including writing and reflection. By the late twentieth century, the advent of the personal computer and the internet had changed how people recorded their lives. Surely then, recording the details of one's life on paper will soon be a thing of the past, particularly for people who did not grow up with cursive writing, pens and paper? The answer is "no," and especially not for people under the age of 25, who in studies have said that they prefer paper diaries and journals to digital diary and planner apps. How can we understand the use of journaling on paper in the wake of the post-digital turn, when analogue and digital technologies inform each other? Is there a connection between the use of social media and the concept of journaling on paper as good self-care and discovery, and if there is, what can the connection tell us about the technologies of the self in the 21st century, in Amsterdam and beyond?

Prof. dr. Julie Rak holds the Henry Marshall Tory Chair in the Department of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta for 2019-2024. She lives and works on Treaty 6 and Region 4, Metis Nation. Her major areas of research are auto/biography and life writing, popular culture and North American literature. She has other interests in book history and publishing, as well as online forms of identity construction and graphic memoirs. She is committed to researching what ordinary people think, do and write about their lives.

*Nina Siegal*

Intimate Recollections: Examining Shards of the Ruins on Which Our Contemporary City Was Built (working title)

"WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 1943—Do you remember that winter evening, a Saturday evening, when we went shopping together on Kalverstraat? We went to Hoying, where we bought those lovely fruit knives....When we came out of the shop, the street was one big, surging mass, and everything was bright and gay.... I have drawn you this picture to tell you what the city looks like now. Kalverstraat is a sea of shutters. Even in the daytime only some of them are removed; most of them are nailed shut. Shop windows all display the same wares. Wooden brooches, for example, are sold by lingerie shops, furniture shops, department stores—in a word, by everybody—because there's nothing else to sell."

These are the words of diary writer Mirjam Levie-Bolle, writing during World War II, and painting two portraits of Amsterdam in her diary: the before, and the now. The contrast is striking but they are both intimate recollections. It's as if she's taken two photographs to hold them side by side: both are fleeting; each city is already, nearly gone. The French literary critic Philippe Lejeune has described the diary as "a daunting face-off with time." It forces us to stay in the moment, because "it is always on the very crest of time, moving into unknown territory." This is what makes diaries both difficult as literature, and powerful to read. They

promise no structure, no narrative arc; they lack cohesion, and do not seek a satisfying denouement. They can break our readerly contract off mid-sentence, never to be taken up again. Yet diaries are the first draft of memory, a record. They insist that every moment is the present moment. And in doing so, they allow us to examine the shards of the ruins on which our contemporary city was built.

Nina Siegal is a Culture Writer for The New York Times from Europe, and the author of four books. Her most recent book, *The Diary Keepers: World War II in the Netherlands as Written by the People Who Lived Through It* (Ecco/HarperCollins) is a nonfiction exploration of the Dutch Holocaust. She has previously written three novels, *You'll Thank Me For This* (2020), *The Anatomy Lesson* (2014) and *A Little Trouble With The Facts* (2008). Siegal was an urban culture reporter for Bloomberg News, a product reviewer for The Wall Street Journal, and a freelance contributor to scores of magazines including *The Economist*, *Art and Auction*, *W. magazine*, and many other art publications. She has also received numerous awards and grants for her writing, including a Fulbright Fellowship and the 2021 Whiting Foundation Creative Nonfiction Grant. Siegal was born and raised in New York, and has been living in Amsterdam since 2006.

*Diederik Oostdijk*

Anne Frank's visual Diary

The Diary of Anne Frank is undoubtedly the most famous and most widely read diary written in Amsterdam. More than 30 million copies have been sold, and Anne Frank's story of hiding in the secret annex has been translated in dozens of languages, and adapted to different media, for instance in plays, graphic novels, and movies. For many generations of young people, The Diary of Anne Frank is their first introduction to the horrors of the Holocaust.

Less known than the written diary is that Anne Frank also narrated her experiences during World War II. Not only did she make drawings and doodles herself, she also cut out and selected postcards and images from magazines which she attached to her wall. This paper analyzes what those images tell us about her development as a teenager, and how they evoke a world outside Prinsengracht 263, in Amsterdam and beyond.

Yet Anne Frank's visual diary does more than that. It also invites us to reflect on how people – young and old – nowadays collect images of themselves and project that into the world. Anne Frank's wall of images can be seen as a precursor of social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest. With the notable difference that Anne Frank did not only garner images to give herself a place in the world, but also bring the world into her room, into her life.

Prof. dr. Diederik Oostdijk (1972) is professor of English and American Literature at the Faculty of Humanities, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Most recently, he published two books on the Netherlands Carillon in Arlington, a gift the Netherlands gave to the people of the United States to thank them for helping to liberate the Netherlands during World War II and for the Marshall Aid. *Bells for America* was published by Penn State University Press in 2019, and a lavishly illustrated Dutch version titled *Klokken voor Amerika* was published by Boom in 2020. A bilingual exhibit based on this story is mounted at Museum Klok & Peel in Asten, the Netherlands, which runs until May 2021.

*Nadia Bouras*

Een klas apart: de coming of age van een generatie Marokkaans-Amsterdamse leerlingen op de Arabische school (in Dutch)

Lang voor de huidige discussie over bijzonder onderwijs richtte het predikantenechtpaar Boiten-Du Rieu in 1971 midden op de Amsterdamse Wallen de Arabische School van Amsterdam op. Een aparte school met alleen maar kinderen van Marokkaanse gastarbeiders. De leerlingen kregen er naast het Nederlandse onderwijs elke dag Arabisch ter voorbereiding op hun terugkeer naar Marokko. Maar de gezinnen bleven, de kinderen werden Amsterdammers, en in 1996, 25 jaar na de oprichting, hield de Arabische School op te bestaan.

Een klas apart is de unieke geschiedenis van de eerste Arabische school van Nederland, die uitgroeide tot een van de grootste basisscholen van Amsterdam, en de persoonlijke zoektocht van Nadia Bouras naar hoe het haar en haar klasgenoten verging. Wat bezielde twee Amsterdamse dominees om een school voor Marokkaanse kinderen te beginnen? Wat is er geworden van juf Fatima die keiharde tucht en orde in het klaslokaal niet schuwde? Welke invloed had de school op de ontwikkeling van de leerlingen?

De geschiedenis van de Arabische School vertelt het coming of age-verhaal van een generatie Amsterdamse kinderen. Met een Marokkaanse achtergrond weliswaar, maar onmiskenbaar Amsterdams. Nu, een kwarteeuw later, zijn ze volwassen en nieuwsgierig naar hun geschiedenis. Ze zijn in de stad geïntegreerd en één geworden met de Amsterdamse identiteit. Maar dat proces is pas compleet als ze ook in haar geschiedenis zijn geworteld. Het verhaal van de Arabische School van Amsterdam is daarvan het tastbare bewijs.

Dr. Nadia Bouras is University Lecturer in Social and Migration history, History Department, Leiden University. Bouras is an expert in the field of the migration and integration of Moroccan people in the Netherlands. She is an Assistant Professor in the History and Urban Studies departments, and is also a representative of the Netherlands Institute in Morocco (NIMAR). Nadia Bouras makes regular media appearances on current affairs relating to migration and integration.