

## ABOUT THE SPECIALIST COURSE

This course focusses on **how violence is represented in works of art** from 1600 onwards, what it means to look at violence and social, cultural and ethical questions concerning the representation of (extreme) violence today and during various historical periods. The specialist course presents a combination of transhistorical, transdisciplinary and transmedial approaches. **PhD-students and artists from as diverging research fields** as schools of arts, media studies and political science, art history and gender and diversity, theatre and visual arts, photography and film, etc., are asked to participate and to share their insight with peers, senior researchers and artists.

Along with the course, **an exhibition will be shown** in the Vandehove Paviljoen in Ghent, containing art works from Simon Pummell (video artist), Doina Kraal (specialised in 'rarekieks', a kind of early modern peepshows) and Abattoir Fermé (modern staging of a baroque tableau vivant) that each in their own medium reflect on the specialist course theme questions. Like the course, this exhibition is an initiative of the Dutch-Belgian research group ITEMP: *Imagineering Violence – On the spectacle of violence in the early modern period*. The specialist course is inspired by the same theme questions as this exhibition. The representation of violence is as relevant today as in the early modern period: it is a vital aspect of today's society, the effects of which are often overlooked. The lecturers are part of the ITEMP team and have a wide experience in researching the workings of violence representation in different media from about 1600 onwards. Their focus will be the performative and technical aspects of individual representations of violence and their effects and affects, as well as the combination of all kinds of representations in the society at large, in other words: regimes of representing and staging violence.

### Objective of the course

This specialist course reflects on contemporary questions that are related to the representation of violence. It aims at bringing together PhD students with different backgrounds and approaches by combining transhistorical, transdisciplinary, and transmedial frameworks. Also, **the academic perspective is countered**

**with an artistic perspective.** Whereas the first day has a more academic character, with a masterclass, PhD presentations and group discussions; the second day invites artists whose work reflects on violence representation and perception. In the afternoon, two artists will give presentations and participate in the feedback and discussions. In the morning, two other artists will take the group to the theme exhibition and discuss their work.

This course offers both a profound interdisciplinary forum and in-depth discussion of the participants' particular projects and will be of relevance to PhD students and artists from different fields in the humanities, social sciences and schools of art. The transhistorical approach to looking at violence and its representations goes along with a transdisciplinary approach that connects different scholarly fields, from theatre studies to the study of socio-political phenomena. As such, this specialist course will help the participants to bring into focus their own findings, receive feedback from peers and senior researchers with a lot of experience on the topic, and to enter into discussion with artists that tackle similar question but from an artistic perspective. The transhistorical and transdisciplinary approach stimulates contact between students from all kinds of backgrounds, which will enhance their understanding of the workings and role of watching representations of violence over time and in different areas. The **contact with artists**, who share their experience of creating representations of violence in our modern society, will create a deeper insight in the tendencies of the economy of images and the interconnectedness of the emotional and the political. This specialist course intends to be a valuable addition to the Doctoral Schools program in that it creates an active dialogue between the academic and artistic frameworks. It transcends a purely conceptual approach by fleshing out concrete examples from various disciplines and time frames.

## **PROGRAMME**

### **Thursday, 28 March 2019**

#### **Session I (28 March 2019 - 9.00-12.15)**

This session will start with a masterclass by Karel Vanhaesebrouck, followed by a group discussion. In the second part of the session, two participants will take the floor by presenting a short case from their own research in relation to the masterclass theme and concepts. Their presentations, too, are followed by a group discussion.

In his Masterclass Karel Vanhaesebrouck will take a series of case studies from contemporary art (both visual art and performing arts) to analyze and discuss the spectacle of violence as well as the position of the beholder who finds himself confronted with these spectacles, from subtle to in-your-face. Special attention will be paid to questions such as the pornography of violence, voyeurism, realness, authenticity and lived

experience. More specifically the Masterclass will take as its starting point the graphic depictions of martyrs and martyrdom, both in early modern and present-day cultural representations. Rather than drawing on all too easy transhistorical parallels, the aim of these Masterclass will be to understand how these spectacular performances both fascinate and contaminate cultural imagination.

**Session II** (28 March 2019 – 13.30-16.45)

Both parts of this sessions consist of two student presentations, followed by a group discussion.

**Friday, 29 March 2019**

**Session III** (29 March 2019 - 9.00-12.15)

The third session is divided between academic- and artistically-inspired discussions. The session will be opened by a masterclass by Kornee van der Haven, followed by a group discussion. In the second part, the group will visit the exposition, where some of the artists who contributed to the exhibition will present their work. Afterwards, we will return to the seminar location where a group discussion about the works, their creation process, their effect etc. will be held with the group and related to the theoretical concepts and academic examples that have been discussed in the previous sessions.

In his masterclass, Kornee van der Haven will tackle the question how representations of violence discuss the issue of looking at that violence as such, and doing so, letting audiences critically reflect on how they view theatrical violence themselves. The viewer's gaze could in that sense also be violent itself (Foucault), but the horror of looking (at violence) can also be related to the sensory and mental violence that the representation of extreme violence exerts on the viewer. By way of some theoretical texts that reflect on these issues (Foucault, Sontag) and some case studies from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, van der Haven will reflect on these issues and bring to the fore some concrete examples of representations of violence that aim to bridge the gap between the baroque representation of violence and the representation of violence in modern art.

**Session IV** (29 March 2019 – 13.30-16.45)

The one to last session continues on the day's synergy between academic and artistic perspectives. Both parts combine the presentation by a PhD student with a presentation by an artist. For both of them, themes of violence and looking at violence in representations are important in their work. Each set of two presentations is followed by a group discussion.

**Session V** (29 March 2019 – 20.00-22.00)

This specialist course ends with an artistic intervention followed by an artist panel. The panel is moderated by Karel Vanhaesebrouck. Whereas sessions III and IV invite the artists to participate in the academic format of the specialist course at the university, this fifth session does the reverse.. The subject of the specialist course is relevant to the public debate about media and violence and should not be limited to academic circles. The artist panel allows a broader audience to experience and deepen their insight in representations of violence and the act of watching them.

## REGISTRATION

Register with Yannice De Bruyn (UGent/VUB): [Yannice.DeBruyn@UGent.be](mailto:Yannice.DeBruyn@UGent.be)

## LANGUAGE

This course will be taught in English.

## RESEARCH GROUPS INVOLVED

ITEMP: Imagineering Techniques of Early Modern Performativity (VUB, UGent, Universiteit Leiden, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

THALIA: Interplay of Theatre, Literature & Media in Performance, UGent/VUB

GEMS: Group for Early Modern Studies, UGent

