

Abstracts and Bios
“Visions for Critical Cycling Studies Futures”
The First Symposium at the Hub for Critical Cycling Studies
2-4 June 2026
De Krook, Ghent, Belgium

Symposium Co-Organizers

Andrew **Bricker** (B.A., M.A. University of Toronto; Ph.D. Stanford University) is Associate Professor of English Literature at Ghent University, Belgium, and a Senior Fellow at the Andrew W. Mellon Society of Fellows in Critical Bibliography at the Rare Book School at the University of Virginia. He is also Co-Directeur Sportif, along with Martin Zeilinger, of **the Hub for Critical Cycling Studies**. Their co-authored essay, “**The many paths ahead: toward an interdisciplinary framework for Critical Cycling Studies**” (*Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 12, 1594 (2025): <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-025-05974-7>) serves as the **theoretical basis for a new methodology in cycling studies** and as a **critical starting point for the discussions** to take place at the “Visions for Critical Cycling Studies Futures” symposium. Bricker also serves as Academic Coordinator/Principal Investigator for *DELIAH: Democratic Literacy and Humour* (2025-2029: <https://www.deliah.eu/>), which is funded by the Horizon Europe Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. He is the author of *Libel and Lamppoon: Satire in the Courts, 1670-1792* (Oxford University Press, 2022); and, with Eric Smith, of *We the Raptors: Thirty Players, Thirty Stories, Thirty Years* (Simon & Schuster, 2025).

Martin **Zeilinger** (Ph.D. University of Toronto) is Reader in Computational Arts & Technology at Abertay University (Dundee/UK), Senior Fellow at the International Research Centre for Cultural Studies (Vienna/AT), and an Affiliate Researcher at Orpheus Institute (Ghent/BE). With Andrew Bricker, he co-founded the Hub for Critical Cycling Studies, and co-authored “The many paths ahead: toward an interdisciplinary framework for Critical Cycling Studies” (*Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 12, 1594 (2025): <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-025-05974-7>), which proposes a new methodological framework for cycling studies and provides the conceptual foundation for the “Visions for Critical Cycling Studies Futures” symposium. Zeilinger also works internationally as a curator and artistic researcher. He is the author of *Tactical Entanglements: AI Art, Creative Agency, and the Limits of Intellectual Property* (meson press 2021) and *Structures of Belonging* (Aksioma Postscriptum Series 2023). His research appears widely in key digital culture journals, and has been translated into languages including Korean, Italian, Slovak, and Slovenian (marjz.net).

Abstracts and Biographical Notes

Keynote Speakers

Keynote Speaker 1

Peter Cox

Professor of Sociology, Emeritus, University of Chester, UK

Cycling Studies:

Retrospect and Prospect

Abstract: This presentation reflects on over 20 years of cycling studies, from the first tentative meetings of the Cycling and Society Research Group in 2004 to the consolidation of a recognized field of study with the publication of a *Routledge Companion to Cycling* (2022). It takes up questions raised in early discussions and publications on the need for critical analysis and interdisciplinary studies and considers how and why these perspectives have largely become submerged in subsequent research. It further looks ahead to the prospect of critical cycling studies and the opportunities and difficulties of disciplinary and interdisciplinary alignment, especially in an area necessarily linked to public policy.

Bio: Peter Cox is emeritus professor of Sociology at the University of Chester. He was a founder member of the Cycling and Society Research Group in 2004 and co-editor of *Cycling and Society* 2007. His research focuses on cycling mobilities, crossing disciplines from sociology to postdevelopment studies and connecting both cultural and political perspectives. He is particularly interested in the experiential dimensions of cycling and walking and how these affect and inform decision-making from personal to policy levels. His PhD in philosophy from the University of Liverpool (2001) investigated Gandhian models of social change and their interaction with radical ecological perspectives. His publications include *Moving People* (2010); *Cycling Cultures* (2015); *Cycling: a sociology of velomobility* (Routledge 2019); *Cycling Activism: bike politics and social movements* (Routledge 2024); and *Anthropocene Mobilities* (Bloomsbury 2025). He is currently working on a project tentatively entitled *Cycling towards Degrowth*.

Keynote Speaker 2

Kaffe Matthews

Sound artist and composer, Berlin, Germany

“*The swamp that was...*” (see: <https://sonicbikes.net/>)

Abstract: Matthews’ keynote will combine two components: (1) a one-hour artist talk (the keynote) and (2) a restaging of her Ghent-based art project *The swamp that was...* Once, long before bike lanes, cobblestones, and conference venues, the terrain beneath Ghent—once called *Ganda*—was a shifting wetland: water-logged, tidal, stubbornly alive. Beneath today’s streets lie soils that remember: stones that once held footsteps, labour, mourning, resistance, celebration; land that once fed sheep, received invading carriages, suffered enclosure, and later hosted a zoological garden whose animals were displayed for the gaze of the elite. A handsome, complicated city—shaped by wealth, war, migration, labour, and mobility—continues to

reverberate with the voices of those who lived, moved, and moved through this place. What remains of those voices, and how might we listen to them through the practice of movement today? For the CCS Symposium, Kaffe Matthews' iconic 2012 bicycle-opera *The swamp that was...* returns—not as a historical document, but as a living, resonant experiment in how mobility produces knowledge. Restaged as a one-hour keynote-cum-performance-cum-bicycle ride, this iteration invites symposium attendees to become both performers and researchers as they cycle through Ghent on “sonic bikes.” Taking place the morning after the group bike ride, her keynote will fold embodied experience into scholarly inquiry: an opportunity to extend the conference's conversations into the city's streets and soils. This restaging renews the original's method of audio archaeology—a multi-layered, geo-located sonic environment that remains silent until activated by your movement. As you navigate the city, your riding line becomes a compositional line. Electronic, acoustic, processed, archival, and newly recorded voices drift into and out of earshot: a ghost of a trumpet behind you; the rustle of imagined reeds; a fragment of a Turkish song; the faint low call of an elephant from a zoo that no longer exists. Each attendee creates their own route, their own interpretation, and their own temporary entanglement with Ghent's past and present. The performance thus becomes an experiment in critical mobility: an encounter between cycling bodies, shifting historical layers, and the invisible choreographies of sound. This keynote-performance honours the original collaborators—developers, artists, community historians, and Ghent residents—whose contributions still resonate within the piece. Their traces remain, stitched into the sonic fabric that Matthews will reactivate for 2026. As with the first iteration, *The swamp that was...* depends on you. No audience without riders; no opera without movement. You cycle, and the past emerges.

Bio: Kaffe Matthews is a pioneering music maker who works live with space, data, things, and place to make new electroacoustic composition. Her past has taken her through things such as midi violin, theremin, star maps, NASA scientists, sharks, children, solo walks and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra to create a massive body of works for sites such as concert halls, city streets, basement clubs, radio, galleries, deserts, living rooms, and the human body. The physical experience of music is also key to her approach so she also invents unique interfaces such as the sonic armchair, the sonic bed and a range of sonic bikes which offer new paths into composition for makers, and ways in to listening for wide ranging audiences worldwide. Today she is focused on dangerous unknowns improvising with space, audience and a new modular instrument, the Ripley. A noise filter system designed through the 12 Gates of alchemical discoveries made by the 15th-century alchemist George Ripley, backfeeding and live sampling throughout. Concerned with community and the environment, Kaffe has also established the collectives 'Music for Bodies' (2006) and 'The Bicrophonic Research Institute' (2014) where ideas and techniques grow within a pool of coders and artists using shared and open source approaches, publishing all outcomes online. Kaffe has been performing, collaborating and teaching worldwide since 1992, receiving awards such as the NESTA Dreamtime Fellowship; Honorary Professor of Music, Shanghai Music Conservatory; a Scottish BAFTA with Mandy McIntosh & Zeena Parkins; Distinction Prix Ars Electronica Sonic Bed_London and Honorary mention for cd cécile. She is the first woman to have received the Edgar Varèse guest professorship, computer music, TU Berlin. and has been releasing solo works on Annette Works since 1996.

Roundtable: “Bringing Critical Cycling Studies to Questions of Mobility”

This roundtable brings Critical Cycling Studies (CCS) into sustained dialogue with contemporary questions of mobility, asking how cycling—understood as a situated, embodied, and politically charged practice—can help us rethink dominant assumptions in mobility research, policy, and planning. Rather than treating cycling as a neutral or purely technical mode of transport, the session adopts the CCS premise that cycles and cycling function as *interface technologies* that mediate relationships between bodies, infrastructures, institutions, cultures, and environments, while shaping sensory, cognitive, emotional, and political experiences of movement. Drawing on a set of empirically rich and conceptually diverse papers, the roundtable demonstrates how CCS can illuminate tensions between mainstreamed mobility policies and more critical, justice-oriented, and reflexive approaches.

Taken together, the contributions show how cycling’s apparent neutrality in mobility policy masks deep political, social, and cultural stakes. A longitudinal analysis of bicycle policy in Flanders demonstrates how cycling has been mainstreamed through a technical-infrastructure logic that prioritises speed, commuting efficiency, and “free modal choice,” thereby depoliticising cycling and leaving automobility largely unchallenged. This policy framing is productively unsettled by a capabilities-based study of transport poverty in the rural Kempen, which shows that cycling access and uptake are shaped not only by infrastructure but by skills, gender, migration background, fear, and bodily vulnerability. Read together, these papers expose the limits of universalising mobility solutions and highlight cycling as a lived, unequal, and socially differentiated practice. These tensions between technocratic governance and everyday experience are further explored in an ethnographic study of cycling infrastructure in Barcelona, where bike lanes emerge as contested sociotechnical assemblages shaped by activist histories, municipal politics, media narratives, and shifting cycling publics. Rather than stable solutions, infrastructures appear as dynamic interfaces that are continuously negotiated in practice. A comparative analysis of 30 km/h speed-limit policies across European cities extends this insight to the level of policymaking itself, revealing how fear, public acceptance, evidence, and political leadership interact through reinforcing and balancing feedback loops. Here, mobility interventions are shown to reshape not only traffic flows but also perceptions of safety, legitimacy, and collective life. Finally, a linguistically oriented workshop foregrounds the discursive conditions that underwrite these dynamics, showing how everyday statements about hills, pollution, or “unsuitable” cities actively reproduce car-centric imaginaries. By collaboratively generating counter-narratives, it highlights language as a critical mobility interface in its own right.

Taken together, these papers illustrate how CCS can broaden mobility studies beyond instrumental solutions, foregrounding questions of power, meaning, justice, and lived experience. The roundtable invites participants to reflect collectively on how cycling research can move from technical optimisation toward more pluralistic, critical, and transformative understandings of mobility.

Roundtable Participant 1

Nicole den Braver

Assistant Professor, Department of Epidemiology & Data Science, Amsterdam University Medical Centre, the Netherlands

*The Politics of Safe and Active Mobility:
A Systems Perspective on 30 km/h Policy*

Bio: Nicole den Braver is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Epidemiology & Data Science at Amsterdam UMC. Her research focuses on how the living environment and policy changes influence health, sustainability, and behaviour, and on the effective implementation of public health policies. She is committed to bridging science and practice, fostering synergy between academia, policy, and society to generate tangible impact. Nicole co-leads the evaluation of the introduction of 30 km/h speed limits in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, examining their effects on health, travel behaviour, and social interaction. She previously led the national implementation of the Physical Activity Environment Policy Index (PA-EPI) in the Netherlands and continues this work within the European ERA4Health-funded IMPAQT consortium (Improving Physical Activity policies and their impact on health equity), where she leads a work package that integrates an equity lens in physical activity policy. She is also involved in the EXPOSOME-NL consortium and coordinates the Amsterdam Prevention Network. Through her interdisciplinary collaborations, Nicole contributes to research that advances healthy, sustainable, and equitable living environments.

Roundtable Participant 2

Josefien Hoeree

Ph.D. Researcher, Research Group for Urban Development and the Design Sciences Hub, University of Antwerp, Belgium

*Cycling and Capabilities:
Addressing Transport Poverty and Social Inequality in Antwerp's rural region, the Kempen*

Bio: Josefien Hoeree is a researcher at the University of Antwerp, affiliated with the Research Group for Urban Development and the Design Sciences Hub. Her work primarily focuses on mobility and social justice. She has contributed to projects on job accessibility, examining differences in access to employment opportunities between low- and high-income groups, and testing scenarios to improve accessibility for lower-income populations. Another of her projects, centered on cycling and transport poverty, is described in the abstract. She recently began her PhD, through which she aims to explore the interconnections between accessibility and social justice in greater depth.

Roundtable Participant 3

Eva Van Eenoo

Postdoctoral Researcher, Cosmopolis Centre for Urban Research, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

*Bicycle policy: disruptive or maintaining the status quo?
A focus on the Flemish region (Belgium)*

Bio: Eva Van Eenoo is a postdoc-researcher at Cosmopolis Centre for Urban Research (VUB) and guest lecturer at KU Leuven, with a background in history and urban planning. She is interested in how, where and by whom the car-dependent society is produced and reproduced. Currently, she works on an FWO-funded project (SoHoLoc) which focuses on social housing, accessibility and mobility patterns of social tenants. She values the aspiration to produce knowledge and insights that assist in realising a just and equitable mobility transition towards low-carbon modes. Eva also co-authored the Flemish Guidelines for bicycle infrastructure, is a member of the Flemish Mobility Council (MORA), the official advisory board for mobility and is a frequently invited speaker on topics related to car dependence, cycling, and mobility justice.

Roundtable Participant 4

Mohammad Nazarpoor

PhD Fellow, Urban Cycling Institute, and PhD researcher, Tarbiat Modares University, Iran

Challenging Linguistic Barriers:

Co-Constructing Counter-Narratives for Transformative Change

Bio: I am a PhD researcher on urban cycling, a PhD Fellow at the Urban Cycling Institute, and the Bicycle Mayor of Tehran at BYCS. My research interests lie in understanding cycling practices from an anthropological perspective, exploring issues of power, space, gender, culture, and politics. My PhD research focused on the lived experience of urban cycling, aiming to discover how cycling can phenomenologically change urban experiences. Currently, I am working on rethinking urban mobility from the humanities and social sciences perspectives, researching the power of language, metaphors, and narratives for critical thinking and transformative change.

Paper (20 minutes) Presenters (alphabetically listed by surname)

Gordon Brown

Computer artist and researcher, Abertay University, UK

Virtual Energy Lab - Intensity in cycling exergames

Abstract: Background: Exergaming, which couples physical activity with video game mechanics, has potential to promote exercise in populations who are less engaged with traditional modalities. Most cycle-based exergames deliver moderate-intensity exercise or mimic conventional workouts, limiting their effectiveness for fitness adaptation. Sprint interval training (SIT) is a time-efficient method to improve cardiovascular health, endurance, and mitochondrial function, yet few exergames target this intensity. Objective: This pilot study aimed to evaluate the acute physiological demands of a cycle-based exergame, T-Wrecks, designed to simulate sprint interval training, and to examine how gameplay mechanics influence exertion. Methods:

Nine healthy adult participants completed two sessions: an incremental cycling test to exhaustion and gameplay of T-Wrecks. The exergame uses pedal speed to control avatar movement across easy, moderate, and hard lanes, punctuated by three “boss battles” requiring 20-second maximal efforts. Heart rate was recorded via chest strap (Polar H10) and expressed as a percentage of individual maximum. Training load was calculated using a modified TRIMP protocol. Data were analysed using Friedman ANOVA and pairwise comparisons ($p < 0.05$). Results: Participants spent the majority of gameplay at vigorous ($32 \pm 18\%$) or maximal ($24 \pm 25\%$) heart rate zones, with significantly less time at light-moderate intensity ($7 \pm 6\%$). Peak heart rate occurred during boss battles, with time-to-peak ~ 24 seconds, reflecting physiological responses similar to traditional repeated sprint protocols. Mean training load (46.8 ± 8.8 a.u.) was consistent across participants, demonstrating effective scaling of intensity independent of baseline fitness. Discussion: The exergame successfully generated high-intensity efforts characteristic of sprint interval training, while gameplay mechanics allowed participants to self-regulate exertion across sessions. Cadence-based control proved effective for individual scaling without requiring maximal power testing, addressing a key limitation of prior exergames. Distinct heart rate peaks during boss battles indicate acute metabolic stress consistent with SIT, suggesting potential for health and performance adaptation. Conclusions: T-Wrecks represents a novel approach to gamifying sprint interval training, delivering vigorous to maximal intensity exercise in a short, engaging format. The pilot demonstrates feasibility and efficacy for acute physiological responses, supporting further research on chronic adaptations, gameplay strategies, and enjoyment. Future studies should explore metabolic outcomes and intervention potential in larger, diverse populations.

Bio: Gordon Brown is a seasoned computer artist and researcher with over 13 years of experience in the video game industry. His career spans work with industry leaders such as Rockstar North, Ubisoft, Gameloft, and Rovio, where he developed expertise in 3D art production pipelines. Now based at Abertay University in Scotland, he focuses on research exploring the impact of avatar aesthetics and virtual environments on athletic performance in exergames. His work investigates how game design and art can enhance motivation, engagement, and physical activity through interactive digital experiences. He remains closely connected to the video game industry, integrating emerging trends and innovations in game development into his research and creative work.

Pierre Cassou-Noguès

Professor, Department of Philosophy, University Paris VIII, France

Bicycle as a means of philosophical investigation:

A trip from Biarritz to Ostende

Abstract: From March to June 2025, I travelled along the Atlantic coast between Biarritz (in the southwest of France) and Ostend (in Belgium) on a bamboo bicycle that I had built myself. I kept a column for the French magazine Philosophie Magazine. These columns, which I have since greatly expanded, are expected to be published as a book (in French) in the spring of 2026. My presentation will be based on this cycling experience and the writing that came from it. Between travel narrative and theoretical essay, this work offers a survey of the coastline in the face of the environmental crisis, as well as a reflection on the forms of coexistence embedded in ways of life

and technological objects. The aim was to confront the “philosophy fiction” that I advocate with the environmental crisis. The environmental crisis brings an “uncanniness” (in particular Ghosh 2013) to the coasts that tourism once seemed to have completely domesticated, yet it also calls for a new writing of the strange—one that deals through the becoming of bodies rather than spirits: waste instead of ghosts, reveries instead of stories. In this presentation, I would like in particular to defend the bicycle as a mode of philosophical inquiry—one that obviously allows for a far more complete experience than the car, but also one that cures us of the fantasy of a “return to nature,” which always threatens to overtake the walker. Elements on the project Littoral On my website : <https://pierrecassounogues.org/publications/projet-littoral/> Chronicles for Philosophie Magazine On my mastodon @[@PierreCassouNogues@mastodon.social](https://mastodon.social/@PierreCassouNogues)

Bio: Philosopher and writer, Pierre Cassou-Noguès is a professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Paris VIII and a senior member of the Institut universitaire de France. His work is characterized by a theoretical use of fiction, through which he questions contemporary technologies and confronts philosophical concepts with the environmental crisis. He is the author of *La mélodie du tic-tac et autres bonnes raisons de perdre son temps* (Flammarion, 2013), *Les cauchemars cybernétiques de Norbert Wiener* (Seuil, 2014), *La bienveillance des machines* (Seuil, 2022), and, with Gwenola Wagon, *Les images pyromanes. Théories fictions des IA génératives* (UV-éditions, 2025). He has also collaborated with Gwenola Wagon on several films and installations.

Joyce David

Ph.D. Researcher, Ghent University, Belgium

Drawing critical mobilities:

Children’s dream streets and collective imagination as method in critical cycling futures

Abstract: This contribution explores how children’s visual imaginations of mobility and urban space can inform the emerging field of Critical Cycling Studies (CCS). Building on a large-scale visual study analysing 998 “dream street” drawings made by children aged 4–12 in Ostend (Belgium), we propose that such visual and participatory methodologies offer a critical lens through which cycling, mobility, and urban futures can be rethought. Rather than treating cycling merely as transport or infrastructure, we position it as a developmental and relational practice that mediates between bodies, environments, and imaginations across generations. The drawings reveal how children intuitively challenge car-dominant logics and reimagine the street as a social, ecological, and playful commons. Across age groups, we observe a developmental trajectory from symbolic and affective representations of safety and proximity toward more complex notions of ecological awareness, civic responsibility, and mobility justice. Children’s drawings frequently foreground bicycles as symbols of freedom and safety, positioning cycling as both a developmental and civic act that connects autonomy, care, and belonging. We interpret these visual articulations through the GROW-SPACES framework (Growth-Oriented Responsive Urban Spaces), which links developmental psychology, spatial cognition, and inclusive design. This model offers a transdisciplinary foundation for reimagining the street, not as a transport corridor, but as a developmental environment enabling growth, agency, and connection. To extend these insights into a shared, reflexive practice, we propose an experimental workshop that

invites participants to respond to an open-ended miracle question: “What does your dream street look like?” Participants will create their own drawings individually and then, in small groups, collectively interpret and discuss what emerges, without predefined categories or prompts. This approach mirrors the openness of the children’s exercise and aims to surface diverse imaginaries of space, mobility, and belonging. By translating the act of drawing into a shared inquiry, the workshop enacts CCS as an embodied, imaginative practice; one that reclaims mobility research as a space of collective world-making. Through this combined presentation and participatory method, we argue for the importance of visual, developmental, and affective epistemologies within CCS. Children’s drawings and adult re-imaginings alike demonstrate that to realise inclusive and sustainable mobility futures, we must move beyond instrumental and policy-driven perspectives and embrace imagination as a critical, collective practice of mobility justice.

Bio: Joyce David is a Ph.D. researcher at Ghent University, affiliated with the Chair of Cycling (Leerstoel Fiets). Her work explores how communication, discourse and power relations shape the ways in which mobility and safety are understood, discussed and governed. Focusing on children’s autonomous cycling, her research examines how infrastructure, policy and cultural expectations interact to influence who can move independently and under what conditions. She studies how adult-defined ideas of safety, care and competence can unintentionally limit children’s freedom to move, reflecting wider systems of control in transport and spatial planning. Methodologically, Joyce combines discourse analysis with creative and visual approaches, including the study of 998 children’s drawings that depict their daily travel experiences. These visual materials are treated not as illustrations but as expressions in their own right: alternative stories that question adult perspectives on space, risk and freedom. Her work positions communication as both an analytical lens and a practical means of change. By highlighting how language and representation shape mobility practices, she aims to support more inclusive, reflective and human-centred approaches to transport and urban design. "

Paulo de Assis

Senior Research Fellow, Orpheus Instituut, Belgium

Becoming Alpe d’Huez

Abstract: Cycling up Alpe d’Huez is more than a feat of endurance; it is an encounter with a complex assemblage of bodies, histories, memories, and affects. This presentation unfolds the climb not as an individual athletic act but as a multiplicity — a convergence of matter and memory, of physical effort and mental aspiration, of technology and myth. Each of its twenty-one curves, inscribed with the names of cycling legends, functions as a psychological and affective marker within a self-constructed topology of sense and sensation. Through the lens of Assemblage Theory (Deleuze & Guattari, DeLanda, Buchanan), I explore how this mountain, its road, the cyclists, the bikes, and the cultural narratives that surround them compose a dynamic ecology of experience and thought. My own ascent — framed by childhood memories of Joaquim Agostinho and Marco Pantani’s heroic victories — serves as an entry point into this distributed network. To climb Alpe d’Huez is thus not merely to conquer a mountain but to enter a field of becomings — a complex composition in twenty-one turns: *Becoming Alpe d’Huez*.

Bio: Paulo de Assis is an artist–researcher, pianist, and philosopher of music, currently Senior

Research Fellow at the Orpheus Institute (Ghent), where he leads MetamusicX, a transdisciplinary research cluster on posthuman and experimental creative practices. His work bridges performance, composition, and philosophy, exploring how musical works operate as assemblages—dynamic systems of materials, affects, and thought. He was Principal Investigator of the ERC Starting Grant “Experimentation vs Interpretation” (2013–2018) and now leads the ERC Advanced Grant “Posthuman Music: Creative Practices after AI and Blockchain” (2025–2030). He is the author of *Logic of Experimentation* (Leuven University Press, 2018) and editor of influential volumes including *The Dark Precursor*, *Machinic Assemblages of Desire*, and *Decentralized Music: Exploring Blockchain for Artistic Research* (CRC Press, 2024). His writings have advanced assemblage theory for music and contributed to current debates on artistic research and posthuman aesthetics. His practice combines theoretical innovation with artistic experimentation, situating artistic research as a generative mode of knowledge in contemporary culture. An age-group triathlete, he has completed three full and seventeen half-distance Ironman races and was Portuguese national vice-champion in half-distance triathlon (2024).

Jana De Troyer

Composer-performer, Germany

Play (with) your bike!

Abstract: In May 2026, the premiere and performances of *Rückenwind* will take place in and around Hamburg, Germany. *Rückenwind* is a contemporary classical composition for voice, harpsichord, saxophones, electronics, and two bicycles. The bikes are played as instruments and are at the sonic core of the work. The textual topics of the piece are the joy of cycling and the independence that comes with it—I am using texts for the lyrics that are related to those topics. For this piece I am extending my artistic research and sonic vocabulary on how bicycles can be played, what sounds can be derived from them, how to play in a chamber music setting with existing instruments, and how to enhance the sonic outcome with electronics. It is not my first work with bicycles (after “Noise Maps”, “recycle” and three bicycle improvisation concerts), but this time I am combining the bikes with harpsichord, saxophone, and voice. One goal of the piece is to find a way to reach new audiences that might not normally go to see contemporary art music but are curious about how bicycles sound. The work is performed in community centers, instead of the classical concert spaces. During my presentation I want to present *Rückenwind*, show footage of the performance, and discuss the findings that I came across during the artistic process, the rehearsals, and the performances. I would also show some DIY sonic enhancements that are easily done by yourself, and play a small live piece on my bicycle (maximum 5 minutes). For that I would need some loudspeakers, but I can also bring my own set-up if necessary.

Bio: Composer-performer Jana De Troyer positions herself at the dynamic borders between styles and disciplines. She deftly switches between her roles of composer, instrumentalist, human, sound artist and bicycle player. Coming from a background as a contemporary saxophonist, Jana has always been curious about exploring and fusing various modes of expression. This “Experimentierfreude” has brought about a myriad of creative collaborations with musicians and artists from other disciplines such as visual arts, dance and coding. Her own compositional output consists of both instrumental and electronic music, as well as interactive

installations, web art and audiovisual works. She has developed works for knitting guitar quartet (Fashionista's), kissers (DU-O), a window cleaner (Putzzwang), a prepared bicycle choir (Noise Maps), and more. At the core of her work is a deep sonic exploration of non-musical concepts, which often leads to the integration of interdisciplinary means. De Troyer holds a Master of Music degree in saxophone (MHL Lübeck, 2018) and in contemporary performance and composition (HfMT Hamburg, 2020). She is the winner of the Ad Libitum Composition Competition 2025 and the Lions Club Liubice Förderpreis 2019. She is an alumna of the renowned stART.up programme of the Claussen-Simon Foundation and she is lecturing the music production software Ableton Live at the University of Music Lübeck. In January 2024, a radio portrait about her work was broadcast on Deutschlandfunk.

David Fevyer

Research Associate, Travel Academy, University of Westminster

No cycle Utopia, not now:

Cultures of Sustainable Mobility in media, fiction, and research

Since the invention of the safety bicycle in the late 19th century, utopian promises of cycling have abounded. From the literary imaginings of H G Wells to the contemporary urban advocacy of Copenhagenize and the Dutch Cycling Embassy, a better world of sustainable urban and inter-urban cycle-mobility remains a continuously predicted yet unfulfilled future. Reflections on this ongoing postponement typically identify political, economic, cultural, behavioural, and historical causes amongst others. Yet such factors may often be only partially considered in relation to each other: we may link the political with the economic, but how are these themselves both products and producers of different and contradictory cultural depictions and imaginings of cycle mobility? What do historic and contemporary cultural representations of cycling and cycle infrastructure mean for current discourses around sustainable mobility? And how might further investigation of these interrelations help us in understanding the cycling utopia as a future that never seems to arrive? Drawing on diverse research into media depictions of cyclists in road traffic collision reporting, public responses to road re-allocation interventions, fictive representations of cycling infrastructure and motonormativity, and selected practices in quantitative cycling research, this presentation traces initial connections between these different domains. In particular, it suggests that conversations between cultural/literary-studies and existing cycling research approaches may reveal some of the contours of how cycling as both individual practice and shared urban form is simultaneously understood as a utopian solution and dystopian threat to the status quo. It also tentatively begins to explore opportunities for future inter-disciplinary research collaboration and praxis, including the outlining of a proposed critical framework for approaching sustainability mobility as a question of cultural criticism.

Bio: David Fevyer is a Research Associate at the Active Travel Academy, University of Westminster, UK. He has a multi-disciplinary background, including literary criticism – his PhD thesis examined the Anthropocene in contemporary fiction – technology enhanced learning, active travel scheme evaluation, critical discourse analysis of road traffic collision reporting, and quantitative research on characterising cycling environments and the impacts of LTNs.

Christoph Fink

MSCA Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology,
University of Vienna, Austria

Performing cycling futures:

Strategic identities and the multiple roles of urban activists

Abstract: Advocates for urban utility cycling perform multiple, often contradictory roles: they are concerned citizens and technical experts, grassroots activists and policy insiders, and radical visionaries and pragmatic negotiators. These identities are strategic, depend on the context, and are consequential: they shape how activists and activism are perceived by policymakers, media, and the general public. They influence what cycling futures become politically possible. At the same time, these performances take place within constrained spaces: activist communities struggle with issues of representation, they are often demographically narrow, typically centred around white, male, middle-class, native-born voices. My research treats activists identities as situated knowledge that mediates between embodied cycling experience and political discourse. By combining quantitative social media analysis with an immersive participant observation, I explore how advocates navigate the tension between authenticity and strategic positioning. I ask to what extent their performed identities enable political collaboration, or whether they constrain it, and what the relative uniformity of their demographics reveals about whose ‘ways of being’ are recognised as legitimate cycling advocacy. In this presentation, I share patterns from social media data and from my ethnographic fieldwork in Vienna and Helsinki, examining how activist performativity varies across political cultures. I critically reflect on my own multiple positions as researcher, activist, insider, observer, to argue that an interdisciplinary Critical Cycling Studies must remain attentive to the complex and often contradictory performances through which knowledge about cycling is (re-)produced, and pay attention to who remains absent from the discourses. Only through such self-reflexivity can we develop truly transdisciplinary frameworks that do not merely study cycling and cyclists, but help transform mobilities towards more ecologically sustainable, socially inclusive, and just and equitable futures.

Bio: Christoph Fink is a social geographer, critical cartographer, and urban ethnographer. In his research, he is interested in people and their activities, in particular in cities. He studies in which ways urban spaces and their meaning are constantly re-negotiated, and asks how digital, social and physical spaces interrelate. Christoph is curious which forms of expression, which actions, and speech-acts people use to constitute their world-views and to reproduce their everyday realities. His research focuses on maps, digital platforms as modern-day *agorai*, and the creative ways civil movements argue for their causes. Recurring themes in his work include active mobility, urban sustainability, the Right to the City, and socially just sustainability transformation.

Mark F. N. Franke

Professor in and Director of the Centre for Global Studies, Huron University College,
Canada

Future Revolutions of Emancipated Mobility through Cycling:

Resisting Spatial Capture of Movement in Capitalist Formations

Insofar as the spaces of modern communities are rendered with transportation and mobilities infrastructure intended to facilitate capitalist exchange economies and the accumulation of capital, cycling is expected to somehow pay for spatial accommodations made for its movements. Before designating, protecting, or building spaces and infrastructure for cycling, cities, municipalities, and regional governments typically require cycling to somehow contribute directly to the efficient and speedy movements of workers and consumers, facilitate growth in tourism, attract investments from wealthy classes, or contribute, as components of progressive budgeting processes, to set environmental or health targets. As a result, on almost global scales, cyclists face fundamental and overwhelming pressures to make cycling economically "relevant." Conversely, cyclists also confront opportunities to resist such economic requirements and take advantage of inherent capacities to challenge the very capitalist productions of space and infrastructure that make such demands in the first place. In its radical forms of mobility, cycling offers possibilities in the production of spaces and uses of infrastructure to recreate modern spaces. Rather than having to conform to determinants of economic exchange in capitalist spacings and infrastructure only, cycling offers powerful opportunities to form or recreate modern spaces and infrastructure wherein the plural use-values of human mobility may be affirmed and proliferated, contributing to social possibilities rather than perceived economic necessities and efficiencies. Accordingly, cycling holds the potential for an anti- or post-capitalist politics, providing conditions under which human-oriented spaces of modernity may be imagined and even realised. A political dilemma facing such a cycling future, though, is located in the fact that the spatial capitalist orientation of modern cities, suburbs, towns, and countrysides has gone far to capture and, thus, neutralise the power of radical mobilities. In the same way that modern social spaces are progressively rendered sites of economic exchange through the fundamental land dispossession on which capitalism is based, modern cities, suburbs, towns, and countrysides are formed, in capitalism, as technologies through which even radical mobilities are subject to dispossession. In capitalist modernity, cycling is conditioned by increasing mobilities dispossession, making the possibilities of its movements as productive and proliferating use-values limited within the demands of exchange-value. Before cycling can manifest spatial revolutions in modernity, cycling must make possible the emancipation of movement itself from modern spaces of capitalism. Such emancipation is possible in cycling, but cyclists must have the political courage to move toward the creation of modernity anew. The futures of cycling rest in the power of a re-modernist movement of movement.

Bio: Mark F. N. Franke is a professor in and the Director of the Centre for Global Studies at Huron University College and was a long-time core faculty member in the Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism at Western University, both in London, Ontario, Canada. Franke's teaching critically engages with cultural, discursive, and ideological formations of subjectivity and social/political relations in world-wide systems, focusing on problems in forced migration, patriarchy, racism, spatial/temporal constructions, mobilities, law, coloniality, citizenship, and governmentality. He is the author of *Withdrawal from Immanuel Kant and International Relations: the Global Unlimited* (Routledge, 2024) and *Global Limits: Immanuel Kant, International Relations, and Critique of World Politics* (SUNY Press, 2001), and he has published journal articles and book chapters on questions of refugees' rights, hospitality ethics, politics of movement, politics of critique, neutrality, political geographies of displacement,

electronic technologies managing human movement, Indigenous self-determinations in law, and pedagogies of experiential learning. Franke's current program of research studies the politics of cycling, as a form of modernist mobility that opens possibilities in how social spacings are formed, focusing on objectives in feminist politics, queer activism, antiracism, transportation justice actions, decoloniality, environmentalism, and critical movements in architecture.

Deniz Johns

Lecturer in Film Practice, Lancaster University, UK

Nicky Hamlyn

Professor of Experimental Film, University for the Creative Arts, UK

Chains, Frames, Cycles

Abstract: Bicycle films fall broadly into two categories: more or less commercial documentaries, mostly about racing -The Tour de France, Paris-Roubaix- and a tiny number of films by artists. Experimental films by artists that feature bicycles have a shared approach; the bicycle is used either as a mark-making device, or as a camera mount. In both cases the films efface the bicycle as object, instead using it as a tool, a machine, to create works in which the spectator is displaced, their relationship to the subject reconfigured. The bicycle has been used to create abstract prints and drawings, which are often ephemeral or performance based, and to show the world from novel perspectives by mounting the camera directly to a moving bicycle. In at least one case the film is made directly with the bicycle, bypassing the camera's mediating function. We propose a short programme of short films made using these methods, including Guy Sherwin's *Cycle* (1978), Vicky Smith's *Bicycle Tyre Track* (2012-ongoing) and two films by Tony Hill: *A Short History of the Wheel* (1992) and *Bike* (2013). The films will be discussed and contextualised within the wider context of experimental film and the idea of the bicycle as a tool that extends the creative possibilities for exploratory, non-generic forms of filmmaking. In his book *Cycling and Cinema* (2019), Bruce Bennett argues that the bicycle and cinema share a profound technological and cultural kinship as machines of modernity, both mediating the experience of speed, perception, and mobility. The bicycle, like the camera, transforms embodied motion into a form of visual thought, producing a different way of seeing. In these films, the bicycle becomes a prosthetic extension of the filmmaker's sensory apparatus—an optical and rhythmic machine that collapses the distinction between human, technology, and environment. Likewise, Peter Weibel (2022) discussing kinetics and cinematography, argues that 'technology of cinema was also essentially wheel-based: cameras were developed in which celluloid strips rotated, and projectors in which celluloid was turned by wheels'. These theorisations/arguments resonate with A. L. Rees's (1999) discussion on experimental practice as an interrogation of the apparatus, where the mechanical conditions of film production are revealed and reimagined as part of the artwork itself. The bicycle, used as both recording instrument and performative device, foregrounding the processes of motion, inscription, and perception. The films proposed here extend this materialist tradition, situating the act of cycling within the expanded field of cinematic experiment.

Bio: Deniz Johns is a Lecturer in Film Practice at Lancaster University, UK, specialising in critical film and video practices within Experimental and Expanded Cinema. A key area of her

research focuses on the political aesthetics of experimental film—British Structural/Materialist film in particular—and its relationship to Marxist political and aesthetic theory. A significant outcome of this inquiry has been featured in *The Palgrave Handbook of Experimental Cinema* (2024). As an artist-filmmaker, Johns has been working with 16mm film, digital video, and live performance since 2009, with her work exhibited at national and international venues. Her recent projects explore and interrogate the negation of imagery as a radical strategy for politicising aesthetics, further expanding the discourse on film and politics by examining how the absence, distortion, or deconstruction of imagery can subvert conventional modes of perception, disrupt hegemonic visual cultures, and open new spaces for critical engagement and radical spectatorship.

Bio: Professor Nicky Hamlyn studied Fine Art at the University of Reading. From 1979-1981 he was workshop organizer at the London Filmmaker's Cooperative, where he co-founded the journal *Undercut*. He was professor of Experimental Film at the University for the Creative Arts, Canterbury, Kent and a lecturer in Visual Communication at the Royal College of Art, London, UK until 2025. Since 1974 he has completed over 70 16mm film, video, multi-screen and installation works, which have been exhibited in London, Edinburgh, Toronto, Berlin, Mexico City, Melbourne, Windsor, Ontario, and in solo screenings at the Pacific Film Archives (Berkeley), the Ann Arbor Film Festival, BFI Southbank, London and EXIS, Seoul. His book *Film Art Phenomena* (2003) is published by the BFI. He has contributed essays and chapters on expanded projector films, medium specificity, Stan Brakhage, Bruce McClure, Cathy Rogers, Amy Dickson and others. With A L Rees and Simon Payne, he co-edited and contributed to a monograph on the Austrian filmmaker Kurt Kren, Intellect books, (April 2016) and with Vicky Smith *Experimental and Expanded Animation: New Directions*, Palgrave Macmillan (winner of the 2018 McLaren/Lambart award for best scholarly book on animation). His most recent essay 'Unframing', appeared in *The Palgrave Handbook of Experimental Cinema*, 2024. He is a member of the editorial board of *Millennium Film Journal*.

Lukas Junghanns

Ph.D. Researcher, Aalto University, Finland

Exploring alternative cycling visions through activism:

Lessons from the Critical Mass movement in Helsinki

Abstract: What does cycling mean to you? This seemingly simple question opens up complex social, political, and cultural dimensions. While much cycling research focuses on aspects such as infrastructure, equipment, and policy frameworks, or remains confined within disciplinary boundaries—addressing issues like safety, governance, or user behavior—critical perspectives on the meanings and motivations behind cycling practices remain comparatively rare. Asking this question within the context of bicycle mass gatherings such as Critical Mass reveals a striking diversity of motivations: some participants call for improved cycling infrastructure, others advocate for sustainable mobility, and still others challenge broader societal structures. These perspectives highlight that cycling is far more than a means of transportation—it is a form of social practice and political expression. This study examines these dynamics through a qualitative case study of Critical Mass participants in Helsinki, exploring their perceptions of cycling, motivations for engaging in non-disobedient civil action, and visions for the future. The

empirical work is complemented by a systematic review of scholarly and non-scholarly literature on the Critical Mass movement globally. Preliminary findings indicate that participants frame their engagement as a celebration of community, an embodiment of utopian visions, and a protest against dominant systems such as “big oil and the war machine” (Carlsson, 2002). In this presentation, we highlight the potential of grassroots activism to inform cycling advocacy and broaden the scope of cycling research. By integrating perspectives from transport planning, political science, policy studies, and transformation research, we argue for a more critical and interdisciplinary understanding of cycling as a transformative social practice.

Bio: Lukas Junghanns is a doctoral researcher at Aalto University. His international background in transportation engineering equips him with the expertise to break down academic silos in transportation research and approach it from the perspectives of social & political sciences. His research focus is on the role of bottom-up movements, protest and civil disobedience, and how they can help to reshape existing planning paradigms.

Piotr Kubkowski

Head of Cultural History, Institute of Polish Culture, University of Warsaw, Poland
*Two Fascinations, Two Anxieties, Two Cycling Revolutions:
Warsaw AD 1900 and AD 2000*

Abstract: This paper examines two historical moments marked by a heightened popularity of the bicycle and of cycling practices: the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, and the transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century. The discussion draws on Polish—more specifically, Warsaw—examples. While these developments formed part of broader European trends and can be interpreted as local manifestations of more universal phenomena, they remain highly distinctive due to their particular socio-historical conditions. At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the bicycle—heavily ideologized by circles of the Polish urban aristocracy and the ethnically heterogeneous bourgeoisie—gradually emerged as a vehicle of emancipation for children and women, and, at least in aspirational discourse, for workers as well. In practice, however, it acquired such emancipatory significance only in the period of postwar socialism. During the second half of the twentieth century, the bicycle was predominantly regarded as obsolete, until the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, when it became both an object and a symbol of protest movements and urban activism in Poland’s major metropolitan centres. The historical trajectory of this invention in Poland thus mirrors its broader evolution across many European contexts. Nevertheless, the paper highlights certain local specificities: the remarkably early association of cycling with ethnic minorities (Jews), political-ideological groups (Freemasonry), and sexual minorities (gay men), as well as the political implications arising from these associations. Rather than offering a straightforward comparative analysis, the paper asks how it came to be that such associations emerged within Polish culture, and to what extent these links with potentially subversive or marginalized groups may themselves arise from the very “nature” of the embodied and sensory experience of cycling, understood in its historically situated modalities as a phenomenon of long duration.

Bio: Piotr Kubkowski is a cultural historian specializing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, he focuses on the cultural history of tourism, travel, sport, the body, and urban culture. He earned

his PhD with distinction in 2017 for a dissertation on Poland's first cyclists. Since 2025, he is the Head of the Cultural History Section at the Institute of Polish Culture (University of Warsaw), and since 2024 he serves as deputy director of the interdisciplinary Urban Studies program at the University of Warsaw. He teaches courses in cultural anthropology, 19th-century Polish cultural history, and methodological workshops. He is the author of *Sprężyści* [The Springy] A cultural history of Polish cyclists at the turn of XIX and XX centuries, 2018, the co-editor and co-author of several other books. He has led and participated in numerous research projects funded by the National Science Centre (NCN), the National Programme for the Development of the Humanities (NPRH), focusing on cultural memory, modernity, and tourism. He has co-curated exhibitions at the Museum of Warsaw and other institutions, and co-created the documentary series BLOK (2018). Active in scholarly associations and editorial work, he has also been recognized with several awards, including the Warsaw Literary Award nomination (2019), the H. Szwankowska Prize for the best varsavianist book (2019), and the National Centre for Culture prize for best doctoral dissertation in cultural studies (2017).

Pauline Münch

Science Communicator, Integrative Research Institute on Transformations of Human-Environment Systems (IRI THESys), Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany

James Bonner

Knowledge Exchange Fellow Physical Activity and Health, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland

Hydro-Cycles:

Critical Encounters between Water and Cycling

Abstract: This session weaves together streams of critical water research, personal practice, and collaborative engagement to open dialogues about possible intersections to the emerging field of critical cycling studies. The proposed two-part format begins with a brief presentation introducing the inter- and transdisciplinary discipline of critical water research. Drawing on the work of scholars such as hydro-feminist Astrid Neimanis, it highlights frameworks that conceive of water not as a one-dimensional biophysical resource, but as a relational entity which connects people, institutions, technologies and the environment. The presentation would share the authors' own water research, focusing on their use of cycling as a practice-based method for encountering water. This includes rides tracing the river Spree from source to mouth in northeastern Germany, the river Clyde and its tributaries in central Scotland, as well as travelling to the symposium in Ghent. These journeys showcase how cycling allows for more nuanced and relational understandings of water; from the water bottles which sustain long rides and the sweat of bodies that are an output of our effort, to the rain clouds and surface water which threaten the rides. Cycling alongside rivers through villages, cities, and industrial areas also allows the social and political dimensions of water to surface through interpersonal and community connections. The session would culminate in a collective discussion: What might these two critical fields learn from one another? How and why do the rhythms, distances, and paces of cycling shift our awareness and understanding of waters? Could critical cycling studies draw inspiration from hydrosocial frameworks to foreground the social, political and environmental dimensions in

cycling? Participants will be invited to let ideas settle and sediment before the following day's session. The second part of the session is a slow, situated group ride, mobilising cycling as a community practice for engaging with Ghent's waterways. Along the route, participants will be encouraged to attend not only to visible waters but also to the less perceptible and hidden traces and stories, from puddles to sewers. Several breaks for exchange, drawing, writing, and/or "wetting" a collaborative booklet will offer space for collective noticing. This booklet will become a repository of watery two-wheeled encounters for symposium organisers, a collection of impressions, ideas and questions about the intersection of the two fields. The ride concludes with shared reflections, inviting participants to take time and space to talk, listen, share and care. "

Bio: Pauline Münch is a science communicator who works with practice-based and transdisciplinary methods of knowledge exchange. She focuses on participatory and multimodal approaches to exploring water, infrastructure, and climate, and collaborates with artists, researchers and publics to create new spaces for dialogue. Her current work fosters encounters that make complex histories accessible and usable for diverse audiences and is currently based at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

Bio: James Bonner is an interdisciplinary Knowledge Exchange Fellow situated in the Physical Activity and Health group, part of the department of Psychological Sciences and Health, at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland. He also has projects working with, and supporting, the university's Centre for Sustainable Development, and Sustainable Strathclyde who manage and practically enact environmental initiatives in the university. His studies and work have spanned all faculties at Strathclyde, as well as a research role at the University of Glasgow. He has undertaken variety of postdoctoral projects and roles, building and developing research and practices in novel autoethnographic and arts-based participatory methods situated in place. Mobility and transport are both an area of study, as well as intertwined aspects of the methodological practices he employs in his work, within and outwith, the university. He is a co-founder of the 'Active Mobility Hub' at Strathclyde. He enjoys cycling about Scotland and beyond, in whatever the weather, looking at water, trees and art, stopping for coffee, and planning where to go next. To be perfectly honest, his cycling is often just very long routes to cafes...

Marcel O'Gorman

University Research Chair, Professor of English, and Founding Director of the Critical Media Lab (CML), University of Waterloo, Canada

Ideas on Bikes:

A Brief Velosophy of Technology

What is it about cycling that lends itself to philosophical thought? First, the bicycle is an eco-philosophy on wheels, universally praised for its environmental benefits. It is also associated with the purity of form, embodying a perfect human-scale design. And finally, beyond the benefits of cycling for physical health, the activity is said to promote creativity and, yes, even philosophical rumination. Such claims inspired the French portmanteau *vélosophie*, which is translated here as "velosophy" to conserve its distinct Frenchness. This neologism identifies a lesser-known genre of writing that is at times serious, at times ludicrous, but always fervent. For

the vélosophe, bicycles are not only vehicles for philosophy -- they are objects of passion, inspiring Didier Tronchet to rename our species homo cyclistus. This paper offers a brief history of velosophy, highlighting how the genre is concerned not only with ecology but also with technological invention and progress. This leads to a more focused examination of how the bicycle has served as a vehicle for thinking about technics, a term Bernard Stiegler mobilizes to express the essential prostheticity of the human animal. From the invention of the dérailleur by Paul de Vivie (aka, Vélocio) to the most recent doping scandals of the Tour de France, cycling provides many insights into how the human co-evolves with its technical milieu. Having established the foundation for a velosophy of technics, the discussion covers a variety of speculative questions, including the following: What type of prosthesis is a bicycle? What type of bike is the most appropriate for a velosopher? Does an e-bike qualify as bicycle, and is it worthy of philosophical reflection? What are the optimal conditions for fostering the state of “velosophical flow” (viz. Cskiszentmihalyi)? Responses to these and other questions are sewn together in this essay by a narrative thread inspired by the author’s recent bicycle tour of the Atlantic Coast of Paris. This thread is organized into two distinct stories: 1) “The Purest Bicycle,” which is about a bamboo bicycle constructed by the author’s philosopher friend, Pierre Cassou-Noguès; and 2) “The Impure Bicycle,” which involves the author traveling by Vélib to a spinning class in the basement of a Paris gym. This notion of “purity,” pulled from the history of velosophy, speaks to the supposedly transcendent form of the bicycle itself and serves as an object of deconstruction through the application of a theory of technological prosthesis. In all, this contribution to critical cycling studies demonstrates, through a cross-disciplinary approach, how the bicycle can serve not only as an object lesson for critical studies, but also as a vehicle to inspire velosophical thinking-in-motion.

Bio: Marcel O’Gorman is a University Research Chair, Professor of English, and Founding Director of the Critical Media Lab (CML) at the University of Waterloo, where he teaches courses, leads collaborative projects, and directs workshops that combine critical design methods and the philosophy of technology. O’Gorman has published widely about the impacts of technology, including his books *E-Crit* and *Necromedia* and articles in *Slate*, *The Atlantic*, and *The Globe and Mail*. He is also a digital artist with an international portfolio that includes touring work such as the *Dreadmill* performance, the *Cycle of Dread* participatory installation, and the interactive canoe project *Myth of the Steersman*. This creative experience guides the hands-on methods espoused by the Critical Media Lab and outlined in detail in his most recent book, *Making Media Theory: Thinking Critically with Technology*. O’Gorman’s recent research looks at how critical and inclusive design methods might accompany philosophy-informed policy to tackle some of the ethical and environmental issues faced by contemporary technoculture. In his personal life, O’Gorman is an avid bird-noticer and passionate cyclist who has competed in off-road endurance triathlons. He can be seen riding his replica vintage penny-farthing bicycle around Victoria Park in Kitchener, Ontario.

Annika Otto

Ph.D. Researcher, Transport Studies, Swedish National Road and Transport Research Institute (VTI) and Lund University, Sweden

Vélotemporalities:

Cycling Beyond the Mobility Fix

Abstract: This paper proposes vélotemporalities as a conceptual lens for understanding the temporal politics of cycling within and beyond urban logistics. Drawing on critical logistics studies, mobilities theory, and fieldwork on cycle logistics in Malmö, Sweden, the paper argues that cycling embodies multiple and often conflicting temporal orders. Logistical temporality describes the invisible rhythms of capitalist modernity, the pressures of acceleration, synchronization, and efficiency that structure contemporary urban life and underpin the organisation of cycle logistics. Yet a similar logic of speed and efficiency operates within private and everyday cycling, as contemporary cycling policies overwhelmingly prioritise commuting and productivity-oriented forms of movement. As Spinney (2016, 2020) argues, such policies constitute a mobility fix: a biopolitical strategy that responsabilises individuals to move efficiently and healthily in order to sustain economic growth rather than transform its underlying temporal logic. However, cyclists do not simply perform along these rhythms but continually negotiate, appropriate, and sometimes resist them. The term vélotemporalities captures these embodied and situated experiences of time: the pulse of delivery work, the endurance and repetition of everyday commuting, and the deliberate slowness of older or child cyclists. Across these practices, alternative temporalities emerge that unsettle dominant imaginaries of cycling as merely fast, efficient, or health-optimising mobility. By extending the notion of vélotemporalities from cargo cycling to everyday cycling, the paper repositions cycling as a field where temporal justice, sufficiency, and sustainability are materially and affectively negotiated. Recognising cycling as a temporal practice highlights how time (like space) is a site of power, inequality, and possibility. I argue that a temporal lens is essential to the emerging field of Critical Cycling Studies: one attentive to how time, not only space, is structured, inhabited, and contested through cycling. Such an approach opens pathways for reimagining cycling futures that move beyond the mobility fix toward plural, caring, and sustainable temporalities of movement.

Bio: Annika Otto is a doctoral researcher in Transport Studies at the Swedish National Road and Transport Research Institute (VTI) and Lund University, Sweden. Her research explores the intersections of mobility, temporality, and sustainability within urban cycle logistics. Before joining VTI and Lund University, Annika worked at the Swedish Energy Agency, where she managed research and innovation funding related to sustainable urban development and energy transitions. She holds a master's degree in Economic and Social Geography with a focus on Urban Areas from the University of Leipzig, Germany (2018), and a bachelor's degree in Geography from Heidelberg University, Germany (2015). During her studies, she spent time at Umeå University, Sweden, both as an Erasmus exchange student and while conducting fieldwork for her master's thesis, which was funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). She has also worked as a research assistant at the University of Leipzig, Malmö University, and the Fraunhofer Center for International Management and Knowledge Economy (IMW) in Leipzig.

David Rodriguez

Mechanic, Pelago Bicycles, Finland, and Adjunct Assistant Professor, Hofstra University, USA

Where are All the Bikes in Books?

Abstract: My presentation introduces to cycling studies the topic of cycling in literary art. This means its prevalence or non-prevalence specifically in literary fiction and the aesthetic experience of reading. Bicycles, cycling, and travel by bicycle afford high narrativity across media: personal written accounts are published in travel books, blogs, and social media; commercial advertising almost exclusively uses narrative form across written and video formats; and cycling sports media follows the form of contemporary event coverage by supplying backstories, emergent character-driven narratives, and historical context. But the common thread among these cycling narratives is that they are all reality-based, non-fictional. My thesis is that the narrative affordances of cycling do not extend to fiction literature because of their lack of normalized aesthetic function and their primary use as tools in daily life. Because of these two features, they are not easily integrated into extra-daily aesthetic experience. Bicycles present themselves as objects in narrative if they are broken down, impede narrative progression, or are commodified. Similarly, cycling as an activity fits the sped-up narrative category for travel unless it functions to limit the narrative in some way. I will present two examples that break this mold. The first is a seemingly conventional presentation of a bicycle in a short story by Willa Cather. The short episode involves a sudden bicycle crash between the protagonist and his wife-to-be that highlights some of the buried affordances of bicycles in modernist fiction. Second, I will analyze the most aesthetically rich description of cycling in contemporary literary fiction from a short story by László Krasznahorkai. This example integrates cycling into the central image of the story of a Japanese Noh mask craftsman, who uses his brief leisure time for cycling in the mountains. This presentation marks the beginning of a project on narrative, aesthetics, and cycling that follows the work in my monograph, *The View From Above in American Literature: Aerial Description, The Imaginary, and the Form of Environment*, published by Edinburgh University Press in 2024, about descriptions of the environment in fiction. My new project extends this theorization of the ways description and the material environment disrupt anthropocentric theories of narrative and the ways fiction affords access to the environmental imaginary. Studying the ways cycling appears in fiction similarly shows the value of bicycles in daily life by emphasizing the ways their aesthetic function disrupts normalized travel and travel objects concretized in the automobile.

Bio: David Rodriguez lives in Helsinki and is a mechanic at Pelago Bicycles. In the United States, he was a worker-owner at Baltimore Bicycle Works. He is also Adjunct Assistant Professor at Hofstra University, for whom he now teaches online. His monograph, *The View From Above in American Literature: Aerial Description, The Imaginary, and the Form of Environment*, was published by Edinburgh University Press in 2024. He received his PhD in American literature from Stony Brook University.

Thomas Vanoutrive

Research Group for Urban Development, Faculty of Design Sciences

Member, Urban Studies Institute

University of Antwerp

The Bicycle in the Age of Mobility as a Service: A Cartoonish Exploration

Abstract: Academics, policymakers, and activists often attribute positive normative meanings to the bicycle, viewing it as a cheap, democratic, efficient, healthy, and sustainable mode of

transport. However, it has been argued that technology is not neutral, and its societal role and impact depend on the specific societal context in which it exists. In many places, transport policy has undergone a significant shift toward a new paradigm that is influenced by market-driven thinking, as well as commercial and entrepreneurial values. This raises the question of how the role of the bicycle has evolved within this changing context. In line with artistic research approaches, cartoons were created to explore and reveal the role of the bicycle within a policy landscape where Mobility as a Service (MaaS) and other market-inspired strategies have gained traction. Among other topics, the cartoons address issues such as the promotion of renting as a form of sharing, and the tendency to assess the moral value of a trip based solely on the chosen transport mode — often neglecting factors such as trip purpose and other responsibilities. While it is common for researchers to use existing cartoons to discuss historical events —since they can succinctly summarize complex ideas in a single image — this study focuses on the process of designing cartoons as a form of research itself. Also some limitations of the approach are highlighted. In particular and despite their pedagogical potential to expose the underlying assumptions in policy discourses, the role of cartoons in envisioning better futures remains less clear.

Bio: Thomas Vanoutrive’s research is concerned with transport policy, with a specific focus on transport justice, accessibility and citizen science. He is at the Research Group for Urban Development, Faculty of Design Sciences, University of Antwerp, and is also a member of the Urban Studies Institute.

Rosa van Walbeek (with James Crossley)

Artist, musician, composer & performer, Cycling Art Research (CAR), the Netherlands

Presenting “Cycling Art Research” (CAR)

Abstract: On behalf of CAR, I will present our shared fascination about the intermingling of art and research about, by, and with cycling. Through the presentation of our first collective publication I will discuss how riding bikes with intention can open new perspectives on the ways in which we are socialised to understand and value time and scale, alongside being a tool to help strengthen bonds with the people and land around us. The publication aims to display the multitude of ways in which cycling can affect our social, creative and political worlds. I will show ways to expand and rethink cycling-related research as well as highlighting the benefits I experience myself of the intersection of my cycling and art practice. CAR’s intended role fits within the field of critical cycling studies and we are curious to meet and collaborate. Each of CAR’s projects can serve as a case study pushing the boundaries of art and cycling studies. Contents: Field Essay exploring the relationship between cycling, art and artistic research through the relationship of our own practices as well as mapping the field by including references of other artists. Middle Ground Presentation of a CAR hosted residency in which participants ride a cargo bike around the Netherlands (and beyond). It intends to connect and reclaim the middle ground in a society where binary politics and geographies are cut through by anger, fear, and motorways. Double Life A trip report written by James Crossley after a 3 month cycle tour (and living experiment) in Spain, Italy and Greece. Through it he considers the pros, cons, ethics, and existentialism of trying to live on a bicycle for a period of time. Long An

experimental film by Rosa van Walbeek created during a 5 month bicycle tour in South-America. The film shows the constant motion of landscape surrounding a cyclist and plays with speed and duration. It explores movement in stillness, and stillness in movement. From 0 An ultra-distance cycling route closely tracing the physical grid lines that are projected onto the man-made land of the Noordoostpolder. The route slips in between the patchwork landscape of intense agriculture and human planning that was raised from the sea less than 100 years ago. TideRide A cycling route along the Northsea. By tracking the ever changing shoreline of land ending- and sea beginning the route discusses the (non)-realism and (non)-objectiveness of maps, speculating on ways to bring the nature of living in time into its visualization. Land With No Space A cycling route connecting two closed down “Paalkamperen” campsites, managed by state agency Staatsbosbeheer; these sites were somewhat autonomous spaces with minimal rules, and no user costs. The route explores autonomy and freedom in a land that considers itself (neo)liberal, but practices ultra-high levels of state oversight and land management.

Bio: Rosa van Walbeek is an artist, musician, composer & performer specialising in musicality of landscape. She questions the relationship of humans to their surroundings using different temporal dimensions to take her audience out of a human-centered narrative. Her mediums include long bike journeys, installation pieces, films, performances, textile- and text based works. Together with James Crossley and Myles Merckel she founded Cycling Art Research (CAR). CAR uses art and research about, by, and with cycling to actively practice and convey alternative ways of moving and being. We see cycling as a radical tool for exploration and experimentation within art which allows us to experience the world at a different speed, duration, and scale; connecting us to the land and each other. CAR members: James Crossley, a freelance urban dweller and thinker, artist, graphic designer, project builder, brand strategist, and campaigner. His artistic practice centres on movement and migration within and between urban spaces. He uses visual art, community building, and critical thought to dissect physical, social, and political binaries and boundaries, often by bike.

Sanderien Verstappen

Vienna Visual Anthropology Lab, University of Vienna, Austria

So, I (Don't) Cycle:

Reflections on the Representation of Migrants in Cycling Research

Abstract: How can the interests of migrants be better represented in research? The EMCY research project— Enabling Migrants to Cycle—explores this question using cycling as an example. It examines the challenges migrants face when using bicycles for transportation in Vienna. This complements existing surveys in Vienna, in which people whose first language is German were overrepresented. The project aligns with a central aim of Critical Cycling Studies (Bricker and Zeilinger 2025): to reflect on the fact that cycling research is frequently biased toward WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic) perspectives, and to actively develop new perspectives to challenge and overcome this limitation. The EMCY project is interdisciplinary, including expertise from traffic engineering, urban studies, environmental science, and visual anthropology, and employs an intersectional gender lens to self-reflexively consider the processes and selection mechanisms that shape research outcomes. The film *So, I (Don't) Cycle* (2025), directed by Helen Vaaks at the Vienna Visual Anthropology Lab of the

University of Vienna, is an outcome of this project. It contains video portraits of Aesha, Bing, Mohsen, and Mohammad, who participated in the research project's activities. By showing how they navigate the city and experience cycling, the film offers a fresh perspective on Vienna as a cycling city and diversifies the representation of cycling as a mode of transport. The film director is herself also an immigrant in Vienna.

Bio: Sanderien Verstappen (presenter) I am an experienced and versatile writer, international cultural event producer and overall project manager - that rare breed of a creative yet highly organized do-it-all. I have worked on communication and events in the cultural sector of the Netherlands for years before I took up the challenge to live and work in Southwest China for 5 years. Here, I continued to work on developing unique cultural events and stepped up my writing practice as an editor. In addition, I have worked for two years in the diplomatic network of the Netherlands in China, aiming to share the power and beauty of Dutch art and culture with our Chinese audiences. Cultural exchange for me is a two-way street: I continue to learn all I can about China but have been particularly focused on the historical depth, cultural richness and the simple but meaningful daily practice of Chinese tea ceremony - forever connecting me with my favourite province of Yunnan. Helen Vaaks (film director), University of Vienna in collaboration with research consortium partners Beatrice Stude (stape e.U. URBAN CONSULTING; lead), Elisabeth Kampel (klarFakt e.U.), and Tadej Brezina (TU Wien).

Henrik von Coler

Musician and researcher, Lab for Interaction and Immersion (L42i), School of Music, Georgia Institute of Technology, USA

BIKES: From Interdisciplinary Education to Situated Urban Practice

Abstract: BIKES — an ongoing artistic research project at Georgia Tech's School of Music — transforms four electric cargo bikes into a moving, networked instrument for sound art and music performance. Positioned at the intersection of technology and art, the project integrates interdisciplinary education with local community engagement and critical urban activations. In a self-led studio environment, students master a diverse toolkit—including digital fabrication, network technologies, and music programming, to develop and compose for the instrument. Beyond technical development, the group investigates the aesthetics and affordances of sonic interaction in public spaces, linking their work to the traditions of urban sound art and the specific socio-environmental landscape of Atlanta.

In its inaugural year, the project has explored various modalities, from interactive installations to organized group rides and large-scale public events. These activations have demonstrated a unique capacity for engaging incidental audiences, where the sonic capacities and aesthetics of the bikes invite immediate participation. However, this talk moves beyond a report of success to offer a critical reflection on the logistical, technical, and social boundaries encountered. By analyzing these friction points, we examine the broader question: What happens when interdisciplinary education meets the realities of situated urban practice?

Bio: Henrik von Coler is a musician and researcher, working at the intersection of art, science and technology. In 2024 he founded the Lab for Interaction and Immersion (L42i) at Georgia Tech's School of Music. Before that he was the director of the Electronic Music Studio at TU

Berlin and head of the Computer Music Team at the Audio Communication Group. In his research and creative work, Henrik has explored various aspects of electronic music and musical instruments. This includes interface design, algorithms for sound generation and experimental concepts for composition and performance. Most of his projects treat space as an integral part of music. In 2017 he founded the Electronic Orchestra Charlottenburg – an ensemble of up to 12 electronic musicians – to explore music interaction on immersive loudspeaker systems. He has since worked on ways to enhance how musicians and audiences experience spatial music and sound art. These experiments encompass network systems for musical interaction, artificial intelligence acting as a sound director, and the movement of musicians and loudspeakers in urban soundscapes.