

BIOS & ABSTRACTS

THE FIRST SYMPOSIUM AT THE

HUB FOR CRITICAL CYCLING STUDIES

Visions for Critical Cycling Studies Futures

2–4 June 2026

De Krook, Ghent, Belgium

Organised by Andrew Bricker & Martin Zeilinger

ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

This companion booklet collects abstracts and biographical notes for the speakers, keynotes, and roundtable participants of the First Symposium at the Hub for Critical Cycling Studies. It accompanies the programme booklet and is intended as a reference during and after the symposium.

Entries are grouped by role — Symposium Co-Organisers, Keynote Speakers, Roundtable, and Paper Presenters (alphabetical by surname) — mirroring the structure of the programme.

CONTENTS

Symposium Co-Organisers

Keynote Speakers

Roundtable: Bringing Critical Cycling Studies to Questions of Mobility

Paper Presenters (alphabetical)

Andrew Bricker

Associate Professor of English Literature, Ghent University, Belgium

Bio B.A., M.A. University of Toronto; Ph.D. Stanford University. Senior Fellow at the Andrew W. Mellon Society of Fellows in Critical Bibliography at the Rare Book School, University of Virginia. Co-Directeur Sportif, 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), serves as the theoretical basis for a new methodology in cycling studies and as a critical starting point for discussions at the symposium. Bricker also serves as Academic Coordinator / Principal Investigator for DELIAH: Democratic Literacy and Humour (2025–2029), funded by the Horizon Europe Framework Programme. He is the author of *Libel and Lampoon: 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). <https://research.flw.ugent.be/en/andrew.bricker>

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Martin Zeilinger

*Reader in Computational Arts & Technology, Abertay University, Dundee, UK
Senior Research Fellow, Orpheus Institute, Ghent*

Bio Ph.D. University of Toronto. 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), which proposes a new methodological framework for cycling studies and provides the conceptual foundation for the symposium. Zeilinger works internationally as a researcher, curator, and artistic researcher with a focus on digital art and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. 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 on digital art, media theory, legal theory, and political economy of media appears widely in key digital culture journals and has been translated into French, Korean, Italian, Slovak, and Slovenian. <https://marjz.net/>

KEYNOTE 1

Kaffe Matthews

Sound artist and composer, Berlin, Germany · sonicbikes.net

“The swamp that was...”

Abstract Matthews’ keynote will combine two components: (1) an 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 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 folds embodied experience into scholarly inquiry. 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. 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 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. 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 for Sonic Bed_London; and Honorary Mention for cd cécile. She is the first woman to have received the Edgar Varèse guest professorship in computer music at TU Berlin, and has been releasing solo works on Annette Works since 1996.

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KEYNOTE 2

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 recognised 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*.

“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 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. These tensions 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, and shifting cycling publics. A comparative analysis of 30 km/h speed-limit policies across European cities extends this insight to the level of policymaking, revealing how fear, public acceptance, evidence, and political leadership interact through reinforcing and balancing feedback loops. Finally, a linguistically oriented workshop foregrounds the discursive conditions that underwrite these dynamics, highlighting 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 PARTICIPANTS

Nicole den Braver • Josefien Hoerée • Eva Van Eenoo • Mohammad Nazarpour
(bios on next page)

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, 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.

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Josefien Hoerée

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 Hoerée 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, centred 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.

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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 postdoctoral 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.

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Mohammad Nazarpour

PhD Fellow, Urban Cycling Institute · PhD Researcher, Tarbiat Modares University, Iran

“Challenging Linguistic Barriers: Co-Constructing Counter-Narratives for Transformative Change”

Bio A PhD researcher on urban cycling, PhD Fellow at the Urban Cycling Institute, and the Bicycle Mayor of Tehran at BYCS. His research interests lie in understanding cycling practices from an anthropological perspective, exploring issues of power, space, gender, culture, and politics. His PhD research focused on the lived experience of urban cycling, aiming to discover how cycling can phenomenologically change urban experiences. Currently, he is 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 PRESENTERS

Alphabetical 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 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. 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. Cadence-based control proved effective for individual scaling without requiring maximal power testing. 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.

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.

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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” 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.”

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 characterised 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 articulations through the GROW-SPACES framework (Growth-Oriented Responsive Urban Spaces), which links developmental psychology, spatial cognition, and inclusive design. 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?” 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.

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.

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Paulo de Assis

Senior Research Fellow, Orpheus Instituut, Ghent, 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 becoming — 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). 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).

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Jana De Troyer

Composer-performer and bicycle player, Hamburg, Germany

Lecturer, Musikhochschule Lübeck and SRH University Berlin, Germany

“Play (with) your bike!: Bicycles as sound generators and chamber music partners”

Abstract In May 2026, the premiere and performances of “Rückenwind” take place in and around Hamburg (Germany). “Rückenwind” is a contemporary classical composition for voice, harpsichord, saxophone, electronics, and two bicycles. The bikes are played as instruments and are at the sonic and thematic core of the work. For this piece, De Troyer extends her 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. One of the main goals of the production is to reach new audiences through their love of bikes and by bringing the piece to their neighbourhoods. The work is performed in community centres instead of classical concert spaces. During her presentation, De Troyer will talk about her bicycle projects, about “Rückenwind”, and discuss the findings that she came across during the artistic process, the production, and the performances.

Bio Jana De Troyer is a Belgian composer, saxophonist, and bicycle player based in Hamburg, Germany. She is a lecturer at the Musikhochschule Lübeck and SRH University Berlin.

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David Fevyer

Research Associate, Active Travel Academy, University of Westminster, UK

“No cycle Utopia, not now: Cultures of Sustainable Mobility in media, fiction, and research”

Abstract 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. 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? 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.

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.

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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 activist 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. 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.

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 agoraí, 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.

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Mark F. N. Franke

Professor & Director, Centre for Global Studies, Huron University College, Canada

“Future Revolutions of Emancipated Mobility through Cycling: Resisting Spatial Capture of Movement in Capitalist Formations”

Abstract 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 to set environmental or health targets. As a result, on almost global scales, cyclists face fundamental 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 its radical forms of mobility, cycling offers possibilities in the production of spaces and uses of infrastructure to recreate modern spaces. 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. Before cycling can manifest spatial revolutions in modernity, cycling must make possible the emancipation of movement itself from modern spaces of capitalism.

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). 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.

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Deniz Johns & Nicky Hamlyn

Deniz Johns: Lecturer in Film Practice, Lancaster University, UK

Nicky Hamlyn: Professor of Experimental Film (Emeritus), 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. We propose a short programme of 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. 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. 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 the negation of imagery as a radical strategy for politicising aesthetics.

Bio Nicky Hamlyn studied Fine Art at the University of Reading. From 1979–1981 he was workshop organiser at the London Filmmakers’ Co-operative, where he co-founded the journal *Undercut*. He was Professor of Experimental Film at the University for the Creative Arts, Canterbury, until 2025. Since 1974 he has completed over 70 16mm film, video, multi-screen, and installation works, exhibited in London, Edinburgh, Toronto, Berlin, Mexico City, Melbourne, and elsewhere. His book *Film Art Phenomena* (2003) is published by the BFI. With Vicky Smith he co-edited *Experimental and Expanded Animation: New Directions* (Palgrave Macmillan), winner of the 2018 McLaren/Lambart Award. He is a member of the editorial board of *Millennium Film Journal*.

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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, 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. 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. 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). 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 and political sciences. His research focuses on the role of bottom-up movements, protest, and civil disobedience, and how they can help reshape existing planning paradigms.

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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. At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the bicycle — heavily ideologised 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 paper highlights certain local specificities: the remarkably early association of cycling with ethnic minorities, political-ideological groups, and sexual minorities, as well as the political implications arising from these associations.

Bio Piotr Kubkowski is a cultural historian specialising in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, focusing 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 programme at the University of Warsaw. He is the author of *Sprężysci [The Springy]: A cultural history of Polish cyclists at the turn of XIX and XX centuries* (2018). He has co-curated exhibitions at the Museum of Warsaw and co-created the documentary series BLOK (2018). He has been recognised with several awards, including the Warsaw Literary Award nomination (2019) and the National Centre for Culture prize for best doctoral dissertation in cultural studies (2017).

Pauline Münch & James Bonner

Pauline Münch: Science Communicator, 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 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 connecting people, institutions, technologies, and the environment. The presentation shares the authors’ own water research, focusing on their use of cycling as a practice-based method for encountering water: rides tracing the river Spree from source to mouth in northeastern Germany, the river Clyde and its tributaries in central Scotland, and travelling to the symposium in Ghent. The session culminates in a collective discussion: What might these two critical fields learn from one another? 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 are encouraged to attend not only to visible waters but also to the less perceptible and hidden traces, from puddles to sewers. Several breaks for exchange, drawing, writing, and/or “wetting” a collaborative booklet offer space for collective noticing.

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. His studies and work have spanned all faculties at Strathclyde. He has undertaken a variety of postdoctoral projects, building research and practices in novel autoethnographic and arts-based participatory methods situated in place. Mobility and transport are both an area of study and intertwined aspects of the

methodological practices he employs. He is a co-founder of the ‘Active Mobility Hub’ at Strathclyde. He enjoys cycling about Scotland and beyond, in whatever the weather.

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Marcel O’Gorman

University Research Chair, Professor of English, and Founding Director, Critical Media Lab, University of Waterloo, Canada

“Ideas on Bikes: A Brief Velosophy of Technology”

Abstract 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 even philosophical rumination. Such claims inspired the French portmanteau *vélosophie*, translated here as “velosophy.” This neologism identifies a lesser-known genre of writing that is at times serious, at times ludicrous, but always fervent. 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 mobilises to express the essential prostheticity of the human animal. The discussion covers a variety of speculative questions: 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? Responses are sewn together by a narrative thread inspired by the author’s recent bicycle tour of the Atlantic Coast of France, organised into two stories: “The Purest Bicycle,” about a bamboo bicycle constructed by the author’s philosopher friend, Pierre Cassou-Noguès; and “The Impure Bicycle,” involving the author travelling by Vélib to a spinning class in the basement of a Paris gym.

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*. 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.

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Annika Otto

Ph.D. Researcher, Transport Studies, VTI & 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, synchronisation, and efficiency that structure contemporary urban life. 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. The term vélotemporalities captures 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. 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 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.

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David Rodriguez

Mechanic, Pelago Bicycles, Finland · 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. 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 normalised aesthetic function and their primary use as tools in daily life. Bicycles present themselves as objects in narrative if they are broken down, impede narrative progression, or are commodified. I will present two examples that break this mould: a short story by Willa Cather in which a sudden bicycle crash highlights some of the buried affordances of bicycles in modernist fiction, and the most aesthetically rich description of cycling in contemporary literary fiction from a short story by László Krasznahorkai. 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* (Edinburgh University Press, 2024).

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.

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Thomas Vanoutrive

Research Group for Urban Development, Faculty of Design Sciences · Urban Studies Institute, University of Antwerp, Belgium

“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, this study focuses on the process of designing cartoons as a form of research itself. 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.

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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, we 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 we 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. 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. Projects include: *Field Essay* (exploring the relationship between cycling, art, and artistic research); *Middle Ground* (a CAR-hosted residency in which participants ride a cargo bike around the Netherlands and beyond); *Double Life* (a trip report by James Crossley after a 3-month cycle tour in Spain, Italy, and Greece); *Long* (an experimental film by Rosa van Walbeek created during a 5-month bicycle tour in South America); *From 0* (an ultra-distance cycling route closely tracing the physical grid lines projected onto the man-made land of the Noordoostpolder); *TideRide* (a cycling route along the North

Sea); and *Land With No Space* (a route connecting two closed-down Paalkamperen campsites).

Bios 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-centred 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), which uses art and research about, by, and with cycling to actively practice and convey alternative ways of moving and being. CAR member **James Crossley** is 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.

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Sanderien Verstappen

Associate Professor, 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, Industrialised, 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, 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 is Associate Professor at the Vienna Visual Anthropology Lab of the University of Vienna. The film *So, I (Don’t) Cycle* (2025)

was directed by Helen Vaaks at the Lab, in collaboration with research consortium partners Beatrice Stude (stape e.U. URBAN CONSULTING; lead), Elisabeth Kampel (klarFakt e.U.), and Tadej Brezina (TU Wien).

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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 organised 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 analysing 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, including 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