

FASTER/SLOWER/FUTURE **Towards Postcapitalism**

talks/conference • in English • Kaaistudio's

SATURDAY 22/10

14:00 – **Nick Srnicek & Alex Williams:** *Inventing the future*

15:45 – **Patricia Reed:** *Politics and Complexity Mediation*

17:00 – **Helen Hester:** *Never Done?: Feminized Reproductive Labour and Post-Work Politics*

19:00 – **Benjamin Noys:** *Futures of Accelerationism*

20:15 – conversation between **Nick Srnicek, Alex Williams, Benjamin Noys & Patricia Reed**

22:00 – screening *HYPERSTITION: The retooling of philosophy and political theory for the 21st Century*

SUNDAY 23/10

11:00 – **Anton Jäger & Alex Williams:** *The Virtues of the Abstract', or 'Late Capitalism Express'*

12:30 – **Nick Srnicek, Thomas Decreus & Francine Mestrum:** debate

SATURDAY 22/10

14:00 – Nick Srnicek & Alex Williams: *Inventing the future*

In recent months a range of studies has warned of an imminent job apocalypse due to automation. This is not simply a rich country problem either, as low-income economies look set to be hit even harder. It would seem that we are on the verge of a mass job extinction. But is this the case? Some point to the longer history of automation, suggesting there is nothing to worry about. This talk examines some of the issues and sets the conditions and progressive potentials for a world without work.

- Nick Srnicek is a lecturer at City University London. He is the author of *Platform Capitalism* (Polity, 2016), and *Inventing the Future* (Verso, 2015 with Alex Williams). He is currently writing *After Work: What's Left and Who Cares?* (Verso, 2017 with Helen Hester).
- Alex Williams is a PhD student at the University of East London working on a thesis entitled *Complexity & Hegemony*.

15:45 – Patricia Reed: *Politics and Complexity Mediation*

If substantial political transformation today is not possible without engaging the entanglement of socio-economic-juridical-climactic realities; it follows that complexity must become a navigable 'object' for politicization. Put simply, we must find ways to mediate complexity in order to leverage our situation for the benefit of the many. These steps are a requirement in order to politicize often invisible or intangible structures that prescribe/deny modes of acting in the world. As the understanding our reality supersedes our current cognitive and phenomenological grasp, this talk will look at how human/machinic intelligence coupling both dismantles classical epistemic separations, and how it can serve the demands of our socio-political world, aiming towards its transformation.

- Patricia Reed is an artist, writer and designer. Recent exhibitions include those at Homeworks 7 (LB); Witte de With (NL); and Haus der Kulturen der Welt (DE). She has contributed chapters to *Reinventing Horizons; Dea ex machina* (with/as Laboria Cuboniks); *#ACCELERATE: The Accelerationist Reader*; and *The Psychopathologies of Cognitive Capitalism vol II*, amongst others.

17:00 – Helen Hester: *Never Done?: Feminized Reproductive Labour and Post-Work Politics*

Helen Hester will explore the suggestion that post-work positions neglect to address domestic and caring activities or to include reproductive labour within their political

purview. It will attempt to both support and query such criticisms with reference to one of the foundational thinkers of the contemporary challenge to work, Andre Gorz. Gorz demands to be recognised as one of the key post-work thinkers of the twentieth century, with *Farewell to the Working Class* exercising a substantial and continuing influence upon later critics and activists. Yet, his attitude to reproductive labour (and hostile stance towards certain feminist positions) renders this influence problematic. Today, I want to sketch out Gorz's framing of 'autonomous labour' and the domestic sphere, arguing that, whilst he undoubtedly positions unwaged reproductive labour at the centre of his project, he does so primarily in order to exclude such labour from his conception of work. In fact, he not only argues that it is a privileged sphere of activity that should be upheld, but does so in such a way that he naturalizes both this work and the existing gender roles that underpin it. In doing so, Gorz runs counter to a materialist feminist refusal of work, wrongly characterizing this refusal as a celebration of the work ethic (and thus failing to absorb all the insights this position has to offer).

- Helen Hester is Head of Film and Media at the University of West London. Her research interests include technofeminism, sexuality studies, and theories of social reproduction, and she is a member of the feminist working group Laboria Cuboniks. She is the author of *Beyond Explicit: Pornography and the Displacement of Sex* (SUNY Press, 2014), the co-editor of the collections *Fat Sex: New Directions in Theory and Activism* (Ashgate, 2015) and *Dea ex Machina* (Merve, 2015), and series editor for Ashgate's 'Sexualities in Society' book series.

19:00 – Benjamin Noys: *Futures of Accelerationism*

The debate about accelerationism has been violent and vituperative. Here I want to consider the battle over the notion of the future. Accelerationism, in its various forms, has often claimed a monopoly on the future. The argument is that only by engaging with capitalist forms of technology and abstraction can we envisage a future beyond capitalism. Neoliberal capitalism only provides more of the same, while accelerationism can force a new future into being or even invent the future. Here I want to consider various alternative futures, which are, at least, reactionary, if not fascist. My suggestion is accelerationism does not have a monopoly on the future and needs to consider how these reactionary futures engage certain forms of technology and abstraction to malign ends. Rather than continuing a polemic with accelerationism, one that has exhausted its novelty, the battle being fought here, tonight, is a battle to think the present as a warzone in which our future is at stake.

- Benjamin Noys is Professor of Critical Theory at the University of Chichester. He is the author of *Georges Bataille: A Critical Introduction* (2000), *The Culture of Death*

(2005), *The Persistence of the Negative: A Critique of Contemporary Theory* (2010), *Malign Velocities: Accelerationism & Capitalism* (2014), and editor of *Communization and Its Discontents* (2011). He is currently writing *Uncanny Life*, a critical discussion of the problems of the vital and vitalism in contemporary theory.

20:15 – Conversation between **Nick Srnicek, Alex Williams, Benjamin Noys, Patricia Reed, a.o. (moderated by Laurent de Sutter)**

22:00 – Screening ***HYPERSTITION: The retooling of philosophy and political theory for the 21st Century*** (Christopher Roth in collaboration with Armen Avanesian)
A film on time and narrative. Of thoughts and images. On plants and the outside. Abduction and Recursion. Yoctoseconds and Platonia. Plots and anaerobic organisms. About the movement of thinking and philosophy in anthropology, art, design, economy, linguistics, mathematics, and politics. And back into abstraction.

SUNDAY 23/10

11:00 – ‘**The Virtues of the Abstract**’, or ‘**Late Capitalism Express**’:

On Some Theoretical and Practical Problems in Left-Accelerationism: a presentation by Anton Jäger with a response by Alex Williams

12:30 – **debate with Nick Srnicek, Thomas Decreus, Francine Mestrum**, moderated by **Antoon Vandavelde**: *On post-work imaginaries*

Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams argue in their book *Inventing the Future* that capitalism is no longer able to create jobs for everybody and that further technological development will only make this problem bigger. So we'd better start thinking about a system in which people are no longer dependent on a job to have an income and where 'work' doesn't take central stage anymore. A basic income for everyone is, in this context, one of the concrete proposals by Srnicek and Williams.