



Doing Gender: Media, Art and Politics 2010-2015

This research programme takes the specific and located history and the growth of the discipline of gender studies as an interdisciplinary, transformative scholarly practice as its point of departure. The research programme of gender studies in the humanities of Utrecht University addresses and re-invents the traditions developed so far by feminist scholars. The programme thus explores how the tensions between generating new categories of gender analysis and building on traditions of women's and feminist movements and scholarship can be taken beyond the opposition of overcoming the past and celebrating the new. The programme thus *reconsiders* the history of the feminist movement and feminist scholarship, and *canonizes* feminist thought again. Based on the strength of its faculty in specific research areas this exploration focuses on three fields: Art & Beyond, Postcoloniality and Social Justice, and Contemporary Feminist Theory. Together they focus on the ways in which instances of *gendering* occur, that is, on how cultural practices and artefacts get to perform and transform gender in a context that is thoroughly power-laden. The programme looks at the ontology and epistemology, ethics and aesthetics of gender in its entanglement with other axes of socio-cultural differentiation such as class, 'race'/ethnicity, sexuality, and age. With its interdisciplinary research, gender studies scholars in the Humanities at Utrecht University add to contemporary (feminist) debates about transitional justice, post-colonialism, post-humanism, and post-secularism.

1. Art & Beyond (Cultural Industry; Aesthetics & Ethics)

This strand focuses on the understanding of art in both its aesthetic and political dimension. It focuses on cross-cultural productions and borrowings that emphasise the uneasy relationship with canons, national traditions, and other operations of inclusion and exclusion. Art and diversity are made central through the study of a myriad of different media and genres which range from literature and cinema to the visual arts, from digital media to photography, from theater to music, and so forth. Art is addressed for its transformative power and as a vehicle for intercultural communication and planetary solidarity. To understand the medium of art in its specificity is as essential as the understanding of its context of operation in order to account for both the aesthetic and ethical dimensions. Art is also understood as part of the market and it is explored in relation to its entanglement with globalization and the issues of production, distribution, reception and canonization (i.e. institutions such as publishing houses, prizes, festivals and competitions are taken into account). The research group has a strong expertise in 'doing gender' in the arts as new forms of appropriation and transformation of gendered identity which are not purely visual but multimodal and multicultural. Projects undertaken *with* artists and curators are thus part of the work undertaken.

2. Postcoloniality and Social Justice (Subaltern archive, post-secular, post-socialist citizenship, cosmopolitanism, migration, human rights, transitional justice)

This strand aims to account for local and global feminist perspectives from multiple disciplinary backgrounds and geopolitical locations. It focuses in particular on how postcolonial critique and intersectional analysis help to untangle issues related to migration, citizenship, human rights, and transitional/transnational justice. Questions of representation (identity, boundaries, and belonging) as well as socio-cultural and political formations (citizenship, equality, welfare) are investigated in order to understand how 'doing gender' takes place through both material and discursive practices that accounts for colonial legacies within global dynamics. The research group has a strong expertise in the field of race and sexuality theories, black and postcolonial Europe, critical multiculturalism, intersectionality, feminist postcolonial theories, postsecularism, post-socialist studies, the history of the welfare state, world literatures, transnational media studies, global art among others. We do projects with civil society (NGOs, and women's and anti-racist organizations) as well.

3. Contemporary Feminist Theory (Epistemology, post-human, new media)

This strand focuses on recent feminist theoretical insights, and on the way in which they relate to the canon of feminist theory and to developments in contemporary cultural theory more broadly. Gender studies at Utrecht University has the reputation of being at the forefront of new feminist and postcolonial theory formation, concerning ontology and epistemology, ethics and aesthetics, and feminist theory and its applied character. The research group positions itself in debates on among other issues new media, science, and technology studies; human rights and post-humanism; the diverse schools in feminist epistemology; and the 'turns' in the humanities. 'Doing gender' or 'gendering' reveals a distinctive conceptual stance: we are interested in the contextualized and processual study of gender in its entanglement with 'race'/ethnicity, sexuality, age, and so on. This we take to be a third-wave feminist perspective: the third wave is not about arguing against the second wave, but rather about revisiting and revitalizing its theoretical and political legacy.

Members of the research group participate in Utrecht University's research focus areas *Cultures and Identities*, and *Origins and Impacts of Institutions*.