



Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture

## LECTURE SERIES

### *Archaeologies of Transition: Reanimating Archives and Re-inhabiting Urban Spaces in South African and Russian Visual Art*

*Dr. Ksenia Robbe  
(Leiden University)*

*Wednesday April 19th 2017, 15:00-18:00  
Room BG2. 012*

#### PROGRAM

15:00 -15:10	INTRODUCTION
15:10 - 16:10	LECTURE BY PROF. DR KSENIA ROBBE
16:20 - 18:00	DISCUSSION

The processes of regime change that took place across Eastern Europe as well as parts of Africa and Latin America during the late 1980s-early 1990s, usually referred to as ‘transitions’ in (post-)Cold War language, have by now been largely relegated to the past and seen as accomplished events, whether ‘successful’ or not. When focusing on the dynamics of cultural memory in individual countries and regions, however, we see that ideologies and practices of the past still hold sway over everyday life. At the same time, we observe how nostalgic moods related to present-day disappointments are being appropriated by the state in support of the status quo. This lecture will discuss some recent practices of remembering ‘transition’ as a lived historical reality foregrounding its contradictions and potentialities, beyond temporalities positing a break or continuity with the past, in South Africa and Russia. Despite significant differences in discursive constructions of the transitional period, critical practices of challenging neoliberal hegemony in these societies expose similar mnemonic tendencies. Among these practices, I will explore the ways in which visual art including curatorial projects and artistic productions reanimates neglected archives of the transitions.

**Dr. Ksenia Robbe** is Assistant Professor at Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society, specializing in African and Comparative literature. She received her PhD (summa cum laude) in English and American Literature and Culture from the University of Giessen (GCSC) with a dissertation on South African women’s writing. Before coming to Leiden in August 2012, she taught at the Department of English and American studies in Giessen and at the Department of English, Postcolonial and Media studies in Munster. She has been a research fellow at the University of Freiburg, working within the Research group 'Universality and the Acceptance Potential of Social Knowledge: On the Circulation of Knowledge between Europe and the Global South' (2012) and a visiting researcher at the African Studies Centre at the University of Cape Town (2013). Her current research explores comparative perspectives on memory and social transformation in contemporary Russian and South African literature and art.

*This lecture is part of the faculty of Humanities honours programme seminar ‘Competing Memories’, and open for all university staff, MA & PhD students. The lecture series is organised by the Amsterdam School of Heritage, Memory and Material Culture (AHM), Space is limited so please register in advance via [sanne.letschert@student.uva.nl](mailto:sanne.letschert@student.uva.nl). AHM Lecture Series Coordinator: Dr Ihab Saloul*