symposium

Materiality, Mediation and the Study of Religion

18 & 19 October 2012 - Utrecht

Instead of having become obsolete through modernization and secularization, religion has continued unabated to transform into new varieties and this poses major theoretical challenges for its study. The central aim of this symposium is to contribute to developing new perspectives for the study of religion from the angle of materiality and mediation. Taking as a starting point that religion is a mundane as well as world-making social-cultural phenomenon, the main concern of the symposium is to explore how religion becomes concrete and palpable through people, their practices and use of things, and is part and parcel of politico-aesthetic power structures.

This symposium places center stage bodies, pictures, objects, and texts – all pivotal for processes of (religious) world-making. Being authorized as material media with a certain task and purpose, bodies, pictures, objects, and texts are located right at the heart of current inquiries into the interface of “materiality” and “mediation.” They are embedded in sets of practices and modes of sensation and experience. Bringing together scholars with different disciplinary backgrounds, this symposium is envisioned as a multidisciplinary platform for debating and rethinking the study of religion in our time.
15.15-16.30 * Christiane Kruse How to Believe in Contemporary Art? The Question of Spirit in Works of Annish Kapoor

* Ann-Sophie Lehman A Hair's Breadth: Interstices between Medium, Body and Belief in Jan van Eyck's Adam and Eve Panels of the Ghent Altarpiece

* Discussant: Simon O’ Meara

OBJECTS I Chair: Christoph Baumgartner

16.45-18.00 * Peter van der Veer What if Everything is Destroyed? Iconoclasm and Embodied Memory

* Patricia Spyer Special Effects: Scale, Animacy, Presence

* Discussant: Peter Pels

19 October 2012 Venue: Kanunnikenzaal -> Utrecht University Faculty Club

Entrance: Achter de Dom 7-A

OBJECTS II Chair: Birgit Meyer

9.30-10.45 * Jo Spaans Beneath the Pulpit. Church Buildings and How They Shaped Protestant Religion from the Seventeenth Century to the Present

* Matthew Engelke "Not Mine, not Mine": On the Coffin Question in Humanist Funerals

* Discussant: Joris van Eijnatten

TEXTS Chair: Christoph Baumgartner

11.00-12.15 * Patrick Eisenlohr Materialities of Religious Discourse

* Terje Stordalen Emancipating Bodies, Artefacts, and Figurations from the Textual Gaze

* Discussant: Eric Ottenheijm