# VU Amsterdam Ethnographic Film Day

**7 December 2016**

## Description

What is the value of film as medium for ethnographic fieldwork? With which dilemmas are film-making anthropologists confronted? What is the relationship between visual methods and other methods? What do visual methods contribute to research?

The Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology of the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam presents the Amsterdam Ethnographic Film Day during which we will screen ethnographic films and discuss the various theories and methods of visual anthropology. We aim to provide a platform for anthropologists and documentary makers engaging in visual anthropology to show their films and communicate their experiences with, and thoughts on, ethnographic film-making.

## Programme

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:30</td>
<td>Arrival &amp; Welcome</td>
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<td>10:30 – 12:00</td>
<td>Screening of <em>Inside the mind of Favela Funk</em> and Q&amp;A with Elise Roodenburg and Fleur Beemster. Topic for discussion: “From thesis to documentary: how to combine anthropology and film-making”.</td>
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<td>12:00 – 13:00</td>
<td>Lunch break</td>
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<td>13:00 – 14:00</td>
<td>Screening of <em>Love Home</em> and Q&amp;A with Sanderien Verstappen and Willy Sier. Topic for discussion: “The use of ethnographic film-making to capture the complexity of ethnographic research”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:00 – 15:00</td>
<td>Screening of <em>Demal Te Niew (“Go and Come Back”)</em> and Q&amp;A with Marcella Pasotti, Viola Bachini and Giulia Sinatti. Topic for discussion: “The use of multimedia in communicating research results”.</td>
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<td>15:00 – 15:30</td>
<td>Tea break</td>
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<td>15:30 – 17:00</td>
<td>Pre-Premier Feedback Screening of <em>The Possibility of Spirits</em> and Q&amp;A with Mattijs van de Port. Topic for discussion: “The use of film in the ethnography of something as inexplicable as spirit possession”.</td>
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<td>17:00 – onwards</td>
<td>Drinks</td>
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## Details

- **Date:** 7 December 2016
- **Time:** 10:00-17:00
- **Location:** Kerkzaal (top floor of the main building of the VU)
Synopsis

‘Inside the Mind of Favela Funk’ is a documentary about love and relationships in the world of the extremely popular ‘favela funk’: pornographic music from Rio de Janeiro’s deprived neighborhoods.

The documentary shows the perspective of the favela youth and aims to find the relation between the favela funk lyrics and their personal, daily (love) lives, dominated by a lawless subculture of drug gangs, violence and sex.

‘Inside the Mind of Favela Funk’ gives an insight in the current Brazilian underground music and its corresponding sexual values, but it also shows a search for faith, hope and love.

Director’s Statement

The aim of this documentary is to find the relation between the personal, daily (love) lives of our characters and the Favela Funk lyrics, dominated by a lawless subculture. We made the choice to only show the perspective of the favela youth, and not involve outside experts or text cards. Our aim is to give a look inside the lives of favela locals in order to understand more of their realities and backgrounds.

‘Inside the Mind of Favela Funk’ doesn’t aim to give clearcut answers. Instead it shows a story that one can interpret and understand in its own way. For us, it became a story that can be used as a point to raise a discussion of how to put extremely pornographic music in perspective in any society.

Topic for Discussion

From thesis to documentary: How to combine anthropology and film making. The makers hope to show how students of anthropology can use their anthropological training in the field of documentary making.
<table>
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<th><strong>Synopsis</strong></th>
<th><strong>Topic for Discussion</strong></th>
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<td>A film about fast urbanisation in China, the desire to buy a house in the city, and the inability to live there. In contemporary China, cities are growing fast with large-scale investments in urban housing to accommodate rural-urban migration. For people from rural areas, buying a house in the city has become an important symbol of success. Yet, the houses they are able to afford are often located in city outskirts with few labour opportunities. Therefore many are unable to stay long-term in their newly acquired house, and instead furnish and store it for the future. This film is about such a house. It is empty most of the year, but the owners still consider it their home.</td>
<td>The use of ethnographic film-making to capture the complexity of ethnographic research.</td>
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Screening of
Demal Te Niew
(“Go and Come Back”)
by Marcella Pasotti, Silvia Lami and Viola Bachini

Synopsis
Migration today is a hot media topic and a primary concern on Western political agendas. The media play an important role in shaping public opinion about this phenomenon, however they often feed the public with negative and stigmatizing images.

Our interactive web-documentary “Demal Te Niew” (Go and Come Back in Wolof) overturns this perspective by adopting an original standpoint: we focus on the stories of return migrants between Italy and Senegal, highlighting their multiple trajectories and their transnational lifestyle.

We cover the lives of three returnees who have resettled in Senegal after a long migration experience in Italy. We explore the reasons that brought them home, the ties they still hold with Italy, the projects they undertake and their aspirations for the future.

The protagonists include Sylla, who has created an ice-cream business in Saly in collaboration with his former Italian employer. Karou, who is starting up a firm producing drip-irrigation systems with recycled plastic in Thiès. Mohamed, who after 12 years as an irregular migrant in Italy opened a cooperative firm in Dakar with his Italian partners and created jobs for 45 young Senegalese.

These individual stories will be complemented with and contextualized by information gathered through an ethnographic research and statistical data. These elements will allow the public to position the three stories in the bigger framework of contemporary international migration.

Topic for Discussion
The use of multimedia in communicating research results.

Links
Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuyslKL4hJA&feature=youtu.be
Website: http://journalismgrants.org/projects/demal-te-niew-go-and-come-back#
Synopsis

“What is it that you film when you film a spirit?

Shot in Bahia (Brazil), The Possibility of Spirits is an essay film that keeps the baffling mystery of spirit possession center stage.

In a poetic assemblage of images and words, it offers an alternative for the kind of documentary that either exoticizes spirit possession in spectacular imagery, or extinguishes the wonder of the phenomenon in explanatory prose.

Unelaborated and undecorated footage -- a solitary tree; faces of adepts standing under a sacred rock fall, water trickling over them; the hands of a woman folding freshly washed sheets; an offering made to the gods -- sketches the conditions deemed favourable to the arrival of spirits.

Words -- of the filmmaker, as well as of his interlocutors -- are allowed to drift out of meaning. Trying to grasp the phenomenon, they become silence, or laughter, or screaming.

The possession ceremonies themselves, although filmed in close up, first and foremost reveal that we don’t know what it is that we are looking at.

Paying tribute to the extra-ordinariness of its subject matter, this film invites viewers to allow themselves to be confused and -- in that confusion -- consider the possibility of spirits.”

Pre-Premier Feedback Screening of
The Possibility of Spirits
by Mattijs van de Port

Topic for discussion

The use of film in the ethnography of something as inexplicable as spirit possession. How can film makers do justice to the ineffable phenomenon of spirit possession?

Links

Website: www.mattijsvandeport.eu
Trailer: https://vimeo.com/174739149