

# theory-f[r]iction

*teachers*

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In association with the *Witte de With Contemporary Art Center's Education Programme*.

*guest lecturers*

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## introduction

Between art academies and universities, we can locate a frictionous space where cultural theory and philosophy conmesh and interllide (collide and intermesh). Art academies offer very little theoretic/philosophical training to students, especially what pertains thinking through and writing research papers. But, at the same time, we observe a static, orthodox and perhaps even unimaginative culture that dominates cultural and creative programs within the university context.

*theory-f[r]iction* aims to nestle itself within this frictionous space.

*theory-f[r]iction* sees the lack of 'academic stiffness' in art academies as a latent opportunity to produce hybrid genres and speculative works.

*theory-f[r]iction* will still aim to learn and use whatever it can from traditional academia.

*theory-f[r]iction* seeks to utilize the creative impetus evident in many aspects of art education.

*theory-f[r]iction* will take this creative impetus as the basis for thinking theory.

*theory-f[r]iction* fosters speculative, fictitious and propositional thoughts, over deconstructive, analytic and critical thoughts.

*theory-f[r]iction* will question and utilize the shortcomings that both the domains of art education and academia have for fostering a space of (collectively) producing new ideas.

*theory-f[r]iction* believes that theory and philosophy happen everywhere, so-called 'peripheral culture' produces just as many notions, ideas and concepts as academia does.

*theory-f[r]iction* sees no reputability issues in seeing, for example, memes as means and ends of research, when it comes to cultural thinking and thinking culture.

*theory-f[r]iction* is an exercise in experimental thinking, which understands thinking as indoctrinated prediction.

## assignment

The assignment for this course is to produce a work of theory-fiction, dealing with a research-concern, subject or theme of your own choice. Through a series of seminars and workshops we will aim to grapple with the various definitions and possible outcomes a theoretico-fictional text can have. The course will end with publications of these theoretico-fictional works, the notion of a 'publication' should here be understood as anything that is made public. The media that this is done through are therefore open-ended.

You can work in groups, bring external parties, work individually, it's all up to you. Whenever needed we will schedule individual consultations about all these details.

## examples of what assignments can be

- 1) a lecture about a theoretic-fictive narrative you've researched/created;
- 2) a (short or long) essay on the themes of the class;
- 3) a proper WORK OF ART: a performance; a painting; a music piece;
- 4) a story you tell us;
- 5) something clever we could not have foreseen.

## reminders

Please reach out to us if you think you need individual guidance, we will not always offer this because it takes a lot of time, but we're happy to do individual tutorials whenever you need them. Please also keep presenting your work to the class, the ones who don't do this are missing out on the feedback! On November 8: midterms.

**After November 8 we expect everyone to present something each week, 4 persons per day.** This is so you can keep on making progress. Below is a schedule to be made of this, please fill it in ASAP:

<https://datumprikker.nl/p8xgnpe3wigbru8x>

evaluation(s)

On November 8 we will have midterms. Midterms will be assessed by ourselves and Docus van der Made (Educational Programme, Witte de With CCA).

*As we are working towards a publication, and would like to find a good outlet for this, if you'd like to convince Docus to do this within the context of WdW: make sure to do your best for these midterms. It is on the basis of this that we will be able to carry this through or not.*

Which leads to: PUBLICATION. Let's brainstorm together about what we want this to be. A series of posters documenting all the projects? A book? A PDF? A video? All of the above? Do we want to experiment with what we've already produced? Let's think about this in class.

final assessment

You are free to do whatever you want. All we want is to see commitment to the subject. If one or some of you want(s) to take the lead in designing a publication, this then would be your project.



in-class microassignments

*further micro-assignments besides what we have already done*

Avatars and personae:

Creating online profiles which are active and become as believable as they may be.

Sources: Amalia Ulman's Instagram Performance

(<http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20160307-the-instagram-artist-who-fooled-thousands>)

Fake news generators:

Creating fake news and testing them against your peers.

Sources: <https://www.breakyourownnews.com/> <https://www.thispersondoesnotexist.com/>

Choose your own adventure:

Create a short book (or coded (eg. html) script) (with three or four sentences per page) that bifurcates into different outcomes, makes the reader choose their own path.

Sources: Borges, the Garden of Forking Paths, Choose your own adventure series

Ethical reconnaissance, through theory-fiction-theory:

Works to look at: The ones who walk away from Omelas (LeGuin), Notes from the Underground (Dostoevsky), <https://anatomyof.ai/> (Crawford)

The opposite of understanding:

This exercise consists of repeating a word/sentence so much (in group chorus or alone) to the point that the word/sentence ceases to have/begins to change meaning.

If all participants agree, recordings of this should be made. Sources: Philip Glass - "Knee Play 1" (From Einstein On the Beach)

Additional collaborative in-class assignment: turn space we're in into a camera obscura.

planning

October 25, 1pm to 5pm:  
Guest Lecture Martina Raponi: Sci-Fi

*Please note that we do not meet on the 24th, only on the 25th, from 1pm to 5pm. There will be drinks and snacks.*

**This session will be in the new building of the Neighbourhood Center 'Het Wijkpaleis'. Address: Claes de Vrieselaan 72**

**MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE ON TIME, WE MEET THERE (IN FRONT OF THE MAIN ENTRANCE) AT 1PM SHARP.**

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October 31st, November 1st:  
Guest Lecture: Lendl Barcelos

*Beginning with an as yet undefined, amorphous potentiality, all is possible. No prescriptive outline delimits a boundary: every trajectory seems equally viable.*

*microassignment*  
*What Lendl brings to the table.*

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November 8, 1pm to 7pm:  
**MIDTERMS WITH DOCUS VAN DER MADE**

*Prepare your work, of course: it will be work in progress, but have something to present. Again, if your work has not yet been 'committed' then present a lecture/text/other. If you cannot be there please notify us ASAP.*

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14 + 15 November:  
Class presentations and reflections on midterms, plus:

*Prediction/Divination:*  
*The Power of Magick and Ritual*

*Superstition and belief, the need for 'sequences', compelling arguments in politics;*  
*Tarot as psychology and self-definition;*  
*Magick and ritual as order within chaos;*  
*Habits as rituals: making models to navigate the world;*  
*The power of randomness, throwing dice, the addictive nature of casinos (and social media, etc.)*

*microassignment*  
*Tarot session / mind-reading*

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*21 + 22 November:*  
*Class presentations +*

*Film: La Jetée + bits of Solaris +*

*Kuso (Flying Lotus) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xp1W4kPfoz4>*

*microassignment*  
*Talking Past Each Other*

*This exercise can be done in pairs or groups. It consists in receiving a word (for example “irreversible”) and, not unlike Family Feud, having all participants (including the one choosing said word) write down as many terms as they can come up with, that relate to that word, plus explain it (short definition, 1 or 2 sentences). At the end of a few rounds we compare results and marvel at how language is not a science and realize how we all constantly talk past each other, with the illusion that we understand. We may or may not vote on ‘best answers.’*

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*28 + 29 November:*  
*Class presentations +*

*Listening session*

*Bring your own tracks, will be deep-listened in a blacked out room (if possible?)*

*microassignment*  
*Prepare a short introduction to why you want others to experience a track (try to keep it below 7 or so mins so everyone has time to show something) and we will play it to the group after you introduce it.*

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*5 + 6 December:*

*Class presentations and reflections on the horror that will be the Netherlands during these dates.*

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*12 + 13 December:*

*Class presentations and planning of publication.*

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*19 +20 December:*

*Planning of publication defined.*

*Dinner and/or drinks somewhere, somewhen.*



references from previous classes

## Theory-Fiction

### First session:

Movies: Videodrome, The Butterfly Effect, (students mentioned 12 Monkeys and Sonia said we could watch La Jetée), Primer.

Texts/authors: Mark Fisher (k-punk), Simon Sellars, Baudrillard, Plato's Cave, Deleuze's Rhizome, Cartesian Demon.

Works: Nas, Notel, Last Angel of History, SlaveCity, Funkadelic/George Clinton.

### Hyperstition

#### Second session:

(including mention of Alejandro Cesarco's references and AVL)

#### Real hyperstition:

Mark Fisher on top 9 hyperstition candidates: [http://hyperstition.abstractdynamics.org/archives/2004\\_06.html](http://hyperstition.abstractdynamics.org/archives/2004_06.html)

"Hyperstitional practice involves recognizing a fiction's effectiveness, using it and still not believing it. You don't have to 'believe' in Prof. Challenger for example, to realize that he has the ability to produce affects, create concepts and transmit signal. Yet his power to do these things makes it impossible to disbelieve in him."

Eulerian video magnification: <https://youtu.be/ONZcjs1Pjmk>

The visual microphone: <https://youtu.be/FKXOucXB4a8>

HAL9000 lip-reading: <https://youtu.be/mvLgvyb18>

Pitch drop: [https://youtu.be/UZKZF7FNh\\_0](https://youtu.be/UZKZF7FNh_0)

Smoothlife: <https://youtu.be/KJe9H6qS82l> (first show: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conway's\\_Game\\_of\\_Life](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conway's_Game_of_Life))

Mandelbrot: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PD2XgQOyCCk>

Light field camera: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Light-field\\_camera](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Light-field_camera)

Speculative hyperstition:

La Jetee (long, maybe next time): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLfXCkFQtXw>

#### Involuntary hyperstition:

Pareidolia/auditory illusions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZY6h3pKqYI0>

Apophenia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apophenia>

Optical illusions: <https://www.sciencealert.com/crazy-optical-illusion-makes-your-brain-see-colour-in-a-black-and-white-photo> / <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/3cYlanhrDhc/maxresdefault.jpg> / Jan Dibbets' "Perspective Correction": <https://dergreif-online.de/www/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Jan-dibbets-1.jpg> / [https://www.pamm.org/sites/default/files/persp\\_coll\\_ryman\\_yellowresize.jpg](https://www.pamm.org/sites/default/files/persp_coll_ryman_yellowresize.jpg)

Pattern-recognition: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pattern\\_recognition\\_\(psychology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pattern_recognition_(psychology))

Projects/people:

Karen Eliot: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karen\\_Eliot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karen_Eliot)

Rustan Söderling: <https://www.rustansoderling.com/> (at AVL)

K-punk, psychedelic reason: <http://k-punk.abstractdynamics.org/archives/003926.html> / <http://k-punk.abstractdynamics.org/archives/004565.html> / <http://k-punk.abstractdynamics.org/archives/007825.html> /

Jane Roberts / Aleister Crowley: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane\\_Roberts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_Roberts) / [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleister\\_Crowley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleister_Crowley)

Possible assignment for today: constructing a “Memory Palace” and or doing some exquisite corpses.

French sci-fi writers:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-KAJY\\_0Ja4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-KAJY_0Ja4)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qK0yAw6124k>

The Burroughs quote:

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/14638-cyberspace-a-consensual-hallucination-experienced-daily-by-billions-of-legitimate>

<http://merliquify.com/blog/articles/hyperstition/#.XXld6CgzZhE>

Also this quote:

“[T]he situation is closer to the modern phenomenon of hype than religious or rational ‘belief’ as we’d ordinarily think about them. “Hype actually makes things happen and uses belief as a positive power. Just because it’s not ‘real’ now, doesn’t mean it won’t be real at some point in the future. And once it’s real, in a sense, it’s always been”

Puncepts

Third session:

OG of cut-up: Dadaist automatic writing/art

William Burroughs, Cut-up & Fold-in Methods:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6NU3dldqIBw>

Дзига Вертов - Человек С Киноаппаратом (1929) // Dziga Vertov - Man With A Movie Camera (This first movie with radical montage, visual puncepts?)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWtNKIRBn98>

Link to the slides:

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1-DkPfP26NA48ResPLwFEJ9MfYBzsOJV5XhTFI\\_ASEis/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1-DkPfP26NA48ResPLwFEJ9MfYBzsOJV5XhTFI_ASEis/edit?usp=sharing)

List of puncepts:

Antillectual

Host-Writer

Drivilege

Simplementation

(T)reason

Dermanent (as in “tattoos are dermanent”)

(this below could be a class experiment, use it if you want!)

# The Memory Palace

The Memory Palace technique is based on the fact that **we're extremely good at remembering places we know**. A 'Memory Palace' is a metaphor for any well-known place that you're able to easily visualize. It can be the inside of your home, or maybe the route you take every day to work. That familiar place will be your guide to store and recall any kind of information. Let's see how it works.

## 5 Steps to Use the Memory Palace Technique

### 1. Choose Your Palace

First and foremost, you'll need to pick a place that you're very familiar with. **The effectiveness of the technique relies on your ability to mentally see and walk around in that place with ease**. You should be able to 'be there' at will using your mind's eye only.

A good first choice could be your own home, for example. Remember that the more vividly you can visualize that place's details, the more effective your memorization will be.

Also, try to **define a specific route in your palace instead of just visualize a static scene**. So, instead of simply picturing your home, imagine a specific walkthrough in your home. This makes the technique much more powerful, as you'll be able to recall items in a specific order, as we'll see in the next step.

Here are some additional suggestions that work well as Memory Palaces, along with possible routes:

**Familiar streets in your city.** Possible routes could be your drive to work, or any other sequence of streets you're familiar with.

**A current or former school.** You can imagine the pathway from the classroom to the library (or to the bar on the other side of the street, if that's the route imprinted on your mind).

**Place of work.** Imagine the path from your cubicle to the coffee machine or to your boss's office (it shouldn't be hard to choose).

**Scenery.** Imagine walking on your neighborhood or the track you use when jogging in a local park.

### 2. List Distinctive Features

Now you need to pay attention to specific features in the place you chose. If you picked a walkthrough in your home, for example, the first noticeable feature would probably be the front door.

Now go on and mentally walk around your Memory Palace. After you go through the door, what's in the first room?



**Analyze the room methodically** (you may define a standard procedure, such as always looking from left to right, for example). What is the next feature that catches your attention? It may be the central table in the dining room, or a picture on the wall.

Continue making mental notes of those features as you go. Each one of them will be a “memory slot” that you’ll later use to store a single piece of information.

### 3. Imprint the Palace on Your Mind

For the technique to work, **the most important thing is to have the place or route 100% imprinted on your mind**. Do whatever is necessary to really commit it to memory. If you’re a visual kind of person, you probably won’t have trouble with this. Otherwise, here are some tips that help:

Physically walk through the route repeating out loud the distinctive features as you see them.

Write down the selected features on a piece of paper and mentally walk through them, repeating them out loud.

Always look at the features from the same point of view.

Be aware that visualization is a just a skill. If you’re still having trouble doing this, you may want to develop your visualization skills first (<https://litemind.com/how-to-develop-visualization-skill/>).

When you believe you’re done, go over it one more time. It’s really important to “overlearn” your way in your Memory Palace.

Once you’re confident that the route is stamped on your mind, you’re set. Now you have your Palace, which can be used over and over again to memorize just about anything you want.

### 4. Associate!

Now that you’re the master of your palace, it’s time to put it to good use.

Like most memory enhancement systems, the Memory Palace technique works with the use of visual associations. The process is simple: you take a known image — **called the memory peg** — and combine with the element you want to memorize. **For us, each memory peg is a distinctive feature of our Memory Palace.**

The memory pegging technique is the same one described in the article ‘*Improve Your Memory by Speaking Your Mind’s Language*’ (<https://litemind.com/improve-memory-speaking-minds-language/>), so if you haven’t read it yet, I highly advise you to do so.

As described in that article, there’s a ‘right way’ of doing visual associations:

*Make it crazy, ridiculous, offensive, unusual, extraordinary, animated, nonsensical — after all, these are the things that get remembered, aren’t they? Make the scene so unique that it could never happen in real life. The only rule*



*is: if it's boring, it's wrong.*

Although we can use the technique to memorize tons of information, let's start with something very simple: using our 'Home' Memory Palace to memorize a groceries list. Let's suppose the first item in that list is 'bacon':

Mentally transport yourself to your Memory Palace. The first feature you see in your mind is your home's front door. Now, in a ludicrous way, visually combine 'bacon' with the sight of your front door. How about giant fried bacon strips flowing out from underneath the door reaching for your legs, just like zombies in those B-movies? Feel the touch of the "bacon hands" on your legs. Feel the smell of darn evil bacon. Is that remarkable enough?

Now open the door and keep walking, following the exact same route you defined before. Look at the next distinctive feature, and associate it with the second item to be memorized. Suppose the next item is 'eggs' and the second feature is 'picture of mother-in-law'. Well, at this point you already know what to do... The process is always the same, so just keep mentally associating images until there are no items left to memorize.

## 5. Visit Your Palace

At this point, you are done memorizing the items. If you're new to the technique, though, you'll probably need to do a little rehearsal, repeating the journey at least once in your mind.

If you start from the same point and follow the same route, **the memorized items will come to your mind instantly as you look at the journey's selected features**. Go from the beginning to the end of your route, paying attention to those features and replaying the scenes in your mind. When you get to the end of your route, turn around and walk in the opposite direction until you get to the starting point.

In the end, it's all a matter of developing your visualization skills. The more relaxed you are, the easier it will be and the more effective your memorization will be.

## Final Thoughts

What I like about the Memory Palace (and other pegging methods) is that it's not only extremely effective, but also quite fun to learn and use.

**With just a little bit of experience, the lists you memorize using the Memory Palace will stay fresh in your mind for many days, weeks or even more.**

Also have in mind that you can create as many palaces as you want, and that they can be as simple or as elaborate as you wish to make them. Each of them is a "memory bank," ready to be used to help you memorize anything, anytime.

Associating physical locations with mental concepts is the most powerful memory combination I know. Most other memory techniques (supposedly more sophisticated than the Memory Palace) are, at least in part, based on the concept of physical locations being used as memory pegs.

*Have you already used Memory Palace or a similar technique? What do you think? Any opinions or testimonials to share?*





*An inventor pilots his jet-powered flyboard, over Bastille Day military celebrations.*



