Bios (research interests/ background/ personal website)

**MEREL**

*Research interests*

My research is concerned with the understanding of neurobiological and psychological processes of fear and anxiety with the main focus on the mechanisms of change in the treatment of anxiety and related disorders. Although cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is effective in reducing fear for most anxiety disorders, a high percentage of patients experience a relapse even after apparently successful treatment. The prevailing view on the return of fear is that CBT can eliminate all fearful responding , but does not erase the original fear memory. Partial or full reappearance of fear may be explained by intact fear memories that resurface. Once a fear memory has been established, it is held to be forever. Insights from neuroscience suggest that it is unnecessarily defeatist to regard fear memory as irreversible. Fear conditioning research in animals and humans shows that reactivation of a consolidated fear memory can turn it to a labile, sensitive state in which the memory trace can be changed. Disruption of fear memory reconsolidation may prevent the return of fear and is thereby a promising therapeutic strategy for patients with anxiety and related disorders. We utilise the fear-conditioning paradigm to achieve a better understanding of the optimal and boundary conditions of changing fear memory. I believe that basic research is required for a step-change improvement of treatment for psychiatric disorders.

*Background*

XXXX

*Personal webpage*

http://www.uva.nl/profiel/k/i/m.kindt/m.kindt.html

**VANESSA**

*Research interests*

Our emotional memories seem indelible, and therefore a reliable record of our experiences. But nothing is further from the truth: over time both the content and emotional intensity of memories are subject to change. My research is driven by my fascination for the neuroendocrinological, physiological, and psycho-emotional mechanisms of memory formation and change, and how these explain clinically relevant phenomena like overgeneralized fearful memories or intrusive memories. To pursue questions in this realm, I am using a wide range of methods and techniques, such as behavioural experimentation (e.g., episodic memory assessment, fear-conditioning), psychophysiological assessments (e.g., functional magnetic resonance imaging, heart rate, fear-potentiated startle) and statistical techniques (e.g., mediation analysis).

*Background*

After completion of the Research Master Psychology Amsterdam (cum laude), I received an NWO-funded Toptalent grant (“Effects of stress on associative memory”) that enabled me to pursue my PhD under the supervision of prof. dr. Merel Kindt. Then, as a post-doc in the group of prof. dr. Karin roelofs at the Donders institute, I helped to design and set up a large prospective study (still ongoing) investigating the neurobiology of human defensive reactions, and their role in the development of post-traumatic stress, in police recruits.

Currently I am working as assistant professor in the Amsterdam Emotional Memory Lab, at the Clinical Psychology department. I am happy to co-supervise the PhD projects of Sascha Duken, Olivier de Vries, and Lotte Stemerding, together with prof. dr. Merel Kindt. My ongoing research is gratefully supported by an NWO-veni grant, “The fate of emotional episodic memories”.

*Personal webpage*

http://www.uva.nl/profiel/a/s/v.a.vanast/v.a.vanast.html

**RENEE**

*Research interests*

The last two decades of neuroscientific research have produced many new insights on the representation and dynamic nature of memory. This has generated a new and promising hypothesis on the malleability of emotional memories. Yet, most of this research has been restricted to simple associative fears in non-human animals; much less is known about how complex autobiographical memories (i.e., what we remember from our own lives) may change. As a cognitive neuroscientist with a background in clinical psychology I investigate brain mechanisms underlying the plasticity of emotional memory. Specifically, by combining behavioural experimentation with functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) I seek to gain fundamental insights into the evolution of autobiographical memory over time, as well as into procedures that target maladaptive processes underlying traumatic memories. In general, I am interested in how cognitive neuroscience can improve mental health care, by informing psychological treatment development and by increasing awareness of the neural processes involved in affective disorders.

*Background*

After completing a clinical master (2009, cum laude), and a research master (2010, cum laude), I did my PhD (2016, cum laude) with Prof [Merel Kindt](http://www.uva.nl/profiel/k/i/m.kindt/m.kindt.html) and Dr [H. Steven Scholte](http://www.uva.nl/profiel/s/c/h.s.scholte/h.s.scholte.html) at the University of Amsterdam. For my post-doctoral training (November 2015-August 2018) I worked with Prof [Emily Holmes](https://ki.se/en/people/emihol) and Prof [Rik Henson](http://www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/people/rik.henson/) at the [MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit, University of Cambridge](http://www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/), United Kingdom. During this time I was gratefully supported by a [Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship](https://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/202951_en.html) from the European Union.

In September 2018 I started working as an assistant professor in the Amsterdam Emotional Memory Lab, at the Clinical Psychology department, University of Amsterdam. My research is supported by a NWO Veni grant, "In search of the affective engram of autobiographical memory".

*Personal webpage*

<http://www.uva.nl/profiel/v/i/r.m.visser/r.m.visser.html>

**ANNA G**

*Research interests*

As a cognitive neuroscientist, I investigate how the brain forms and stabilizes long-term memories, with a special focus on spontaneous consolidation processes occurring after learning. In my research, I combine behavioral data, psychophysiology and pharmacological manipulations with functional MRI data in humans.

*Background*

In 2012 I received a Research Master in Psychology from the University of Amsterdam. I did my PhD in Translational Biomedicine at the Johannes Gutenberg University Medical Center (Mainz, Germany) together with [Raffael Kalisch](https://www.german-resilience-center.uni-mainz.de/ag-kalisch/) and [Oliver Tüscher](https://www.drz-mainz.de/ag-tuescher/). During my PhD, I was gratefully supported by a [Research Fellowship from the Mainz Research School TransMed](http://www.unimedizin-mainz.de/transmed/home.html). Since September 2018 I am a postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Clinical Psychology at the University of Amsterdam.

*Personal webpage*

<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Anna_Gerlicher>

**WOUTER**

*Research interests*

I am a PhD-student in the Amsterdam Emotional Memory Lab. I study the malleability of emotional memory and try to translate basic neuroscientific findings to clinical practice. In order to gain more insight in the optimal and boundary conditions of memory plasticity I conduct studies in fear conditioning paradigms as well as with human episodic memory. In a patient study I attempt to apply these fundamental insights to real-life anxiety disorders.

*Background*

I finished a combination of the research master’s psychology and a clinical master in 2015 (*cum laude*). After working as a research assistant for a year I was awarded a NWO Research Talent Grant in 2016 to start my PhD-project.

*Personal webpage*

<http://www.uva.nl/profiel/c/o/w.r.cox/w.r.cox.html>

**SASCHA**

*Research interests*

I’m a PhD student in the Amsterdam Emotional Memory Lab. I investigate how emotional episodic memories can change or distort over time, using experimental designs and psychophysiological measures (e.g. fEMG, HRV).

Our personal memories define who we are, they change the way we feel in the present, and they guide our behaviour in the future. Consequently, when memory processes become distorted, they can play an important role in psychopathology. While we know that memories can change, we know little about the circumstances under which such changes occur. When can the quality or content of our memories change? How can memories become excessively negative over time and what can we do to reduce the emotionality of such negative memories? In my research, I aim to find answers to these questions, together with my supervisors Vanessa van Ast and Merel Kindt.

*Background*

I started my studies at the University of Vienna, where I received a Bachelor of Science in Psychology (2014) and a Bachelor of Arts in Romance studies (2015, specialization Spanish). Before my Master’s, I worked in a camp for asylum seekers in Austria. Following, I completed the Research Master’s in Psychology at the University of Amsterdam, specializing in Clinical Psychology and Social Psychology (2017, cum lude, prize for the best research master thesis within the institute). During my studies, I worked as a research assistant at the Austrian Academy of Sciences and at the University of Amsterdam. My PhD is funded by an NWO Research Talent Grant.

*Personal webpage*

<http://www.uva.nl/profiel/d/u/s.b.duken/s.b.duken.html>

**JAMES**

*Research interests*

I am a PhD candidate in Clinical Psychology, working under the supervision of Prof. Merel Kindt, Prof. Arnold van Emmerik, and Prof. Arnoud Arntz. My research focuses on the translational applications of memory reconsolidation. Specifically, I am assessing whether fear memory reactivation followed by the administration of propranolol can be a means of tackling a range of specific fears and phobias, from spiders to social anxiety. Beyond these clinical applications, my work has considered the ethical implications of memory reconsolidation and other neuroscientific developments (i.e., neuroethics), as well as the optimal means of providing evidence for reconsolidation in human studies.

Outside of my work on memory reconsolidation, I am interested in the promises and pitfalls of novel technological, pharmacological, and psychotherapeutic trends for individuals and society, from consideration of psychedelic drugs to virtual reality technology.

*Background*

I completed my undergraduate BSc in Psychology at University College London (UCL - First Class Hons). My MSc in Developmental Neuroscience and Psychopathology (Distinction) was a joint program between UCL and Yale University. While at UCL, I worked as a research assistant for both Prof. Essi Viding and Prof. Helene Joffe. Under the supervision of Prof. Marc Potenza at Yale, I investigated the neurobiological impact of childhood trauma using fMRI, and published further work on impulsivity and behavioural addictions. Following my MSc, I stayed in the States for a further year, working as a research associate with Dr. Jennifer Harris at the Yale and then UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, where we assessed how advertisers target children and teens with unhealthy foods.

*Personal webpage*

<http://www.uva.nl/en/profile/e/l/j.w.b.elsey/j.w.b.elsey.html>

**MICHELLE**

*Research interests*

*Background*

*Personal webpage*

<https://nl.linkedin.com/in/michelle-de-haan-7218549a>

**JACQUELINE PETERS**

*Starting soon…*

**LOTTE**

*Research interests*

I am a first year PhD student in the Emotional Memory Lab. In a broad sense, I am very interested in how past memories shape and affect our behaviour, decisions, and mental health. Related to this, I am also interested in the possibilities of updating those memories through memory reconsolidation. In my current research, I am looking at the role of prediction error (PE) in memory reactivation, where my aim is to understand and potentially predict the PE necessary to destabilise the engram. Next to this, I currently am learning more about (Bayesian) modelling and its applications in reinforcement learning and conditioning.

*Background*

Previously, I completed a bachelor degree in liberal arts and sciences at the Amsterdam University College (2015), where I majored in human biology, but also took various courses in different disciplines. After, I moved to London to start an MSc programme in Cognitive Neuroscience at University College London, which I completed in 2017. For my thesis project, I conducted research at the UCL clinical psychopharmacology unit, where I looked at the potential use of memory updating through reconsolidation for the treatment of alcohol addiction.

*Personal webpage*

<http://www.uva.nl/profiel/s/t/l.e.stemerding/l.e.stemerding.html>

**OLIVIER**

*Research interests*

Sometimes we look back on an event that at the time didn’t seem noteworthy, but perhaps in light of new information or by association with subsequent events has become a cherished or painful memory. It is something we all already know: events that are initially experienced and encoded into memory as emotionally neutral can over time acquire an emotional dimension. Conversely, the emotional charge of a joyful or tragic event may fade away. My research is focused on the conditions under which memories change in terms of their emotional expression, and the cognitive and neural mechanisms that underlie such change.

*Background*

I obtained a B.Sc. in cognitive neuroscience from the University of Amsterdam, which included an exchange at the University of Hong Kong where I followed courses in philosophy and astrophysics. For my M.Sc. degree, I studied computational cognitive science at the University of Edinburgh, graduating on the topic of Bayesian models of musical rhythm perception.

*Personal website*

<http://www.uva.nl/profiel/v/r/o.t.devries/o.t.de-vries.html>

**ANNA F**

*Research interests*

I am particularly interested in researching and developing novel clinical treatments that seek to disrupt fear memory reconsolidation. In the past, my research has focussed on the mechanisms that underlie the intergenerational transmission of depression, and reconsolidation-based interventions for specific fears. My other research interests include programming and addiction.

*Background*

I completed my Bachelor’s degree in Psychology at University College London (first-class honours) in 2014. I am currently in my second year of the Psychology Research Master’s programme at the University of Amsterdam, with a major in Clinical Psychology and a minor in Methodology and Statistics.

*Personal webpage*

<https://nl.linkedin.com/in/anna-filmer-4a1845a6>

**Alumni** (van deze mensen geen foto. Wel huidige werkplek erachter?)

Junjiao Li (visiting PhD candidate, currently at South China Normal University)

Femke Gazendam (former PhD candidate, currently GZ-certified therapist at PEP psychologen)

Anna Kunze (former PhD candidate, currently assistant professor at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München)

Marieke Bos (former PhD candidate, currently assistant professor at Leiden University)

Dieuwke Sevenster (former PhD candidate and post-doc, currently assistant professor at Utrecht University)

Marieke Soeter (former PhD candidate and post-doc, currently researcher at Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research [TNO])

Marieke Effting (former PhD candidate, currently lecturer at University of Amsterdam)