

Hybrid histories

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Valorization Addendum

In this valorization addendum, I describe how my research results are valuable both within and outside of the academic community, which audiences I have addressed and hope to continue addressing, and which activities have contributed to the valorizations of this project.

Relevance

The central topic of this research is how throughout the twentieth century families recorded their memories on film, video and digital media and how changes in these technologies of memory shaped new forms of home movie making and screening. A historical analysis of how these cultural practices have changed in the course of nearly a century – from the first moving images made by amateurs to contemporary selfies and online sharing cultures – is relevant for various reasons. First of all, because of its **subject**: the making and screening of family films is one of the most characteristic twentieth-century memory practices. Analyzing how people have recorded and shared their family memories, which technologies and techniques they used, and which meanings they attached to that, contributes to a better understanding of the home movie as a twentieth-century family memory practice. Looking at its history may even provide a new perspective on contemporary media practices. While in the digital and social media age almost everyone seems to have access to a multiplicity of memory technologies and platforms, this dissertation shows that the recording of moving images was a rather exclusive family memory practice until recently. The so-called “digital revolution” not only improved the accessibility of media technologies, but also brought forward different media usages. Whereas the making of home movies used to serve an archival purpose, namely the recording and preservation of family memories for future generations, now this function seems subordinate to their (online) sharing. This dissertation shows how this shift from “archival desires” to “performative pleasures” – as well as the underlying processes of democratization (from exclusive to popular), memory staging (from domestic to public) and generational shifting (from parental to juvenile) – has a long and complex history, in which the transformation from analogue to digital user practices is only one of many transitions.

This dissertation is relevant, secondly, because of its innovative **approach**. It investigates the history of home movie making and screening from a long-term perspective. By zooming in on specific periods of transition it aims to grasp the complexity of historically changing user practices and the related technological

and social-cultural developments in a systematic way. The long-term perspective of this study as such adds to previous academic scholarship, which is predominantly focused on *filmic* home movies and practices. Including video and digital media technologies and practices makes this dissertation relevant, thirdly, because it brings to the fore the importance of preserving these forms of **audiovisual heritage**. Many archives and museums currently face a growing gap in their collections as a result of the neglect of analogue video material and, to a lesser extent, born-digital material. By systematically studying the changing means and meanings of film, video and digital media as technologies of memory, this dissertation contributes to raising historical awareness of the importance of collecting and preserving home movies in all their material diversity.

Audiences

The results of this dissertation are valuable for both academic and non-academic audiences. Within the academic community, this research may be of interest to scholars working on media and history, memory and generations, or technology and users. Outside the academic community the results may be valuable to archivists, curators, educators, artists, amateur filmmakers and other actors interested in home movies as forms of audiovisual heritage. However, my research is not only valuable for others; others have also been valuable for my research. Instead of being a solitary academic exercise, this study of home movie making and screening as twentieth-century family memory practices involved close collaboration with various partners in the field of cultural heritage. Aside from staff from national and regional audiovisual archives, museums and libraries, these included collectors, hobbyists and amateur filmmakers. Although the current definition of valorization¹ centers on the translation of scientific knowledge into societal use, I have experienced these collaborations as involving several unanticipated and partly reciprocal processes of learning rather than a one-way street. The collaborations with various actors in the cultural heritage field led, for instance, to the disclosure of relevant source materials, the discovery of important experts and a better understanding of both the materiality and past usages of the researched media technologies. As such, the interactions and exchanges of knowledge with various audiences constituted an integral part of the research process, as reflected by the different kinds of activities.

¹ Since 2014, the valorization addendum forms a part of all dissertations written at Maastricht University. In the promotion regulations, valorization is defined as the “process of creating value from knowledge, by making knowledge suitable and/or available for social (and/or economic) use and by making knowledge suitable for translation into competitive products, services, processes and new commercial activities” (adapted definition based on the National Valorization Committee, 2011, 8).

Activities

Various activities have contributed to the valorization of my research, both within and outside of the academic context. In the following overview I distinguish between public, scholarly and educational activities.

Public activities

An important output of the NWO research project was the realization of two **museum exhibitions** on home movies: one in the Limburgs Museum in Venlo, the Netherlands, and one in the House of Alijn in Ghent, Belgium. Both museums were partners of the research project right from the start. The exhibition in the Limburgs Museum, entitled “A century of home cinema: from film projector to smartphone” (*Een eeuw thuisbioscoop: van filmprojector naar smartphone*), was held from 28 May–30 October 2016. It presented a historical overview of the home movie as cultural practice in six time-periods: from the first moving images of the late nineteenth century to contemporary vlogs on YouTube.² Because of the direct link between the exhibition’s topic and my research, I became closely involved in the realization phase as a project assistant (on a voluntary basis) of curator Frank Holthuizen. As such, I contributed to the writing of exhibition texts and the selection of objects, contacted external partners for the lease-lend of audiovisual materials, and produced theme-based films with archival footage from each of the six historical time-periods. This was not only valuable for the museum, but also gave me the opportunity to present (parts of) my research to the general public and work with my historical sources in different ways. Just before the exhibition ended, I made high resolution photo and video recordings as well as 360 degree photos to create a virtual exhibition. This way, the exhibition remains accessible online, long after the doors of the museum have closed.

Together with the other members of the collaborative research project, I was also involved in the preparation phase of the exhibition “Homeless Movies,” held from 26 June 2016–15 January 2017 in the House of Alijn in Ghent, Belgium.³ Complementary to the exhibition in the Limburgs Museum, this exhibition approached the subject of historical home movies more artistically. Visual artist Jasper Rigole built a number of impressive home movie installations presenting, in his own words, an “archive of someone else’s memories.”⁴ In addition to these

2 For more information about the exhibition in the Limburgs Museum, see: <https://www.limburgs-museum.nl/nl/tentoonstelling/eeuw-thuisbioscoop>.

3 For more information about the exhibition in the House of Alijn, see: <http://www.huisvanalijn.be/collection/expo-homeless-movies>.

4 Jasper Rigole published a dissertation that reflects on his artistic practices. See: Jasper Rigole, *Addenda* (Ghent: AraMER, 2015). For his personal website, see: <http://www.jasperrigole.com>.

museum installations, six private film cabins were set up in the city of Ghent. They screened films from six artists – Mekhitar Garabedian, Eva Giolo, Katrin Kamrau, Jasper Rigole, Meggy Rustamova, Lisa Spilliaert – who were selected by guest curator Edwin Carels to work with the home movie collection of the House of Alijn.

Under the guidance of project member Susan Aasman (University of Groningen), I have furthermore contributed to the development of a **best practice guide** called “*Het Behouden Waard*” (Worth Keeping) together with my colleague Tom Sloomweg and two student assistants from the University of Groningen.⁵ This online user guide was developed in collaboration with the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision and aimed to share best practices on how to document and preserve amateur films, home videos and online content. Written as a guideline for the general public, it provides a clear overview of the wide variety of carriers that are used for storing home movies and videos throughout the years, their different technical specificities, and requirements for preservation and digitization. With this best practice guide we wanted to raise public consciousness about the need to preserve and contextualize home movies and videos as valuable forms of audiovisual heritage. The best practice guide is integrated in the Amateur Film Platform, an online platform initiated by the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision in collaboration with the Groningen Audiovisual Archive (GAVA), Limburgs Museum and the Rotterdam City Archive that presents a growing collection of digitized amateur films and videos as well as born-digital material.⁶

For communicating the research results of our collaborative project to the public, an online presence was crucial. In 2012, soon after the official kick-off of “Changing Platforms of Ritualized Memory Practices,” I created a **weblog** which served as an interactive platform for the documentation and presentation of our project and its outcomes.⁷ I have hosted this project blog ever since and together with the other project members have filled it with content, including blog posts, conference reports, announcements of events and other project-related items. The weblog contains 71 posts in total and was set up internationally. It reached 23,088 views by 8,126 unique visitors from 119 countries. Most views came from visitors from the Netherlands, United States, United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, Italy, France, Canada, Luxembourg, Austria, Poland and Brazil. In addition to the project weblog, I maintained a personal website to communicate my personal research activities.⁸

5 In preparation of the best practice guide, Susan Aasman organized together with Dagmar Hänel the international workshop “How to Keep our Audio-Visual Memories Safe? Storing Home Movies, Home Videos and Online Content.” The workshop was held in the Institut für Landeskunde und Regionalgeschichte in Bonn on 2-3 May 2013.

6 For the Amateur Film Platform and the integrated online best practice guide, see: <http://www.amateurfilmplatform.nl/het-behouden-waard>.

7 For the project weblog, see: <https://homemoviesproject.wordpress.com>.

8 For my personal website, see: www.timvanderheijden.nl.

I have also valorized my research in the **media**. At the final stage of my research, I was interviewed by journalist Lukas Plank on Austrian radio to reflect on the topic of “technostalgia” – the revival of analogue media technologies in the digital age. The interview was part of a weekly radio show on computer and technology called *Matrix: Computer & Neue Medien*. On 8 January 2017, it was aired by Österreich 1 (Austria 1), one of the four nationwide channels run by the Austrian public broadcaster ORF.⁹ For the book project “*Wonderjaren*” (Wonder Years) (working title), the Dutch author and journalist Pam van der Veen consulted me for a chapter about how the arrival of consumer video technologies, among other “revolutionarily” technologies like the fax, answering machine and Walkman, changed the lives and homes of people in the 1980s and 1990s. The book will be published by Ambo Anthos in December 2017.

Finally, I valorized my research in **miscellaneous volunteer activities**. For example, I have contributed to the realization of the Home Movie Days in Amsterdam (20 October) and Venlo (27 October) in 2012. Home Movie Day, first held in 2002, is an annual worldwide event that celebrates amateur films and filmmaking. They are organized locally by volunteers and usually provide individuals and families the opportunity to see their home movies and share them with an audience. Besides highlighting the personal, cultural and historical value of home movies, such events often include demonstrations by local archivists on film preservation and digitization to preserve them for future generations. In 2012, on the occasion of the event's 10th anniversary, the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Groningen Audiovisual Archive (GAVA), Rotterdam City Archive and the Limburgs Museum organized several Home Movie Days, which focused on the collection of home *videos* made between 1980 and 2005. Aside from acquisition, the events were aimed in particular at raising public awareness on the importance of preserving home videos as forms of audiovisual heritage. The events were organized in the context of the archive's joint efforts in the development of the Amateur Film Platform. Since 2013, I am a board member of the Dutch Foundation for Amateur Film. As such, I have been involved in the organization of various activities, which, in line with the objectives of the foundation, were meant to stimulate the collection, preservation and (re-)use of amateur film in all its varied forms and to raise public interest in both historical and contemporary forms of amateur film production in the Netherlands and abroad.¹⁰ These activities included, for instance, the Netherlands edition of Global Super8 Day, which celebrated the 50th anniversary of Super 8 film. Together with the other board members Valentine Kuypers, Hans van der Sloot, Guy Edmonds and Tom Slootweg, I have produced a film portrait of amateur

9 After broadcasting, the radio program was published online: <http://oe1.orf.at/programm/456912.I>.

10 For the website of the Dutch Foundation for Amateur Film, see: <http://stichtingamateurfilm.nl>.

filmmaker and collector Michael Ijsbrand Rogge (1929).¹¹ It marked the first film portrait of a series, in which we aim to document persons who put their mark on the world of amateur film and amateur filmmaking in the Netherlands.

Scholarly activities

Various scholarly activities have contributed to the valorization of my research. A conventional way of sharing knowledge and research results to both academic and non-academic audiences is through **publications**. In addition to writing a dissertation (in my case a monograph), I have published two peer-reviewed journal articles, one professional book contribution, and one forthcoming scholarly book contribution. The journal article “Technostalgia of the Present: From Technologies of Memory to a Memory of Technologies” was published by the international, open access journal *NECSUS. European Journal of Media Studies*. It reflects on today’s “technostalgic” trend in media culture, in which analogue media technologies from the past, like Super 8 film, are re-appropriated and remediated in contemporary memory practices. I also touched upon the concept of technostalgia in the contribution “‘Voor ik vergeet.’ Spinvis en het potentieel van reflexieve technostalgie,” which I wrote for the book *Wat de verbeelding niet vermag! Essays bij het afscheid van Maaïke Meijer*, edited by Agnes Andeweg and Lies Wesseling. The article “‘Hare Majesteit de Smalfilm’ – De making of de vroege amateurfilm(er)” I wrote together with Susan Aasman (University of Groningen) for the Dutch Journal of Media History (*Tijdschrift voor Mediageschiedenis*). The article, based on chapter 2 of this dissertation, reconstructs the world of amateur filmmaking in the Netherlands around 1930. A forthcoming scholarly book contribution, entitled “Hybrid Histories: Historicizing the Home Movie *Dispositif*,” is based on chapter 6 of this dissertation and can so be seen as an attempt to valorize the main conceptual results of my research. It is part of the volume *Materializing Memories: Dispositifs, Generations, Amateurs*, edited by Susan Aasman, Andreas Fickers and Joseph Wachelder, to be published by Bloomsbury Publishing in 2018.

Besides these publications, I have presented my research at various international **conferences and workshops**. These include the conferences “Things to Remember: Materializing Memories in Art and Popular Culture” (Radboud University, Nijmegen, 2014), “In/Between Cultures of Connectivity” (NECS, Potsdam, 2015), “Changing Platforms of Memory Practices: Technologies, User Generations and Amateur Media *Dispositifs*” (University of Groningen, September 2015), and “Sensibility and the Senses: Media, Bodies, Practices” (NECS, Paris, 2017). I have also presented work-in-progress on the three international workshops organized by our research project, including “*Dispositif*: Theory, Methodology, Practice” (University

¹¹ For the film portrait of Michael Ijsbrand Rogge, see: <https://vimeo.com/126610328>.

of Luxembourg, June 2014), “Media Generations” (University of Bremen, October 2014), and “Amateurs and/as Experts: User Typologies” (Maastricht University, November 2014). Besides presenting my research, I have contributed to the organization of these workshops and have co-written grant applications for their financing. These conferences and workshops were important for sharing and discussing (preliminary) research results with an academic audience and engaging in debates, and they were crucial for building an international research network.

An innovative form of research valorization was the performance “Staging the Amateur Film *Dispositif*: A Media Archaeological Experiment.” In this special contribution at the International Orphan Film Symposium “The Future of Obsolescence,” held at the EYE Film Institute Amsterdam in March 2014, Andreas Fickers, Susan Aasman, Guy Edmonds, Tom Sloomweg and me performed a **media archaeological experiment** in which we reconstructed the changing *dispositif* of home movie screening practices in front of an audience of film scholars and archivists. What made this conference contribution innovative was its approach and form of presentation. Instead of giving a traditional lecture, we chose to do a historical re-enactment and theatrical performance to study and communicate how changes from film via video to digital media technologies affected how people watched their home movies in different periods of time. With the help of stage director Marjan Sonke, we developed a theater play in which we performed a family, called “the Mavericks,” watching home movies in the 1950s by means of an 8mm film projector, watching home videos in the 1980s on the television set, and watching digital videos online in the twenty-first century. Performing this media archaeological experiment helped us not only to better understand past media usages by doing “hands-on” experiments, but also to explore historical re-enactment as a method in media historical research.¹² Apart from contributing to the script (written by Susan) and the performance, I produced a video that documents the complete performance.¹³ This video, called “Staging the Amateur Film *Dispositif*,” was screened in various workshops and conference presentations.

Educational activities

One of the most direct forms of research valorization is **education**. Between 2012 and 2016, I was involved as a lecturer, coordinator and tutor in various courses offered to students of the bachelor and master programs of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Maastricht University. In my guest lectures I could often draw

12 For some lessons learned, see the blog report “Staging the Amateur *Dispositif*,” written by Susan Aasman: <https://homemoviesproject.wordpress.com/report-staging-the-amateur-dispositif>.

13 The video was produced with the help of professional camerawoman Charlotte Storm van ‘s Grave-sande (Team ENG). See for the full version: <https://vimeo.com/95314562> (16’43 minute). A shorter version can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/137589495> (2’54 minute).

upon my PhD research. In the course entitled “Memory Lecture Series (Research & Writing)” (BA-1), for example, I introduced first-year bachelor students to the concept of technology of memory and different approaches in researching home movies as object of study. For the course “Always Already New? Theorizing and Historicizing Old and New Media” (BA-3), I introduced students to historical discourse analysis as methodology from a research-based perspective. For the course entitled “Real Virtualities” (MA), I introduced students to the concept of “technostalgia” as part of the “Analogue Media Lab” experiment, which I developed together with Dr. Ike Kamphof for the master’s program in Media Culture. Besides my lecturing activities, I was involved as a tutor in “Media Culture: Theory, History, Concepts I & II.” Furthermore, I coordinated (together with Prof. dr. Andreas Fickers) the course on “Staging Snapshot Versions of Family Life.” This course was part of the Maastricht Research Based Learning Program (MARBLE), a special research-based learning program offered to excellent third-year bachelor students. It serves as a good example of valorization of the research project in educational practices. This course not only familiarized students with some of the key literature in home movies studies and its related fields; it also involved them in the preparatory phase of the abovementioned home movie exhibitions in the Limburgs Museum (Venlo) and the House of Alijn (Ghent, Belgium). This direct connection between research and teaching, and theoretical reflection and hands-on learning, I found to be very inspiring.

To conclude, in this section I outlined how I valorized the results of my dissertation to academic and non-academic audiences through various public, scholarly and educational activities. In the future, I aim to continue engaging in collaborations with relevant stakeholders and share my research experiences and insights with both academic and non-academic audiences.