



Geert Lovink

- We Are Not Sick

Talks

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Geert Lovink

• We Are Not Sick

Geert Lovink discusses the dark side of the net. The mental state of internet users is tragic. Instead of empowerment and self-organization, what we mostly see around the internet is anger and despair. How did we end up like this? This lecture by the renowned media theorist, internet critic, and author will zoom in on the widespread techno-sadness that is produced by dominant social media platforms through “behavioral modification” (also known as “nudging”) with the aim to keep users coming back to the app, exposing them to even more personalized ads. Instead of empowerment and diversity, we witness a “chilling effect” of hyper-conformism, resulting in anger, sadness, depression, and loneliness. This is the social today.

Please note: We Are Not Sick contains discussions of mental illness.

The program includes a post-event talk with Geert Lovink, moderated by Ben Grosser.

We Are Not Sick is organized by California Institute of the Arts MA in Aesthetics and Politics Program and the School of Critical Studies.

ABOUT THE PANELISTS

Geert Lovink is a Dutch media theorist, internet critic, and author of *Uncanny Networks* (2002), *Dark Fiber* (2002), *My First Recession* (2003), *Zero Comments* (2007), *Networks Without a Cause* (2012), *Social Media Abyss* (2016), *Organization after Social Media* (with Ned Rossiter, 2018) and *Sad by Design* (2019). Almost all his books have been translated into German, Italian, and Spanish. In 2019, an anthology of his work appeared in Russian. Lovink got his MA in Social and Political Sciences from the University of Amsterdam in 1984 and did his PhD at the English department, Media and Communication program at the University of Melbourne (2002). He was a postdoc at the University of Queensland in 2003. In 2004, he was appointed research professor (lector) at the Amsterdam University of Applied Science where he founded the Institute of Network Cultures. In 2005-2006, he was a fellow at Institute of Advanced Study (Wissenschaftskolleg) in Berlin. From 2007-2017, he was professor of Media Theory at the European Graduate School where he supervised five PhD theses. From 2004-2012, he was associate professor in the digital cultures program of Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam where he supervised numerous MA theses. His institute organizes conferences, publications, and research networks, such as Video Vortex (aesthetics and politics of online video), Unlike Us (alternatives in social media), Critical Point of View (Wikipedia), Society of the Query (the culture of search), and MoneyLab (blockchain and internet-based revenue models in the arts). Recent projects deal with digital publishing and the future of art criticism.

Ben Grosser creates interactive experiences, machines, and systems that examine the cultural, social, and political effects of software. Exhibition venues include Eyebeam (New York), Somerset House and the Barbican Centre (London), Centre Pompidou (Paris), SXSW (Austin), Museum of Modern Art (Moscow), Museu das Comunicações (Lisbon), Museum Kesselhaus (Berlin), Science Gallery (Dublin), Japan Media Arts Festival (Tokyo), IMPAKT Festival (Utrecht, Netherlands), and the Digital Arts Festival (Athens). His works have been featured in *The New Yorker*, *Wired*, *The Atlantic*, *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, PBS, *Fast Company*, *Hyperallergic*, *BBC*, *The Telegraph*, *Le Monde*, *Corriere della Sera*, *Der Spiegel*, *El País*, and *Folha*. *The Guardian* (UK), writing about his film *Order of Magnitude*, said “there will be few more telling artworks [from] the first decades of this century ... a mesmerising monologue, the story of our times.” Speaking about his social media-focused projects, RTÉ (Ireland) described Grosser as an “antipreneur.” Slate referred to his work as “creative civil disobedience in the digital age.” Grosser’s artworks are regularly cited in books investigating the cultural effects of technology, including *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, *The Metainterface*, and *Investigative Aesthetics*, as well as volumes centered on computational art practices, such as *Electronic Literature*, *The New Aesthetic and Art*, and *Digital Art*. Grosser is an associate professor of new media at the University of Illinois and an assembly fellow with the Institute for Rebooting Social Media at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University.

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Dystopian...a scathing indictment of a technology that transforms the very notion of self into a sharing platform.

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—Eva Illouz, author of
Why Love Hurts: A Sociological Explanation

UPCOMING AT REDCAT

Dorian Wood: *Canto de Todes*

February 3

Dorian Wood's *Canto de Todes* (*Song of Everyone*) is a 12-hour composition and installation, making its worldwide debut at REDCAT. Inspired by a lyric of the late Chilean singer and songwriter Violeta Parra, the Creative Capital-awarded project emphasizes the urgency of folk music as a vessel for social change. A genre-defying canon of songs arriving as a long-duration spatial experience, the work is divided into three movements. The first and third movements are hourlong chamber pieces influenced by folk, popular, and experimental music. The second movement is a 10-hour prerecorded piece unfolding throughout multiple spaces within REDCAT. *Canto de Todes* upends the expectation of the rigidity often associated with witnessing chamber music performances by offering a welcoming space that allows for individuals to project their personal, communal joys, and traumas. It is a collaborative work with local artists who have historically been marginalized due to their nationality, race, or othered identity.

The Wooster Group / Bertolt Brecht: *The Mother*

February 8 - 12

The Wooster Group returns to REDCAT with a new production of Bertolt Brecht's 1932 play *The Mother*. This play was written by Brecht in the style of a "learning play," intended both to entertain and to incite social change. He used plain language and songs to tell the story of an illiterate Russian woman's journey to revolutionary action. The Wooster Group's American translation of *The Mother* uses the vernacular of early Hollywood gangster movies (one of Brecht's favorite genres). The production features new music by composer Amir ElSaffar, who works across classical, jazz, and Arabic musical forms. *The Mother* is The Wooster Group's first staging of Brecht, and the result is a dialogue between two influential experimental theater methodologies.



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