

## Neobaroque tendencies in contemporary culture

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### Research Theme:

This research project ambitions to analyse how the ‘baroque’ manifests itself in another guise—as neo-baroque—in contemporary culture and entertainment media: in contemporary arts (both time-based and visual) and in popular culture, such as the theme park attractions, in the illusionistic displays of digital media, television series and cinema with its special effects spectacles or in computer games. Candidates are firmly encouraged to propose a specific research corpus relevant to this research question.

Historically the term Baroque was predominantly used to characterise the ‘degenerative’ and ‘bad’ art of the preceding period. Baroque art was rejected as irregular, bizarre, spectacular and excessive. Publications on the neo-baroque in 1980-90, such as Buci-Glucksmann’s *Neo-Baroque* (1986), Calabrese’s *L’età neobarroca* (1987), Deleuze’s *Le pli: Leibniz et le baroque* (1988) and more recently the work of Angela Ndalianis (*Neo-Baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment* 2004) or the research group *Neo-Baroque: transcultural and transhistorical efficiencies of the Baroque paradigm* convincingly point to the question whether the baroque is really a transhistorical phenomenon, and why the most recent ‘baroque’ sensitivity - related to the problematic of postmodernism - should be redefined as neo-baroque.

This research project starts from the assumption that the baroque should not be limited to a specific historical era and tradition, but that it should be considered as a transhistorical artistic culture or sensitivity that reappears throughout history in times or moments of transition and crisis (be it mostly in peripheral practices which generally escape the process of cultural canonization). The central question of this research project is thus whether we can apply the baroque artistic regime, with its foregrounding of the spectacular, excentricity, poly-interpretability, multi-perspectivism, theatricality, transformations, or processes of degeneration as a heuristic, theoretical and historiographical category to analyze contemporary artistic developments within their specific scientific, intellectual and foremost technological context.

In very general terms, this project explores the possible interference (and tensions) between a (neo)baroque artistic practice and its epistemological, scientific and technological context by focusing on a case-study, which is to be proposed by the candidate him- or herself. The project could entail a phenomenological analysis of the baroque viewing experience in contemporary culture (e.g. the position of the spectator, the idea of immersion), a more formalist analysis of a specific corpus, or a contextual analysis of a specific – historical or contemporary - baroque or neobaroque artistic regime.

Students with an MA degree in history, art history, media studies, cultural studies, film studies, theatre studies, literary studies, or aesthetics may apply to this project.