

***Heritage Dynamics: Politics of Authentication and Aesthetics of Persuasion in Brazil, Ghana, South Africa and the Netherlands***

This multidisciplinary, international, comparative program (financed by NWO in the context of the Cultural Dynamics program) focuses on (a) the framing of cultural heritage in multicultural arenas, (b) its intersection with citizenship and identity, (c) attempts to design cultural heritage in such a way that it appear as ‘authentic’ and ‘real’ (politics of authentication) and (d) the extent to which cultural heritage is – or is not - subjectively experienced as objectively real (aesthetics of persuasion) in Brazil, Ghana, South Africa and the Netherlands. Combining (1) a thorough analysis of the processes by which canons-in-the-making are re-mediated with (2) an in-depth empirical study of how cultural heritage becomes inscribed into understandings of self through embodied performances, this project seeks (3) to develop a comparative framework, and (4) to move cultural analysis beyond the trodden paths of constructivist and essentializing approaches. This project is co-chaired by Birgit Meyer, Mattijs van de Port and Herman Roodenburg and involves 3 international co-applicants, one postdoc, and 4 PHD students. It also resonates with broader research interests in the department and beyond, especially with regard to questions of aesthetics, sensations and the search for solid groundings. The project organizes monthly seminars, workshops and international conferences.