Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University

Full Professor in Media Heritage, Technology & Culture

1. General

The Faculty of Humanities at Utrecht University has a vacancy for a full professor in Media Heritage, Technology & Culture (1.0 FTE). The chair will play a key role in the development of research, teaching, and public engagement in and from the field of comparative media history with a specialization in media archaeology or adjacent approaches to transformations of media technologies and practices as they take shape within broader media ecologies. Specifically, the chair will study the historical roots of our contemporary media environments as well as the role of audio-visual heritage in the highly mediatized societies of today.

Within the Faculty, the chair will be expected to assume a prominent role in the Department of Media and Culture Studies, contributing to the shared strategic vision and mission, and strengthening its position within both academic and societal debates. For this, the department invites the chair to develop new research initiatives and encourages a committed effort to attract external funding from Dutch and/or European funding schemes to support these initiatives.

The chair also plays a leading role in the further development of research and education of media in the context of Utrecht University’s interdisciplinary Strategic Themes – specifically Institutions for Open Societies. As such, the new chair in Media Heritage, Technology & Culture contributes to the realisation of the strategic plans of the department of Media and Culture Studies, the Faculty of Humanities, and Utrecht University with respect to research, teaching, and public engagement.

The Faculty of Humanities is committed to supporting our staff with a variety of backgrounds, skills, and views, and to foster various forms of interdisciplinary collaboration. The new chair will be positioned in the Department of Media and Culture Studies (MCW). In our department, a wide range of media as well as cultural and artistic expressions are studied, also in their intermedial relations. Besides film and television studies, screen studies, and new media studies, we also conduct research and offer education in the fields of critical data studies, game studies, communication & information studies, performance studies, musicology, arts & society, gender studies, and postcolonial studies. We interpret culture as a dynamic combination of everyday, artistic, and creative practices that people use to shape their identities, and within which social processes, structures and institutions are shaped.

2. The Research Field and Profile of the Chair

Giving shape to a theoretical and critical comparative perspective on emerging and transforming media cultures, the chair of Media Heritage, Technology & Culture is responsible for the development of research, teaching, and public engagement in media studies with a specific focus on culturally situated developments of new media technologies and the cultural and socio-technical media practices that they afford. A comparative and historical perspective on media in transition for the investigation of the diverse media of
the past, present, and emergent future, is productive for understanding the dynamics of change, patterns of innovation, and the cultural tropes that work through and take shape within a rich and dynamic media landscape. A perspective on technology and culture interrogates the complex interrelations between various media technologies and practices, and the patterns of circulation and change of and within this rich landscape. Focused on emerging and transforming media technologies and practices, the shaping of media heritage in various cultural and historical contexts, and the relation between media and heritage to wider societal, cultural, and epistemological transformations, the new chair will guide developments in international academic, institutional, and societal fields from this combined perspective on media technologies and practices, media heritage, and culture.

Together with the other chairs in media studies at the department, the new chair will be responsible for courses, tracks and programs that deal with a variety of media and with questions of innovation and transformation. These include courses and specialization tracks that deal with film and television studies, screen cultures, and new media and digital culture in the BA programs Media and Culture, and Communication and Information Studies; the MA programs of Film and Television Cultures, and New Media and Digital Culture; and the research MA of Media, Art & Performance Studies. Specifically, the chair will be responsible for the courses about audio-visual heritage in these tracks and programs. Moreover, the chair will contribute to the development of innovative teaching formats, new directions in interdisciplinary teaching, and possibly also transdisciplinary teaching in the context of continuing education or executive teaching programs.

The research topics and areas of transdisciplinary partnerships and public engagement that the chair specializes in can include:

- historical-comparative, media ecological, or media archaeological approaches to the role of media in societal, cultural, and epistemological transformations;
- redefining heritage from the perspective of diversity and inclusion, and from a global perspective on differences and possibilities for exchange between the Global North and Global South;
- activating media archaeological knowledge about obsolete media practices in a perspective on new and emerging (digital) media practices;
- curation of media heritage and other digital collections for algorithmic media cultures;
- innovative approaches (including AI) to media heritage, e.g., new interfaces for digital archives, or new formats for audio-visual storytelling and/or visualisation that makes use of various image databases, heritage collections, and digital archives;
- interdisciplinary research and teaching, specifically around questions related to societal, cultural, and epistemological transformations;
- transdisciplinary collaboration with partners from heritage and other cultural institutions and creative industries for research, teaching, and various forms of public engagement;
- new methods and didactics for media historical-comparative, media ecological, and/or media archaeological research.

3. International and National Positioning
Internationally, chairs specializing in similar media comparative, media archaeological, and media ecological approaches can be found under the profiles of:

- Film and Media Studies (Prof. F. Casetti) – Yale University;
- Contemporary and Digital History (Prof. A. Fickers) – University of Luxembourg;
- Digital Aesthetics and Culture (Prof. J. Parikka) – Aarhus University;
- Media Theories (Prof. W. Ernst) – Humboldt University of Berlin;
- Design Media Arts, and Film, Television, and Digital Media (Prof. P. Lunenfeld) – University of California Los Angeles (UCLA);
- Comparative Media Studies (Prof. W. Uricchio) – Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT);
- Communication, Journalism, and Cinematic Arts (Prof. H. Jenkins) – University of Southern California Annenberg & USC School of Cinematic Arts.

While the combination of the profile of the chair in Utrecht is unique with its combination of expertise about film and screen media, media ecological and archaeological approaches, and media heritage practices, other chairs in the Netherlands that specialize in either media comparison, media history, new media, or media heritage include:

- Comparative Arts and Media (Prof. G. Verstraete) – Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam;
- Digital Heritage (Prof. J. Noordegraaf) – University of Amsterdam;
- Digital Humanities (Prof. S. Aasman) – University of Groningen;
- Film Heritage and Digital Film Culture (Prof. G. Fossati) – University of Amsterdam (with Eye Film Institute);
- Media and Art in Museum Practice (Prof. M. Schavemaker) – University of Amsterdam (with Amsterdam Museum);
- Media Studies (with specialization in Film Studies) (Prof. P. Pisters) – University of Amsterdam.

Within Utrecht University, outside of the department of Media & Culture, the following chairs are relevant for future collaboration with the chair of Media Heritage, Technology & Culture:

- History of Art, Science and Technology (Prof. S. Dupré) – Faculty of Humanities;
- Interaction Technology (Prof. J. Masthoff) – Faculty of Science;
- Intercultural Education (Prof. M. de Haan) – Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences;
- Literature and Comparative Media (K. Brillenburg Wurth) – Faculty of Humanities;
- Logical methods in Artificial Intelligence (J. Broersen) – Faculty of Humanities;
- Social Urban Transitions (A. Bailey) – Faculty of Geosciences.

4. Required Qualifications

Research
• Has a disciplinary background in film and media studies; has expertise in media comparative, media archaeological, and/or media ecological approaches to the study of media and media heritage within a wider media landscape;
• Has demonstrated capacity to design an innovative line of research and is internationally recognized as a senior researcher, as evidenced by regular publications in international peer-reviewed journals and books published by prestigious academic publishers;
• Has had demonstrable success in acquiring external research funding;
• Has demonstrable experience with international, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary collaboration,

Teaching

• Has teaching experience at BA., MA., and PhD. levels;
• Is capable of developing new teaching initiatives for interdisciplinary contexts;
• Has experience or is interested in developing courses for continuing education for professionals in cultural institutions or creative industries;
• Is able and willing to teach in Dutch and in English (candidates whose command of Dutch is insufficient at the time of appointment are expected to acquire a working knowledge of the Dutch language in two years’ time).

Collaboration

• Is able to engage in, and to further develop, collaborations and networks within the department, with other groups in the Faculty of Humanities, and the wider university, and within the interdisciplinary focus areas and strategic themes of the UU;
• Has a strong professional network both in academia and in the domain of applied research and the professional world beyond academia;
• Has experience with the organization of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary knowledge exchange in collaboration with academic and heritage partners;
• Plays an active role in international networks.

Knowledge Utilization

• Has the capacity to translate research results into support and advice for non-academic stakeholders and organisations;
• Engages in various forms of outreach activities and public engagement;
• Has expertise and experience in showing the relevance of media heritage and media ecological research to the broader academic and non-academic world.

Management and administration

• Is a team player with proven managerial and interpersonal skills in the collaboration with colleagues in the department as well as in various partnerships in relation to research, education, and public engagement;
• Is capable of leading, mentoring, and inspiring a diverse team of researchers and lecturers, in collaboration with other senior staff members;
• Proactively identifies and promotes developments critical to the cohesiveness and well-being of colleagues in the department, as well as in various partnerships in research, teaching, and public engagement;
• Is willing to share responsibility with other senior staff members in the department for the development and implementation of a joint departmental vision for research, teaching, and public engagement;
• Is willing and able to take up a managerial role within the department.

Qualification system for teaching and research at UU

Utrecht University has a system of qualifying diplomas for teaching and research. This means that, in addition to a PhD in a relevant discipline, a senior qualifying diploma for teaching and a senior qualifying diploma for research are required. Candidates who transfer in from another university and do not possess these Dutch qualifications may submit a portfolio for teaching and another for research, on the basis of which the Dean of the Faculty may grant the necessary senior qualifying diplomas prior to the appointment.