



Epistemic Dizziness in STS, 5056x2944 px, DALL·E 2, 2022, © Lucius Fekonja, Maxime Le Calvé, MoA

Call for Papers: Special Topic Panel at STS-hub 2023 “Circulations”
March 15th - 17th, Human Technology Center in Aachen.

Epistemic dizziness.

Coping with the side effects of the fast-paced circulation of metaphors and figures in STS

The vertigo triggered by the circulation of ideas and pictures in our research field can be intense. We are inviting proposals that toy with the discomfort triggered by proliferating metaphors and figures. We believe that this ambiguous kind of serious fun is a promising path for an engaged while playful anthropology of science and technology.

We take up anthropologist Anna Tsing's article "Getting by in terrifying times" (2018), where she writes that "it is important not to let the metaphors and figures make you dizzy." Dizziness may be especially induced by their incessant circulation. Vertigo describes different sensations generally associated with discomfort and unpleasantness, but that are rarely life-threatening: false senses of motion and spinning, a loss of balance, and lightheadedness. Yet vertigo is also one of the four fundamental types of play according to Roger Caillois (1961). What can a practice of epistemological vertigo teach us about the current challenge of overflowing ideas, tools, and pictures floating and circling in STS? Are there techniques to grow ourselves out and through this state of off-balance, which we could share and benefit from? How might it be possible to embrace it rather than study against it?

Based on our collaborative engagement in the Laboratory for Human Environmental Relations (HU Berlin), we want to overclock the conversations between research on policy research and sustainability, on high-tech economy, and on human and planetary health. We invite proposals that address these fields from any disciplinary background and anyone interested in joining blissful encounters with circulatory epistemic dizziness.

Convenors: Britta Acksel (Ruhr Uni), Jonna Josties (HU Berlin), Maxime Le Calvé (ExC “Matters of Activity”, HU Berlin) w/ the Laboratory: Anthropology of Environment | Human relations, Institut für Europäische Ethnologie, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

Send your abstracts by October 15th (300-500 words) to jonna.josties@hu-berlin.de, maxime.le.calve@hu-berlin.de and britta.acksel@rub.de.