

CLIC NEWSLETTER

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CENTRE FOR LITERARY &
INTERMEDIAL CROSSINGS
RESEARCH GROUP

July 2026

Highlights

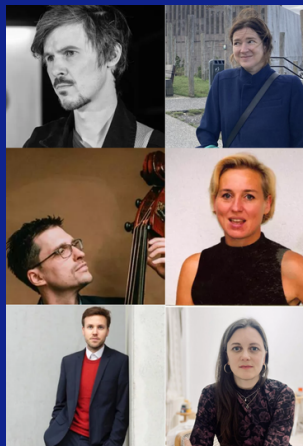


"The Politics of Intermedial Connectivity": Highlights from the 3-Day Conference

From **27–29 May**, CLIC hosted the 8th biennial conference of the International Society for Intermedial Studies (ISIM). The conference welcomed **130** researchers and artists from more than **25** countries for three days of panels, keynotes and cultural events. See [page 8](#) for a report on the event.

CLIC-ARTO Merger

CLIC is excited to announce the integration of artistic-led research through the merger with the Research Group in the Arts (ARTO). The merger builds on CLIC's longstanding connection with the arts and further boosts CLIC's interdisciplinary profile. ARTO's expertise in knowledge production in and through the arts develops CLIC into a humanities knowledge centre where scholars, artists, and cultural producers collaborate. 6 senior researchers have already formally joined CLIC as members; 19 PhD researchers in the arts will follow at the start of the next academic year. See [page 2](#) to get to know CLIC's new members!



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See [page 8](#) for a special report on the 8th biennial conference of the International Society for Intermedial Studies!



New: Brussels Centre for Interdisciplinary Resistance Studies (Inter-RESIST)

CLIC congratulates **Arvi Sepp** and his co-applicants (VUB colleagues at the research groups SHOC, BRISPO, ECHO, and the Brussels School of Governance) on their successful Inter-RESIST Centre, recently established through funding from VUB for an Interdisciplinary Research Programme. One of the planned PhD positions established under Inter-RESIST will be affiliated with CLIC.

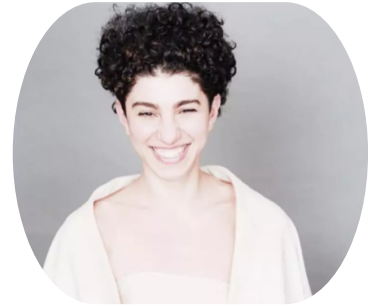
New Members

Welcome to CLIC!

CLIC is delighted to announce the award of two postdoctoral fellowships to incoming researchers.

Hadas Zahavi

Hadas has been awarded an MSCA postdoctoral fellowship for her project *Warketing Peace* under **Cedric Van Dijck**'s supervision (2026-2028). In her project, she will examine how commercial brands invented a modern ideology of "peaceful consumption" from the late 19th century onward, pioneering a non-binary history of peace and war across peace studies, narratology, media history, and ecopolitics. The MSCA-PF includes a secondment at Columbia University. Zahavi is Founding Director of the Columbia University Global Center for Peace Innovation and a former Fulbright scholar (Princeton University).



Anna-Lena Eick

Anna-Lena has received an FWO Senior Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her project *Postdigital Poetics in Contemporary Print Fiction* under the supervision of **Arvi Sepp** (2026-2029). The project investigates how contemporary print novels (Western Europe and North America, 2015-present) engage with the postdigital mediascape through innovative formal-aesthetic reconfigurations and increased media-reflexivity.

CLIC warmly welcomes its new colleagues from ARTO, who join the group following the merger of the two research centres.

Kurt Bertels

Kurt is a Senior Researcher and professor at Royal Conservatory of Brussels and Vrije Universiteit Brussel. His research interests include historically informed performance, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, gender and race in music.



Ellen Gillard

Ellen is the Head of Research at RITCS School of Arts (EhB). She works across philosophy, art, and literature. Her research interests include presence/absence and sound/silence across artistic forms. With a background in philosophy, psychology, and educational sciences, in her work she combines theory, essayistic writing, and artistic inquiry.

New Members

Welcome to CLIC!

Matthias Heyman

Matthias is a Senior Researcher at Royal Conservatory of Brussels and an Assistant Professor at Vrije Universiteit Brussel. His research focuses on Belgian jazz history, bass practice, artistic research.



Inge Pieters

Inge holds degrees in Germanic Languages and Literature and Cultural Studies (KU Leuven) and Cultural Management (University of Antwerp). Since 2017, she is the coordinator of Kunstenplatform Brussel (VUB/EhB collaboration for the PhD in the Arts).



Maarten Stragier

Maarten is a guitarist who has performed across Europe and the U.S. He is a researcher and professor at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels and at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, and a member of the Young Academy of Belgium (Flanders).



Kristin Van Den Buys

Kristin is the Head of Research at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, a department of the Erasmus University College Brussels, and a professor at Vrije Universiteit Brussel.



Grants and Visiting Positions



Cedric Van Dijck has been selected as P.P. Rubens Visiting Professor at UC Berkeley for 2027.



Thomas Mantzaris was awarded a John F. Kennedy Institute Research Grant to visit the library at the John F. Kennedy Institute in Berlin in 2026.

Member in the News!



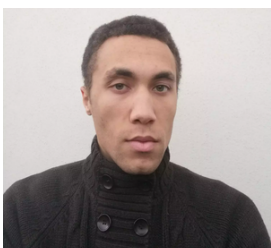
Alice Königstetter was featured in the Kuwait Times for her PhD research on women's fiction from Kuwait, with Kuwaiti women writers sharing their own perspectives in the same article. The article can be found on the [Kuwait Times website](#).

PhD Defences



Congratulations to **Zhijie Tang** for successfully defending her PhD dissertation, *The Construction of Older Adults' Identity in Lexicographic Discourse: A CDA Approach*

Supervisors: Hai Xu, Philippe Humblé, **Arvi Sepp**



Congratulations to **Anthony Manu** for successfully defending his PhD dissertation, *Humour in Nineteenth-Century Poetry: A Model*

Supervisors: **Cedric Van Dijck** & Isabel Ermida

2 Updates CLIC Activities & Projects

Lorand Chair Intermediality 2025–2026

CLIC organised a screening of the techno-choreographic performance *Being River* (2024). This performance explored the embodiment of identity and the entanglement between dancing bodies and cutting-edge technologies such as virtual reality, motion capture, real-time interaction, and sensors. CLIC's Lorand Chair in Intermediality, [Shuangyi Li](#) (University of Bristol), introduced the performance. The screening was followed by a discussion featuring the director and choreographer Zhi Xu (Bath Spa University).



Lorand Chair Intermediality 2026-2027



CLIC is pleased to announce next year's Lorand Chair in Intermediality, Isabel Hofmeyr, Professor Emerita at the University of the Witwatersrand. Over the last three decades, she has pioneered research on global, oceanic and transnational forms of literary and cultural history that seek to understand Africa's place in the world. Stay tuned as more information will be released soon.

CLIC DAY 2026 – Call for Papers

Mark your calendars! On **11 December**, Vrije Universiteit Brussel will host CLIC Day 2026—the 16th edition of CLIC's annual research symposium, and a landmark occasion marking CLIC's recent merger with ARTO. Centred on the theme "**Writing and Listening as Artistic Inquiry: Perspectives from Artistic Research and the Humanities**", the symposium explores how artistic research develops distinctive forms of attention, engagement and inquiry through practices of writing and listening, and what such practices might contribute to broader conversations in literary studies and the humanities.

The event seeks to foster dialogue between scholars, artists and scholar-artists working with topics including hybrid writing, autofiction, essayism, archival and sonic listening, and the documentation and dissemination of artistic research. Contributions in English, Dutch or French are welcome in a range of formats, from papers and panel discussions to posters and artistic presentations combined with critical reflection. A selection of contributions will be considered for publication in *JLIC*.



CLIC Day 2026 is organised by [Kurt Bertels](#), [Tiago Da Silva](#), [Ellen Gillard](#), [Inge Pieters](#), [Hannah Van Hove](#). Please submit an abstract of up to **300 words** and a short biography of approximately 100 words to ellen.gillard@vub.be and kurt.bertels@vub.be. The submission deadline is **30 August**. For the full call for papers, click [here](#).

[read more](#)

2 Updates CLIC Activities & Projects

WOLEC

The Study Group for Literature and Culture (WOLEC) wrapped up a varied spring programme this semester. In March, **Lily Beckett** (University of Bristol) examined how experimental poetic texts incorporate intermedial references and historical layering in a lecture titled "Intermedial References and References to History: How the Past Penetrates Experimental Poetic Texts in the Present." April's session brought **Chris Maurant** (University of Birmingham) to discuss the editorial history of E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924), tracing what the novel's manuscript revisions reveal about its composition and reception.

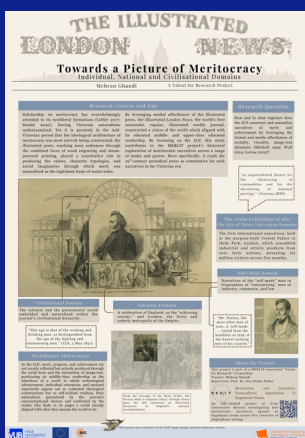


In May, CLIC's 2025–26 Lorand Chair in Intermediality, **Shuangyi Li** (University of Bristol), led an interactive workshop on the aesthetic and material challenges of translating between French-Chinese and English-Chinese calligraphic traditions. The spring programme closed with a lecture by CLIC's own **Aya Chriac**, "The 21st-Century American Nightmare: New Forms of Monstrosity in Black American Horror Literature (2014-2025)", mapping the genre's engagement with racial violence and social anxiety.

Looking ahead, WOLEC will organise the second edition of its PhD Writing Retreat in early October. Following last year's success, the retreat offers CLIC's PhD researchers dedicated writing time and peer support at the start of the new academic year. Registration is now open for CLIC's PhD and junior researchers.

CLIC Talent for Research Traineeship

On **26 May**, CLIC's 2025 Talent for Research cohort presented their work at the Faculty Research Day organised by the Faculty of Languages and Humanities at Vrije Universiteit Brussel. **Mehran Ghandi**, **Roba Eissa**, **Jiske Herrijgers**, **Jana Kopkášová**, and **Noah Van den Eynde** each designed and displayed a research poster reflecting the individual projects they have been developing within CLIC's research activities, covering topics ranging from meritocratic narratives in Victorian periodicals to identity in Chicana and Latin American fiction. The event offered a public platform for these emerging scholars to demonstrate the work they have been conducting under the supervision of CLIC researchers. CLIC's Talent for Research programme individually coaches BA and MA students, integrates them into the group's research culture and actively supports their development as junior researchers. To learn more about the 2025 cohort, [see the CLIC website](#). Click on the thumbnails below to view the posters!



Mehran Ghandi



Jana Kopkášová



Noah Van den Eynde

3 Past Events

"Comics as Bridges"

CLIC in the EUTOPIA Network

EUTOPIA is a European university alliance of 10 member institutions, including VUB, providing a practical framework for cross-border academic collaboration and researcher mobility. This semester, CLIC member, Diana Castilleja, coordinated "Comics as Bridges", a project bringing together researchers from Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Univerza v Ljubljani and Universidade Nova de Lisboa to explore graphic narratives at the intersection of translation, pedagogy, intermediality and literature. "Comics as Bridges" illustrates how the EUTOPIA network enables CLIC to build sustained international partnerships across research and teaching.



Francois Chair Closing Symposium "Poetics in an Age of Differences"



On **7 May**, the closing symposium of Roland Greene's International Francois Professorship took place at the Auditorium De Wolven, Muntpunt, Brussels. Greene, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Stanford University, Director of the Stanford Humanities Center, and a past president of the Modern Language Association, held the 2025–26 Francois International Chair across four Belgian universities: VUB, UGent, UCLouvain, and KU Leuven. The Brussels symposium, organised by Andrew Bricker (UGent), invited Belgian scholars at all career stages to reflect on poetry and poetics in relation to universalism, canon formation, and the social and political forces shaping literary studies today. CLIC was well-represented among the presenters, with contributions from Aya Chriaa, Roba Eissa, Alice Königstetter, Anthony Manu, and Gry Ulstein.

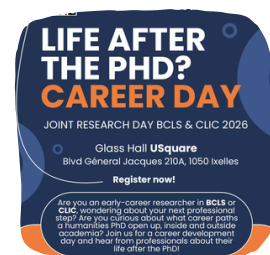
[read more](#)

"Life after the PhD?"

CLIC/BCLS Career Day

On **12 May**, CLIC and the Brussels Centre for Language Studies (BCLS) co-organised a full-day career development event for PhD candidates, (early-career) postdocs, and Talent for Research students at the Glass Hall, USquare. Organised by Gry Ulstein and Beatrijs Wille (BCLS), the programme featured sessions on humanities funding opportunities by Lieven Raymaekers (VUB Research), Beatrijs Wille, and Gry Ulstein; insider jury panels for FWO and BAEF applications (Inge Arteel, Martijn Wieling, Sofie Decock, Cedric Van Dijck) and MSCA (Colin Jakob Rittberg); and career testimonials from researchers now working both within and beyond academia, including Charlotte D'Eer, Mieke Vandenbroucke, Sara Buekens, Sean Bex, and Mahlu Mertens. Given its positive reception, the event will be organised again next year.

[read more](#)



3 Past Events: “The Politics of Intermedial Connectivity”

8th biennial conference of the International Society for Intermedial Studies (ISIM) Conference Report (27–29 May 2026)

Thematically centred on “The Politics of Intermedial Connectivity,” the conference explored how intermedial studies can contribute to contemporary debates on power, identity, mobility, and cultural exchange. Across four parallel streams, participants examined the ways in which media interactions shape and reflect political realities, drawing on perspectives from postcolonial, feminist, queer, decolonial, ecocritical, migration, and digital media studies. A recurring focus throughout the programme was the role of intermediality in addressing non-hegemonic positionalities and forms of representation related to gender, race, and other dimensions of identity.



[Click here to see the ISIM's website](#)

Contributions also highlighted how intermedial practices mediate pressing global challenges, including environmental crises, migration, and more-than-human relations.

Other sessions investigated the ethical and political implications of cultural translation, transcultural encounters, and uneven global media landscapes, while several papers considered intermediality as a decolonial practice and reflected critically on established theoretical frameworks within the field.

The conference further examined what the organisers, CLIC members [Janine Hauthal](#), [Marcela Scibiorska](#), and [Gry Ulstein](#), described as the “politics of the in-between”: the ways in which intermedial connections unsettle fixed notions of identity, culture, and meaning by foregrounding processes of interaction, entanglement, and transformation.

Presentations addressed questions of affect, memory, materiality, and historical change, while also engaging with the opportunities and challenges posed by increasingly fragmented and polarised digital public spheres. Methodological discussions considered transnational pedagogies and efforts to broaden the geographical and epistemological scope of intermedial studies.

The programme featured [keynote lectures](#) by **Birgit Neumann** (Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf), who explored intermediality as a site of cultural contact and discomfort in contemporary Anglophone literature; **Mieke Bal** (Universiteit van Amsterdam), who reflected on intermediality, visibility, and the ethics of social connection through artistic practice; and **Patrick Jagoda** (University of Chicago), who examined the political potential of transmedia games to engage questions of diversity, difference, and dissensus. Beyond the academic programme, the conference provided an important forum for strengthening international networks within intermedial studies and fostering dialogue across disciplines and research traditions. Scholars had the opportunity to visit the *Foragers* exhibition at Pilar – House of Science & Art and to attend the performance *Reality Show* by the Brazilian collective Mexa, shown as part of the 2026 edition of the *Kunstenfestivaldesarts*.



A special word of thanks goes to CLIC members [Carmijn Gerritsen](#), [Thomas Mantzaris](#), and [Yanrong Wang](#), as well as BA student [Alice Sudina](#) and CLIC's Talent for Research trainees [Mehran Ghandi](#), [Jiske Herrijgers](#), [Jana Kopkášová](#), and [Noah Van den Eynde](#), whose dedication as conference volunteers contributed greatly to the event's success.

[read more](#)

4 Future Events

9–11 September, KBR

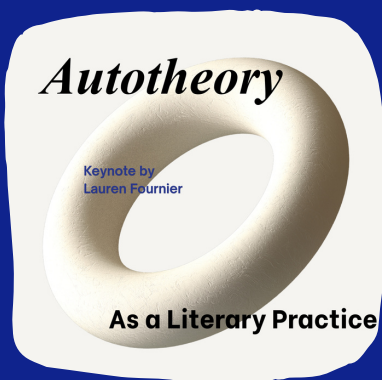
International Conference “Periodicals and the World”

From **9–11 September**, the 14th Annual Conference of the European Society for Periodical Research (ESPRit) will take place at the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR) in Brussels. Co-organised by CLIC members [Chiara Cremona](#), [Dirk Vanden Berghe](#), [Florian Deroo](#), [Cedric Van Dijck](#), and [Birgit Van Puymbroeck](#), the conference will explore how magazines and newspapers have historically travelled across regions, shaped public discourse, and constructed their own visions of the world. Keynote lectures will be delivered by Stefano Evangelista (University of Oxford), Barbara Mittler (Universität Heidelberg), and Chris Ouma (Duke University). Registrations are open.



[read more](#)

17 September 2026, Ghent



International Seminar “Autotheory as a Literary Practice”

On **17 September**, Ghent University will host the one-day international seminar “Autotheory as a Literary Practice.” Co-organised by Lars Bernaerts (UGent), CLIC member [Hannah Van Hove](#), and Helena Van Praet (UGent), the seminar approaches autotheory as a literary practice in its own right—related to autofiction and rooted in embodied experience, feminist thought, and experimental writing—and seeks to open the field beyond its predominantly Anglophone framework. The keynote lecture will be delivered by Lauren Fournier who is widely credited with establishing autotheory as a distinct field of inquiry.

[read more](#)

VAL – Call for Papers

Annual VAL Symposium 2026 “Literature and/as Care”

On **20 November**, the annual VAL Symposium of the Flemish Association for Comparative Literary Studies (Vlaamse Vereniging voor Algemene en Vergelijkende Literatuurwetenschap) will take place at Ghent University, organised by Luna Dieleman, Zoë Ghyselinck, and Jürgen Pieters. The theme, “Literature and/as Care,” takes up questions from the health humanities and beyond, examining what it means for literature to function as a form of care and how literary texts represent care, illness, and vulnerability. Admission is free but registration is required and open until **17 November**. There is an active call for papers for the afternoon sessions; contributions are eligible for subsequent publication in the *Cahier voor Literatuurwetenschap* (CLW).



[read more](#)

4 Future Events

2 October 2026, LIC

World Translation Day

The Practice of Literary Translation

CLIC members [Eva Ulrike Pirker](#), [Diana Castilleja](#), [Arvi Sepp](#), [Ceydanur Temurok](#) and Graham Riach (ULB) are organising a day devoted to literary translation in proximity to the International Translation Day. Apart from featuring a keynote by writer, scholar, and translator Jan Wilm titled "Translating Myself and Others," three literary translation workshops, focused on target languages Dutch, English, and French will be offered. The event is free but registration is required.

[read more](#)



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5 JLIC

Special Issue: "Poetics in an Age of Differences"

JLIC is preparing a special issue on "Poetics in an Age of Differences," guest-edited by Andrew Bricker (Ghent University). Emerging from the lecture series held across VUB, UGent, UCLouvain and KU Leuven as part of Roland Greene's Francqui International Professorship, the issue addresses topics such as universalism, canon formation, decolonial critique and literary criticism in relation to democratic culture. The call for abstracts for this issue has now closed; the issue is expected to appear in **early 2028**.



[Click here to see the JLIC website](#)

Open Call

In addition to its special issues, JLIC welcomes year-round submissions in Dutch, English, French, German, Italian or Spanish (5,000–6,000 words) on topics including intra-, inter- and transmedial phenomena, genre hybridisation, cross-cultural exchange, transnationality and multilingualism. Submissions will be considered for the varia section accompanying each special issue.

- Deadline for abstracts: **15 August**
- Deadline for full articles: **1 November**

[read more](#)

Latests Publications: Volume 11, Issue 1, 2026

The latest issue of JLIC brings together new research and an interview that explore literary, visual and intermedial perspectives on memory, displacement, colonialism and environmental entanglements.

- Leenu Sugathan (George Washington University), ["The Refugee Counter-Archive: Feminist Refugee Epistemology and Human Rights Aesthetics in Thi Bui's *The Best We Could Do*"](#)
- Julée Al-Bayat De Ridder (University of Amsterdam), ["Deltas as Intermedial Contact Zones: Reimagining Entanglements between Water and Dutch Colonialism"](#)
- Interview: [Eva Ulrike Pirker](#) and [Deniz Gündoğan İbrişim](#) (Kadir Has University), ["A Constellation of Lives: A Conversation with Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor"](#)

[read more](#)

6 Call for Applications

CLIC Grant Writing Residency 2026 - Update

The CLIC Grant Writing Residency supports early-career researchers in developing competitive postdoctoral fellowship applications. Launched in **2025**, the programme attracts promising researchers to CLIC, offering a monthly grant writing fee of **2000 EUR** (for up to 2 months). Candidates commit to submitting their research project with MSCA, FWO, and/or other funders with a CLIC supervisor, and receive tailored grant writing training, support, and screenings of their application with CLIC.

This cycle received **35 applications**; 12 candidates were selected for interview; 5 will ultimately receive a Residency and come to CLIC between August and December 2026, aligned with the MSCA-PF deadline (9 September) and FWO-PF deadline (late November).

CLIC will run the Grant Writing Residency annually—stay tuned to CLIC communications for the next call!

[read more](#)

CLIC's Steering Team

Chair: Janine Hauthal (Janine.Hauthal@VUB.be)

Vice Chair: Arvi Sepp (Arvi.Sepp@VUB.be)

Policy Officer: Gry Ulstein (Gry.Ulstein@VUB.be)

Communications Team: CLIC's Communications Team is responsible for the coordination of the centre's website, social media, newsletter, and onboarding communication. Currently, the team consists of Tessa van Wijk, Roba Eissa, Mehran Ghandi, and Noah Van den Eynde. Members are kindly invited to send any news related to their activities, events, publications, or other updates to: CLIC.Comms@vub.be.

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