

Fellows



Geertjan de Vugt

IFK_Gast des Direktors

Duration of fellowship

01. March 2019 bis 30. June 2019

Geertjan de Vugt

PROJECT TITLE

Fingerprints: An Essay on the Art of Individualization

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Few parts of the human body have played such a central role throughout modernity as the peculiar little lines on the tips of our fingers. But how did the fingerprint come to be the most decisive marker of individual identity? The history of fingerprinting is one that, like its object of study, takes many twists and turns. Since the early nineteenth century, anthropologists, criminologists, novelists, and artists of various kinds have all taken part in it. It was, however, the Czech physiologist Jan Evangelista Purkinje, who, in a dissertation devoted to the organ of sight, coined the first qualification of the practice of fingerprinting: the art of individualization. In what ways are art and fingerprinting actually related to each other? This project charts the many intertwinements of the arts and sciences in the history of fingerprinting.

CV

Geertjan de Vugt is an Amsterdam-based writer and translator, who works as Coordinator of Arts & Sciences for the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). He studied Cultural Studies at Tilburg University and Comparative Literature at Utrecht University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 2013 he was a Visiting Scholar in the Department of Comparative Literature at Princeton University. He obtained his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature with highest distinction at Tilburg University with a dissertation that charts the genealogy of political dandyism. He is currently writing two books: an essay on the cultural history of fingerprinting and a collection of essays on contemporary Dutch poetry, tentatively titled *A Little Philosophy of the Instant*. Geertjan de Vugt is also the Dutch translator of Daniel Heller-Roazen's *The Enemy of All: Piracy and the Law of Nations* and Thomas Macho's *Das Leben ist ungerecht*.

Publications

The Art of Individualization: An Essay on the Cultural History of Fingerprints, Amsterdam 2019 (in preparation); *A Little Philosophy of the Instant*, Amsterdam 2019 (in preparation); *Political Dandyism in Literature and Art: Genealogy of a Paradigm*, Basingstoke 2018; trans., Thomas Macho, *Het leven is onrechtvaardig*, Utrecht 2017; trans., Daniel Heller-Roazen, *De vijand van iedereen: piraten in het volkenrecht*, Amsterdam 2016.