

The Acoustics of Service: On the Performance of Invisibility in Butlering Practice (The Butler as a Buffer)

Supplementary material

(0026) The Acoustics of Service: On the Performance of Invisibility in Butlering Practice (The Butler as a Buffer).

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Cultures of In/Visibility and In/Audibility

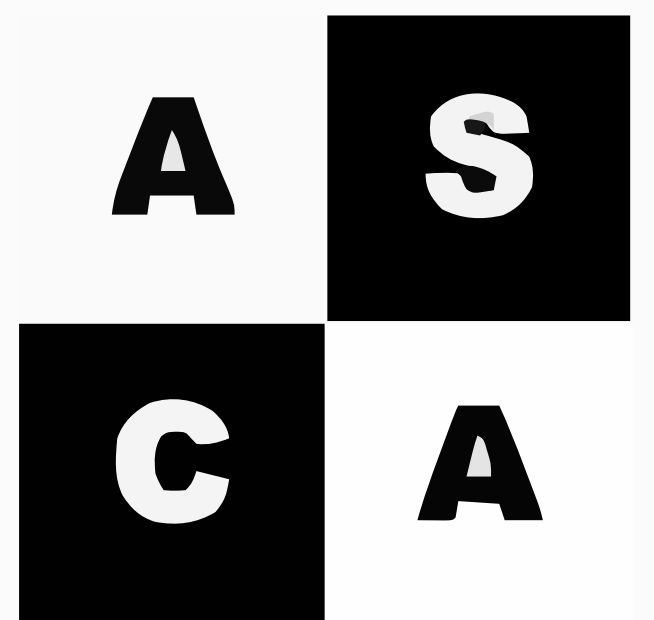
April 23rd-24th 2026

University of Amsterdam

Programme



*Netherlands Institute
for Cultural Analysis*



Cultures of In/Visibility and In/Audibility

International Conference

23-24 April 2026 - University of Amsterdam

Organizers:

Esther Peeren (ASCA/NICA), Alice Borrego (EMMA Research Unit), Gero Guttzeit (LMU Munich), Héloïse Lecomte (Sorbonne Université)

Sponsors:

ASCA, NICA, Sorbonne Université, VALE Research Unit

Invisibility and inaudibility, and their corollaries, visibility and audibility, have become impactful concepts and metaphors across media and disciplines in recent years. This conference aims to take stock of the role they play in shaping and understanding culture in different contexts and historical periods, including, perhaps most urgently, in our current conditions of political polarization and surveillance capitalism.

With regard to invisibility we take up both ideas of invisibility as marginalisation or social invisibility (LeBlanc 2009, Král 2014), comprising, for example, lesbian invisibility (Lecomte 2024, 23) or “subaltern invisibility” (Chemmachery 2019), and ideas of invisibility as a site of power or hegemonic invisibility (Guttzeit 2025), comprising, for example, billionaires’ invisibility (Peeren 2024, 86–88) and the power of “decorporation” (Borrego 2024, 37). In this field of tension, a key issue we want to explore is how social, political, cultural, literary, filmic, televisual and online texts can explore the potentials and limitations of an “agency of invisibility” (Peeren 2014).

Inaudibility – as silence – has predominantly been explored as resulting from marginalization. Far from a “passive state of understanding” (Santos), silence can be part of a potent mechanism to create a monopoly of narrative (Le Blanc) that erases cultural, social, and political dissonances. In this regard, inaudibility not only raises the question of how one can make oneself heard, but of how the multiplicity of narratives, of stories, of shared experiences, is muffled by imbalances of power. Silence, the “currency of power” (Achino-Loeb), partakes in the construction of the spectral. Much like being seen requires one to be actually perceived by the other, being heard entails being actively listened to. Inaudibility, however, can also be recuperated as a form of agency: choosing to refrain from speaking, like claiming the right to opacity (Glissant), can be a form of empowerment.

What constellations of the in/visible and in/audible can be distinguished and what perspectives and social groups do these constellations privilege and ignore? How are in/visibility and in/audibility culturally, socially, politically and economically mobilized? How do in/visibility and in/audibility impact attention and circulate within attention economies? What are the affective dimensions of in/visibility and in/audibility? How do they link to other logics of marginalisation and power dynamics?

The conference sets out from the assumption that our understanding of political and social in/visibility and in/audibility needs to be sufficiently complex to answer these questions and related ones.

Conference Programme Thursday 23th April



Roeterseilandcampus
Building REC J/K, Valckenierstraat 65-67.
Building REC V, Valckenierstraat 61

9:00 - 9:15 Welcome and Opening by Organisers

9:15- 10:15 Keynote - Kristin Veel.

REC J/K, room B.11 *The Sensing Home Rethinking In/Visibility and In/Audibility in Infrastructures of Care and Control*

Abstract

Motion sensors, sound detection, environmental monitoring, and predictive interfaces within many modern homes quietly transform domestic space into a sensing environment, where vulnerability, proximity, and safety are continuously negotiated. Invisibility here does not signal absence, but misalignment: a gap between lived experience and the forms of activity, intention, vulnerability, or consent that sensing systems are able – or designed – to register. What remains inaudible or invisible is not necessarily hidden, but fails to register as signal, relevance, or actionable data. This talk approaches in/visibility and in/audibility in domestic sensing technologies not primarily as questions of absence or marginalization, but as effects of sensing infrastructures that actively filter, prioritize, and render some forms of life perceptible while leaving others unregistered. In this sense, invisibility and inaudibility emerge as operational conditions of contemporary technological environments rather than as their limits.

As a domestic space historically associated with intimacy, care, and privacy, but also with labour, violence, and control, the home becomes a particularly charged site for examining how sensing infrastructures reconfigure relations between visibility and invisibility, audibility and silence. Drawing on both everyday negotiations of sensing technologies in domestic settings and their articulation in contemporary artistic practices, the talk reframes invisibility and inaudibility as infrastructural conditions that contribute to shaping intimacy, care, fragility, and control. In doing so, the talk opens up a space for thinking about what forms of resistance may emerge within – and sometimes through – the very systems that sense, listen to, and inhabit everyday life.

Bio

*Kristin Veel is Professor of Aesthetic Technology Studies at the University of Copenhagen, Department of Arts and Cultural Studies. Her research explores how invisibilities emerge across artistic and everyday domains, with particular attention to the temporal and affective dimensions of contemporary technological environments. She is co-editor of *Invisibility Studies: Surveillance, Transparency and the Hidden in Contemporary Culture* (2015) and has published widely on surveillance technologies, datafication, and the uncertainties produced by digital archives. Her recent work includes the 2025 article “The Leaky Home” in *Theory, Culture and Society*.*

10:15 - 10:30 Coffee Break

10:30 - 12:00 *Parallel Panels 1 + 2*

Panel 1: Black Invisibilities

REC J/K, room B.11

Rhys Jones

Refiguring Racial In/Visibility in H.P Lovecraft's "The Rats in the Walls" (1924) and Misha Green's *Lovecraft Country* (2020)

Eva Ries

Racial Regimes of Visibility in Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah's *Chain-Gang All-Stars*

Panel 2: Gendered Invisibilities

REC V, room 2.12

Florian Lützelberger

Visible Invisibility and Counterpublics of Shame: Narrating Abortion through Boltanski, Illouz, and Berlant

Margaret Gillespie

Trans (In)visibility in Juliet Jacques' *Variations* (2021)

Diane Gagneret

Mirroring the (Fe)Male Gaze: In/Visibility in Jenny Diski's "The Vanishing Princess"

12:00- 13:30 *Lunch for All Speakers*

Café CREA, Nieuwe Achtergracht 170

13:30 - 15:00 *Parallel Panels 3 + 4*

Panel 3: Interspecies Visibility/Audibility

REC J/K, room B.II

Ruby de Vos

The (In)Audibility of Silt: Artistic Attempts at Multispecies Listening

Mary Fontinakopoulou

Now the Subaltern Has to Speak!: On Nonhuman Transmission

Françoise Kral

Literature as Line of Flight: Retrieving the Lost Archives of the “Small Lives”

Panel 4: Asian and Muslim Invisibilities

REC V, room 2.12

Judith Neder

The Pleasures of Invisibility: Travels to the Parental Homeland in *The Life of a Banana* (2014) and *Takeaway* (2022)

Eva-Maria Windberger

Constructing British East and South East Asian Visibilities on the Stage: Daniel York Loh's Plays

Alizée Goron

The Paradox of Muslim Women's Invisibility in Contemporary British-Asian Poetry

15:00 - 15:15 *Coffee Break*

15:15 - 16:45 NICA Panels

Panel 1: Making Oneself Visible/Audible

REC J/K, room B.11

Anna Halberstadt

Ophelia's Soliloquy Proper: Sad Girls, Tradwives, and the Ambiguous Politics of Withdrawal

Klee Schmidt

Necropolitics Need You! On the Everyday, Mundane, Invisibilization of Being-with SARS-CoV-2 and the Potential of Resistance through Self-Surveillance

Nor Akelei

An Open Casket, or Traces of a "Deadname"

Panel 2: Challenging Systemic Invisibilizations

REC V, room 2.12

Mehran Abdollahi

Bla(n)kness in the Frame: Investigating the (Non-)Cinematic Aesthetics of Invisibility in ABC Africa

Emma Shi

Rainbow behind Clouds: A Case Study on the Silenced Majority in China

Mateo Rhône

Invisibility through Mexican Interculturalism: The Relationship between Indigeneity and National Education in 21st-Century Mexico

Panel 3: Listening/Looking beyond the Normative

REC V, room 2.04

Andrea Neelissen

To Witness Slaughter: *The (In)visible in Abattoir: USA!* by Aria Dean

Yago Sağlam

Listening for the Inaudible in Jay Afrisando's "In Which to Trust?" (audio described, 2023): The Use of Repetition in the Contestation of Colonial Aural Normativity

RJ Weichert

Flavours of Word Salad: Mad Legibility and Poetics across the Discography of p.Wrecks/Vulture Lung

16:50 - 17:20 *Book Launch*

Gero Guttzeit

*In/Visible Subjects: Literary Character and Narratives of
Invisibility since the Eighteenth Century*

(Palgrave Macmillan, 2025)

REC J/K, room B.II

17:30 - 18:30 *Drinks for all speakers and attendees*
Café CREA, Nieuwe Achtergracht 170

Friday 24th April

9:00 - 10:30 Paralell Panels 5 - 6 - 7

Panel 5: Invisibilized/Silenced Archives

REC J/K, room B.11

Paula Albuquerque

Becoming Opaque: Decolonizing Film Archives

Serkan Kasapoğlu

Censoring *Huysuz*: Drag on Turkish TV and Infringement of Cultural Expression

Özgür Çiçek

Beneath Silence: Archival Imagination in Palestinian and Kurdish Documentary Practices

Panel 6: Invisible/Inaudible Labor

REC J/K, room TB.16

Penn Ip

Devalued Female Labor: The Invisible Lives of Grassroots Women in the Socialist Workers' New Villages in Shanghai, China

Margaux Schwartz

The Acoustics of Service: On the Performance of Invisibility in Butlering Practice

Caszimir Cleutjens

Work Performed, Work Dissimulated

Panel 7: Visibility/Audibility and Literary Form

REC J/K, room TB.18

Laurent Trèves

"Sometimes I Think I Don't Exist": Voicing Social Invisibility, Self-Blame, and the Feminine Self in *The Trick Is to Keep Breathing*

Irmtraud Huber

Visible in Which Light? Exploring Artificial Illumination in 19th-Century Detective Fiction and Ghost Stories

Jingyi Wan

When the Bathroom Song Becomes Audible: On the Inaudibility of Poetry and Intuition in Yiyun Li's *Where Reasons End*

10:30 - 10:45 Coffee Break

10:45- 12:15 Parallel Panels 8 + 9 + 10

Panel 8: Colonial Invisibilities

REC J/K, room B.11

Natalia Giraldo-Jaramillo

TAGANGA (IN)VISIBLE: Dynamics of (In)visibility in an Indigenous Fishing Town in the Colombian Caribbean

Doro Wiese

Unsettling Coloniality. White Space in the Cut-Up Poetry of Jordan Abel (Nisga'a)

Andrin Albrecht

Silicon Eyes: Extraction Capitalism and the Hubris of Ocular Genius in Eleanor Catton's *Birnam Wood*

Panel 9: Making Invisibility Visible

REC J/K, room TB.16

Pedram Dibazar

On Failing to Rise to Visibility in *On Falling* (2024)

Rabea Klesing

Challenging Invisibility: Narrative Strategies of Reader Accountability in Gastarbeiterliteratur

Alireza Kenari

Politics of Absence: Coexistent Invisibility and Spatial Resistance in Contemporary Iranian Media

Panel 10: Theorizing Sensory Regimes

REC J/K, room TB.18

Christopher Herzog

Contesting Sensory Hegemony: In/Audibility, In/Visibility, and the Right Not to Be Made Legible in Darius Marder's *Sound of Metal* (2019)

Enrica Zaninotto

The (in)visible in/audibility of CODA: (Children of Deaf Adults) Auto/biographies

Amber Helmes

Affective In/Visibility: Writing Loneliness in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Whereabouts*

12:15 - 13:45 Lunch (self-paid; see suggestion list below)

13:45- 14:45 Keynote - Claire Davison

REC J/K, room B.11 *Lest We Remember? War, Sound and Sonic Memory in the BBC's 'Scrapbook' Programmes*

Abstract

By exploring sound archives related to trench warfare in WWI, my talk explores the paradoxes of sonic recollection and replay, whether collective or individual, when powerful acoustic experience and indelible memories of sound confront the far more ruthless regimes of visibility, silence and historiographical reconstruction “on air”. The topic is vast, but will be approached via a case study of a popular BBC radio series first launched in 1933, which continued intermittently for over thirty years; the “Scrapbook Programme”.

Each broadcast, one hour in length, revisited one year in British history, assembling sound recordings, eyewitness accounts, dramatised memoirs and the music of the day in a sonic panorama blending nostalgia, surprise and direct contact with bygone days. The Scrapbook for 1918, first broadcast on Armistice Day 1934, inevitably pulls both ways – into the indelible experience of trench warfare, the sonic memory of past combatants, and civilian life on the ‘home front’, and into the 1930s present of commemoration and renascent trans-European nationalisms. Almost emblematic of frontline experience in WWI is shelling, and the lasting often physical reenactment of fear in shellshock.

But in an era when recording technology in the open was in its infancy, how could the horrors of shelling and sonic memory be revived, recounted and shared with a later generation? What role did soundscape and music have in the creation and manufacturing of collective memory? What stories did soldiers and those at home want to remember? The first Scrapbook programmes were performed live, not recorded; in the absence of recordings, however, printed archives compile producers’ scripts, guidelines of home listeners (in broadcasting magazines such as the Radio Times) and audience feedback. Assembling these materials, the talk therefore probes the question of silence at the heart of sonic memory, and the ideological forces shaping the making and transmission of aural history, and the quest for authenticity.

Bio

Claire Davison is Professor of Modernist Studies at the University Sorbonne Nouvelle. Her teaching and research all bear on the aesthetics and cultural history of British and European Modernism, with an especial focus on sonic modernity, music, and cultural mediation. After extensive research in the sound archives of the BBC, her ongoing book project explores sound memory and the radiophonic imagination, while she also completes an extensive, new critical edition of Three Guineas for the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Virginia Woolf. Claire is co-editor with Gerri Kimber of the four-volume, newly re-transcribed and annotated series of The Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield (2020–25), and the project deviser and co-editor of Cross-Channel Modernisms (EUP, 2020).

14:45- 15:00 Closing by Organisers

Suggested Restaurants (self-paid)

Friday 24th Lunch

Café CREA

Nieuwe Achtergracht 170 (on campus — 1-min walk)

Dutch café fare, sandwiches, soups. Affordable and convenient. Also the venue for Thursday lunch and drinks.

Note: Thursday conference lunch is here (organised).

Bakhuys Amsterdam

Sarphatistraat 61 (~8 min walk)

Café and bakery, French inspiration.

Lebkov

Roetersstraat 15 (~2-min walk)

Fresh sourdough sandwiches, vegetarian and vegan options

Pita Chef

Roetersstraat 11 (~1-min walk)

Mediterranean lunch spot. Wraps, pitas, hot meals.

Kriterion Café

Roetersstraat 170 (~2-min walk)

Broodjes and tostis, inside a film theatre.

The Breakfast Club

Roetersstraat 10 A (~1-min walk)

Breakfast food (savoury and sweet), salads and cakes.

Practical tip: Many places in this area are popular at lunchtime. Booking ahead is advisable for groups of 4 or more.

Most accept both cash and card.

Getting There — Venue Map

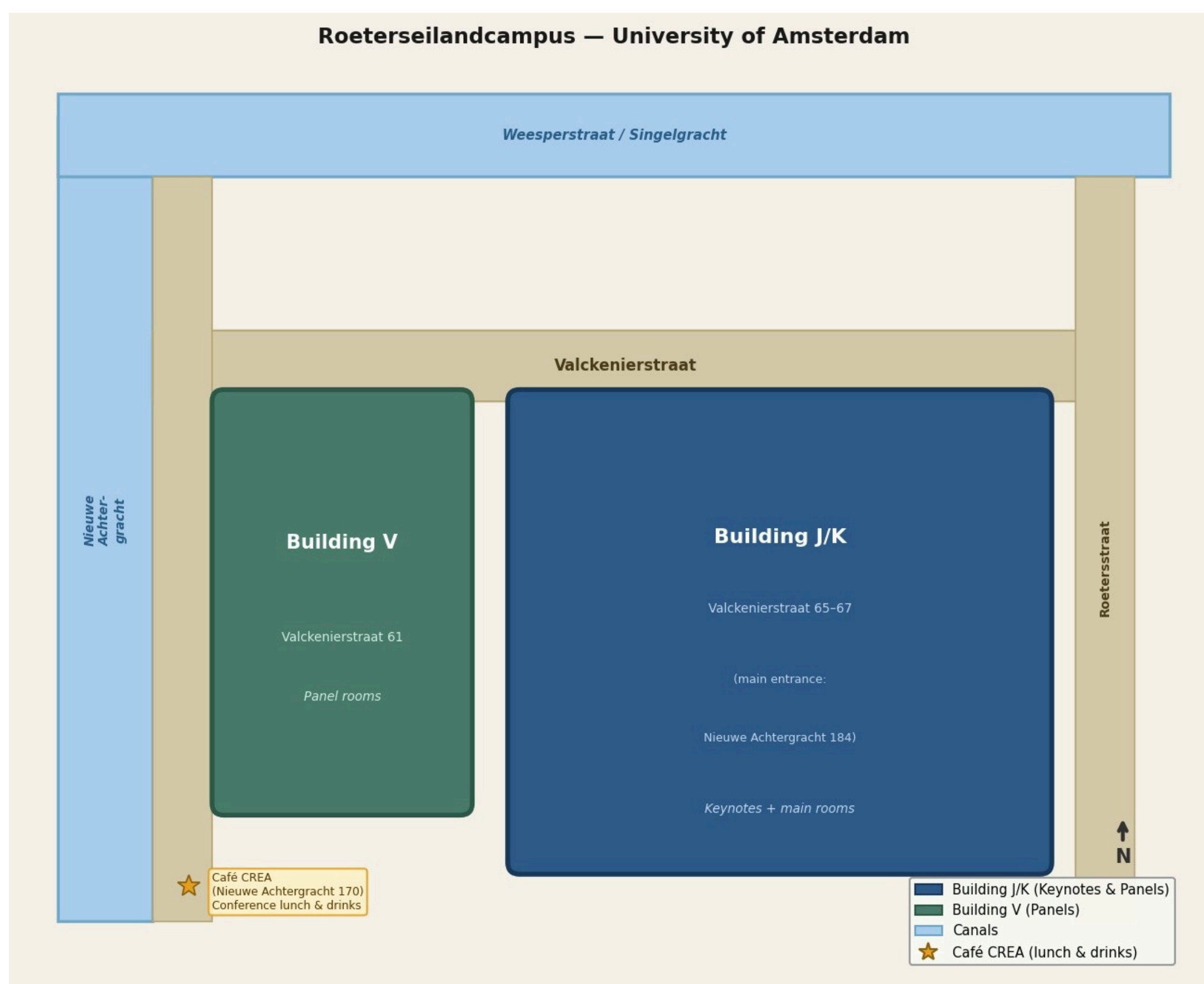
Main entrance: Nieuwe Achtergracht 184

Building J/K
Valckenierstraat 65–67
1018 XE Amsterdam

Building V
Valckenierstraat 61
1018 XE Amsterdam

Keynotes · Opening · Book launch

Parallel panel rooms



Roeterseilandcampus, University of Amsterdam

Getting there by public transport:

Metro (M3): Weesperplein station (3-min walk to campus)

Tram (lines 7, 19): Weesperplein stop

From Amsterdam Centraal: approx. 15 minutes by metro or tram

Bicycle: Bicycle parking is available at the campus entrance on Nieuwe Achtergracht

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Emergency services (Netherlands): 112

Police non-emergency: 0900-8844

UvA Security desk (REC J/K): +31 (0)20 525 5663

Nearest hospital (Amsterdam UMC, Meibergdreef): +31 (0)20 566 9111

Conference organisers: Esther Peeren · Alice Borrego · Gero Guttzeit · Héloïse Lecomte

Nearest pharmacy: Apotheek Weesperstraat, Weesperstraat 109 (5-min walk)