

## [The Poetics of Precarity: Literature, Art, and the Precarious Condition](#)

Announcement published by Michiel Rys on Tuesday, July 9, 2019

Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

September 30, 2019

Location:

Belgium

Subject Fields:

Art, Art History & Visual Studies, Literature, Popular Culture Studies, Social History / Studies

### THE POETICS OF PRECARITY

#### *Literature, Art and the Precarious Condition*

18-20 March 2020, University of Leuven (Belgium)

**Keynotes: Isabell Lorey** (Academy of Media Arts Cologne / EIPCP), **Benjamin Kohlmann** (University of Freiburg), **Roswitha Böhm** (TU Dresden) & **Kathrin Röggla**

'Precarity' has become a key term to describe diverse physical, psychological and affective effects of neoliberal working and living conditions. In academic and in popular discourse, concepts as 'precariousness', 'precarity', 'precarisation' and 'precariat' have resonated widely and have provided explanatory narratives to critically reflect on the impact of global capitalism on everyday life (Maurizio Lazzarato, Klaus Dörre, Isabell Lorey, Guy Standing). Culture and literature in a broad sense have engaged with these societal developments and have thematised diverse aspects, patterns and figures of precarity. A variety of aesthetic models and figurative tools have been developed to mediate experiences of precarity and shape our perception and understanding of precarious realities.

This conference will focus on the cultural figurations of precarity to (re)construct its poetics from a historical point of view. Present-day 'precarity' can in certain regards be understood as a return of structural uncertainty that characterised earlier stages in the history of capitalism, like the scenes of primitive accumulation, the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the 1930s... (Robert Castel, Sanford Schram). Perhaps the imagination and

representation of precarious realities are rooted in former cultural models and practices as well. For example, contemporary authors revisit and reinvent 19<sup>th</sup>-century genres like the social reportage, the social novel and the interview to address the social question of the 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century. This conference will map and examine these continuities and discontinuities in the intellectual histories and poetic imaginations of precarity. To explore the 'poetics of precarity' from a variety of angles, this conference invites panels and individual papers that deal with or are related to one or more of the following topics:

- The representation and representability of precarious working and living conditions.
- Precarious minds and bodies.
- Types and patterns of precarisation, i.e. of the process of becoming-precarious.
- The tensions between sociological and literary precarity narratives.
- Precarious genres and media, as well as their histories.
- Alternate literary histories of precarity.
- Precarity across national forms of literatures.
- Precarity and popular culture.
- Precarity and the poetics of everyday life.
- Figures of precarity: identities of the precarious worker and the 'precariat'/'proletariat'.
- The gender of precarious work.
- Precarious work and migration.
- Precarious subjects and/as writers or artists (also as a literary theme).
- The aesthetic experience of precarity (e.g. time, fragmentation, disorientation).
- The representation and production of precarious affects like anxiety, alienation, anger.
- Precarity and realism (e.g. the realism debates, the notion of 'new realism').
- The precarious condition of literature: who reads precarity narratives anyway?
- Precarity and the aesthetics of social agency, protest and activism.
- Precarity and ideology (e.g. socialism, liberalism, anarchism).
- ...

Authors are invited to send proposals for twenty-minute presentations in English

(150 words) to [precarity2020@kuleuven.be](mailto:precarity2020@kuleuven.be). It is also possible to submit proposals on the conference website (<https://www.arts.kuleuven.be/precarity2020>). The deadline for submissions is 30 September 2019. The organising committee will review all paper proposals and confirm acceptances by the end of October. A conference fee of 50€ will cover coffee breaks and sandwich lunch. For any other questions regarding this conference, please contact [precarity2020@kuleuven.be](mailto:precarity2020@kuleuven.be).

Contact Email:

[precarity2020@kuleuven.be](mailto:precarity2020@kuleuven.be)

URL:

<https://www.arts.kuleuven.be/german-literature/precarity2020>