

observant

INDEPENDENT WEEKLY MAASTRICHT UNIVERSITY — VOLUME 44 / NOVEMBER 23, 2023 **Nr11**

Children's rights

What is it like to grow up as a child on the West Bank? Researcher Marieke Hopman asked Palestinian children and children of Israeli settlers. "A strikingly large number of them have panic attacks and nightmares." Page 6-7



Disappointed

Of the four hundred students that were selected for the bachelor Biomedical Sciences, not even half turned up last September. And that in the first year that the study program had a numerus fixus. The intake restriction will not be abolished, but the faculty board is worried. Page 3

Crowded

MECC is bursting at the seams in the exam period just before Christmas. Maastricht University is growing, new study programmes have been added and André Rieu is holding his Christmas concerts in the events complex. UM is working with a so-called 'emergency set-up', with extra rows of tables and chairs. "The capacity problem was waiting to happen, but we are now on the verge of disaster." Page 5





Riki Janssen

editorial

No mouse sightings yet

My deadline for this editorial is 4 PM on Tuesday afternoon. That's when it has to be sent off to the translator. So, ideally, I'll have come up with a topic by late Monday afternoon. I usually brainstorm with my colleague WD, sleep on it, and then leisurely work out a writing plan in my head during my fifty-minute bike ride to work the next morning.

That's the ideal scenario, though. If I haven't settled on a topic yet, my morning commute is much less relaxed. I'll rack my brain for inspiration: what has happened at *Observant* in the past few days that might interest a wider audience? Any dilemmas, intriguing questions or funny incidents? Something will eventually come to mind. It has to – not writing is not an option.

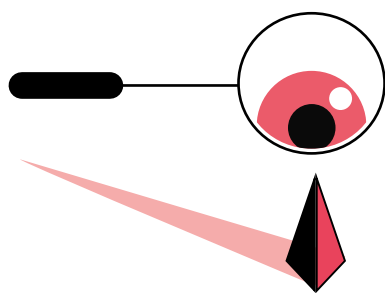
Whenever I mention a colleague's initials here, I run my editorial by them to see if they're OK with it. I've never

received a "no" in response to this question. Of course, not everything is suitable to write about; some things are private, and other things happen too often to be interesting. First, some happy news. This week, our colleague CF attended our editorial meeting for the first time since the summer break. She's been reading *Observant* from an outsider's perspective, resulting in valuable feedback. She has been enjoying the series where students talk about their future plans. But there's room for improvement, too. In the most recent print version of *Observant*, for example, political parties' views on the increased use of English and number of international students were relegated to the very last page. She pointed out that not all readers make it there – even she sometimes doesn't read beyond the two-pager on pages 6–7.

More happy news: last Monday, our editor MT was one of

73 employees being spotlighted for their 25th work anniversary at UM. We'd already celebrated the occasion as a team before the summer, so he decided to forgo the event. Finally, in the category of minor inconveniences, our offices and corridor haven't been cleaned for weeks. The floor is covered in so many crumbs that it looks like a veritable all-you-can-eat buffet for mice, as attested by a poor soul (I won't name names) who walked around in socks for a moment. Fortunately for us, we haven't had any mouse sightings yet, and Facility Services is on the case. Crisis averted, hopefully.

*Every week, the editor-in-chief writes about what has been happening at the *Observant* office*



splinters

A funny incident, a striking piece of news, something interesting that happened elsewhere in the country: it is in this column. Contributions: Wendy Degens and Simon Wirtz

Salsa with the judge

It is a regular source of dissatisfaction: the division of the so-called administrative months, with which board members from student associations are compensated for delays in their studies. Last spring, for example, there was a heated discussion in the Maastricht University Council about a new measure which would result in large associations such as Circumflex and Koko receiving less money. In the end, an 'escape route' was found and a deadlock was prevented.

At TU Delft, internal discussions yielded no results recently. Battling for more compensation, student dancing association SoSalsa approached the Council of State, sister newspaper *Delta* reports. The dancers demanded 46 instead of the 22 administrative months offered by TU, which



comes down to 6,120 euro extra. The reason: in the university sports and culture centre, the dance halls were considered too small and the schedule too full, resulting in them moving to a larger (and more expensive) hall. This takes more work and hence result in study delays, according to the board. An internal complaints procedure produced no results, because TU claimed that the dance spaces available were suitable. Now, it appears that the judge is not dancing along either: the court followed TU's reasoning. Besides, the Council also states that it is impossible "to completely facilitate associations in practicing their activities."

Flash visit by Frans Timmermans

"Even if you find people's views reprehensible, you should enter into discussion with them, because the people themselves are not reprehensible." This is what Frans Timmermans, party leader of GroenLinks-PvdA and a citizen of Maastricht, said in the Student Services Centre (SSC) on Tuesday morning. On the very last day before the elections, Timmermans paid a fleeting visit to Maastricht University. He had been invited by SSC, said the press release that was published the day before. Invited by SSC? A rather impulsive action, according to the UM spokesperson: "Timmermans was around", "the occasion presented itself ...". Apart from Timmermans, there was no other party leader to be seen. A one-man show-therefore. He briefly argued against polarisation. "Never avoid discussions. You may disagree, but leaders of the future, such as you, must not exclude or leave anyone behind."

Some thirty students were seated at the front, spread across the room were local GroenLinks-PvdA members and UM employees who wanted to get a glimpse of the person who might be the next prime minister of the Netherlands. The questions were about climate, millionaires' tax, the "unlucky generation", polarisation and nitrogen policies. Those who followed the debates and interviews the past few weeks, will know the answers. Internationalisation, whether foreign students are still welcome, whether Dutch should become the primary language of communication at universities: all non-issues. A student – "a young woman like me" – wanted to know why she should vote for "an old white man". "If you believe that my age is a decisive factor, well, then I can't help you but you should judge me on the basis of my policies. It is in your interest to vote for someone who stands up for your rights, rather than voting for a woman whose main interest is with the shareholders." The very last question was about football club Roda JC Kerkrade, which Timmermans supports: "Do you expect they will be promoted to the premier division?" "We are so close," he answered. "GroenLinks-PvdA as largest party in the Netherlands; we are so close," he concluded. An obvious one.

Disappointing influx Numerus fixus for Biomedical Sciences to remain

Despite the disappointing number of first-year students for Biomedical Sciences, the faculty board does not want to abolish the numerus fixus after one year. But there are concerns. A lower intake is disadvantageous for the faculty's financial position.

The Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences (FHML) is facing decreasing student numbers. The main cause is the bachelor's of Biomedical Sciences (BMS). About seven hundred students registered for the study programme, said Mirjam Oude Egbrink, who is responsible for education, during the latest faculty council meeting at the beginning of November. Ultimately, four hundred were selected (the maximum of the numerus fixus) of whom not even half turned up. How is this possible? And maybe even more importantly: should the intake restriction be abolished? A lower influx has considerable ramifications for FHML's funding in the long term. The board was giving itself until 1 December to make the decision.

As of this academic year, a maximum of four hundred first-year students were admitted in order to guarantee the quality of education. "The ever-increasing number of students (430 in 2022) led to capacity problems," state FHML's budget documents, among others at lab and computer practicals and work placements. Moreover, the Maastricht BMS programme was the only one in the Netherlands with an unlimited number of places. The board feared that Maastricht would be inundated with students. But in fact, it turned out the opposite.

A decision has now been taken: BMS will maintain the numerus fixus for the coming academic year. To reach this decision, an "extensive analysis" was carried out of the selection procedure and everything that has to do with that, such as why registered students didn't turn up in the end, but this did not yield anything extraordinary. "Students eventually chose a different programme," Director of Education Jan Theys reacts, "or a programme closer to home, or decided to have a gap year". The psychological 'intake restriction effect' also plays a role, Theys already admitted in *Observant*. Students become scared when there is a selection procedure; they think they will be tested on knowledge within the domain. If they are already a little doubtful, they won't take the risk. "But that is not how we select," he emphasised. The early registration date of 15 January, Theys also previously said, was a stumbling block: "It is very early and because future students are not used to this, some might forget."

By putting more effort into recruitment, the board hopes to attract enough newcomers in September 2024. In addition, FHML expects growth within new programmes, such as the bachelor's of Regenerative Medicine and Technology, the master's of Health and Digital Transformation, and the new interfaculty bachelor's of Brain Science, which will start in September 2024.

Wendy Degens

Up early for democracy



Photos: Joey Roberts

It's Wednesday morning, 8:30 hrs in a former gym, located in an old school building in the neighbourhood Blauwdorp. Khyra Faradji (20) has already been working for more than two hours. That is rather early for the second-year student of *Arts and Culture*, but this is election day and Faradji is a member



Khyra Faradji

of the polling station. "From the moment we opened the doors an hour ago, it has been quite busy," she says, handing out one ballot paper after another to incoming voters. "It is the second time that I am here as a volunteer. I do it just because I like it. Not only do I contribute to our democracy, it is also fun, getting to know the other volunteers well; it is also very instructive, because most of them are older. The moments when it's quieter, we talk about our lives, our problems, and we laugh a lot too."

The manual counting of the votes, which starts at 21:00 hrs, is a nuisance at the end of the day: "That is when we open the ballot boxes, drop all the ballot papers on the floor, sort them out and start counting. It takes hours, you can make mistakes, and how can you be sure there isn't a corrupt volunteer among all those thousands across the country?" So, she hopes that one day she will see computers in the voting booths instead of ballot papers and red pencils. But, all and all, Faradji is happy to be part of it: "I help our democracy and also earn 200 euro. In my student job as a barista, I need to work for a week to earn that amount."

Simon Wirtz



Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors

“

"Dear student, we determined your monthly amount of student debt for 2024." This financial reality check should have reached the inboxes of many in the past week. At the start of this year, 1.6 million current and former students in the Netherlands collectively owed a staggering 28.2 billion euros in student debt, as reported by the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. And brace yourselves, because starting January 1, 2024, the interest rates on our study debts are rising to 2.56 percent. Happy new fiscal year, right?

Logging into the DUO website and clicking on the button labeled 'My debts' is a surreal experience. The numerical representation of my debt doesn't evoke much in me; I've never been a numbers person. Perhaps, if someone would show me visually how many apples I owe the Dutch government, I'd be more worried. But as a number, it becomes a distant problem that future me will have to figure out.

For those of us who have never earned more than minimum wage, the idea of working later to pay off today's debts feels like an abstract concept. How many hours would it take to work away at that imposing number? And what student has the time to contemplate whether their bad credit score will stand in the way of buying a house later when they have to focus on today's student life? Tuition fees, living costs, and semester-abroad programs are expensive. When relying on parental income isn't an option and juggling a full-time job alongside studies is an unrealistic expectation for most, there are few alternatives remaining aside from resorting to taking out a student loan. Still, the level of worry about my debt fluctuates, largely influenced by those around me. Most of my German friends don't have any debt at all, thanks to lower tuition fees and state-provided student financing. However, when I'm with my U.S. friends, the extent of their student debt and their worries about ever being able to live without the constant burden of it make my own concerns seem comically small. But perhaps, instead of comparisons, it's better to acknowledge that there's room for improvement and that a student's financial background shouldn't hinder their education, nor force them to burden themselves with lingering debt after graduation.

”

Line-Marie Eichhorst,
student UCM

societal impact

“A relief for patients, appointment coordinators and doctors”

In today’s world, the societal impact of research findings seems more important than getting published in an academic journal like *Nature* or *The Lancet*. What impact has research conducted at UM had in recent years? This week: how the AMACING trial changed the international standard of care for patients with poor kidney function undergoing contrast procedures.



Estelle Nijssen and Joachim Wildberger Photo: Ellen Oosterhof

The AMACING trial has made it into *Observant* before; Estelle Nijssen from the Radiology Department of the Maastricht University Medical Centre+ (MUMC+) was interviewed after winning the UM Dissertation Prize for her PhD, completed before the pandemic hit the Netherlands. She and her team studied whether it is beneficial to give intravenous (IV) fluids to patients with poor kidney function before a procedure with iodinated contrast material. This preventive measure had become standard practice worldwide in this century, as recommended in guidelines that were strictly followed in the Netherlands. It was intended to prevent kidney damage, “based

on the idea that your kidneys are tasked with filtering the large contrast molecules from your blood”, explains Nijssen. “Diseased kidneys may struggle with this, so doctors administered extra fluids to support them. The rationale makes sense.”

Drawbacks

However, IV hydration is not without its drawbacks. It’s a financial and logistic burden on the hospital (requiring patients to be admitted for a day) and can be a medical burden on the patient, notes Professor of Radiology Joachim Wildberger, Nijssen’s PhD supervisor. “It’s a preventive measure that can have serious side effects in a certain group of patients.”

“And ironically, it was precisely this group of patients that often received IV hydration”,

adds Nijssen. “Heart failure patients regularly undergo procedures involving contrast administration. But poor heart function and poor kidney function often go hand in hand. These patients were given extra fluids even though it may put added strain on the heart.”

The question was whether the benefits of the practice outweighed its potential risks. Nijssen was surprised to find that there was no hard evidence supporting the existing guidelines. The AMACING trial was the first randomised controlled trial assessing the effectiveness of IV hydration. The answer was a resounding “no”: the researchers found no difference between the group that received IV hydration and the group that didn’t. After publication in *The Lancet*, guidelines worldwide were updated to reflect the AMACING results. “They were easy to implement in practice”,

says Nijssen. “You didn’t have to do anything new; you just had to stop doing something. The new approach has brought relief for patients, appointment coordinators, doctors, budgets... It has been an improvement for everyone.”

Careful monitoring

Is this reflected in the statistics? Hundreds of millions of contrast procedures are performed worldwide each year. “We’ve published a calculation method in *European Radiology* that lets hospitals calculate their cost savings”, says Wildberger cautiously. “In that context, based on our data, we’ve shown that the new approach saves MUMC+ just over a million euros per year.” “And that’s a conservative estimate”, adds Nijssen. “I’m proud to say that in this hospital, 99 patients per year no longer face the complications of IV hydration – and we’ve freed up more than 1500 bed days per year.” Nijssen and Wildberger would like to stress that it’s not their intention to eliminate IV hydration for this group of patients altogether. “All we’re saying is that doctors must take the patient’s situation into account”, explains Nijssen. “Doctors can depart from the guidelines if it’s in the patient’s best interest. What we’re seeing now is that some are going too far the other way – they’re ready to do away with IV hydration even for patients with very poor kidney function. This is a small group, less than 1.5 per cent of all MUMC+ patients undergoing contrast procedures. For safety reasons, we and the Medical Ethics Review Committee decided not to include them in our randomised trial. Based on observational data from recent years, we believe that IV hydration is beneficial in these patients. There is a risk of side effects, but it can be mitigated with careful monitoring.”

Visibly proud

For this purpose, MUMC+ established the Contrast Preparation Outpatient Clinic. Nijssen and Wildberger are visibly proud of this outcome of their research; their faces light up when they talk about it. “Each patient is screened again by a clinic team member”, explains Nijssen. “They also support the patient during their appointment, monitor fluid administration and often consult with the cardiologist as well. It’s truly unique.” “It’s great to be able to do something for this very vulnerable group of patients”, adds Wildberger.

Both researchers are strong advocates of repetition in science. It’s ironic, then, that AMACING has not yet been repeated – and perhaps it never will be. Nijssen explains why. “The results of the AMACING trial were so clear that it is no longer ethically justifiable to randomly administer IV hydration to patients.” Wildberger adds, “Initially, the question was whether our research was ethical; now, you can no longer just give extra fluids to patients undergoing contrast procedures. The approach has almost been turned on its head.”

Exams from three to two hours next year



Mecc 2021 Foto: Joey Roberts

MECC is bursting at the seams this exam period: “We are on the verge of disaster”

During the exam week, just before Christmas, Maastricht University is working with a so-called ‘emergency set-up’ in MECC. This means that extra rows of tables and chairs will be added, because it is simply too busy. “The capacity problem was waiting to happen, but we are now on the verge of disaster,” says Anja Ronken, central exams co-ordinator.

Normally, a maximum of 1,800 students can take their exams at the same time in MECC’s West Hall. In the week before Christmas that will be about a hundred more during six of the twelve exam sessions. UM then switches to the emergency set-up, says Ronken. “This has been approved by the fire brigade and MECC. We will add rows, which will give us a maximum of 1,956 exam spaces. It is not ideal: the hall will be fuller than normal, in some cases the blocks are inconveniently large, which calls for more invigilators and the toilets will be busier.”

Rieu

The second exam period is always one of the busiest in MECC. The university is growing, new study programmes have been added and André Rieu is holding his Christmas concerts in the events complex from 9 until 17 December, which means that UM does not have all the evenings available to

“In exam week 1, we came close to only being able to open one group of toilets”

them. What doesn’t help either, is that a number of exams (take-home exams, papers, online exams) have ‘switched’ from off-site to on-site, among others to prevent fraud with artificial intelligence. That is mainly the case at the School of Business and Economics (SBE). In seven smaller courses, the exams have been changed around (the equivalent of 480 additional spaces in MECC), e-mailed Mark

Vluggen, scientific director of the education institute. Whether ChatGPT is always the reason in these cases, he doesn’t know. It definitely is for two courses. Vluggen: “The exam form itself usually doesn’t change, by the way, it is more a matter of block co-ordinators being worried about the chances of fraud of take-home exams, and then the solution is to ask students to do that same take-home exam in MECC.” The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS) added four exams to the MECC schedule, reports Patrick Bijsmans, vice dean of education. He

is not sure either if this has to do with ChatGPT. It certainly plays a role in the master’s of European Studies, said co-ordinator Francesca Colli. “We already made the switch last year due to worries about fraud and artificial intelligence.” Moreover, some Boards of Examiners advise or even require that the identity of the student can be verified for a certain part of the exam. So, in an exam hall.

Invigilators

In a document to the Education Platform (which includes the vice deans of education) Ronken had already made it clear at the end of October that there were “acute capacity problems” in no less than three exam periods (1, 2 and 4). Adding extra chairs and tables is one thing, but adding exam sessions (mornings, afternoons and all evenings) also requires more invigilators. “In exam week 1, we came close to only being able to open one group of toilets resulting in long queuing times. And initially there were fewer invigilators available for supervision. A solution was sought together with job agency InterUM; it all worked out well at the very last minute. An alternative was to deploy regular colleagues from the Student Services Centre to supervise.” Whether it will work out with the invigilators this time, is a matter that is keeping Ronken in suspense.

Noise

A solution for the busyness in MECC is to shorten the exam duration from three to two hours. Ronken: “By doing so, you create an additional exam option in a day. It also means that many evening exams will not be necessary for the time being.” An added advantage is that there will be no more trouble from groups of ‘two-hour exam students’ who leave the hall in a crowd making a lot of noise, while there are still ‘three-hour exam students’ working on their exams. “In the Education Platform, they agreed with the adaptations for the 2024-2025 academic year. It is now being discussed with the faculty boards.”

For Law, Psychology, FASoS and SBE, this means getting to work, because some of their exams still last three hours. You need to take your time with this, emphasised Anne van der Heul, exam co-ordinator for the Faculty of Psychology: “The staff will take a thorough look at the content of the exams to see how they can test in a reliable and valid manner and obviously be able to complete the exam in two hours.”

Although the adaptation is planned for the next academic year, co-ordinators of block period 4 have been asked to test in 120 minutes as much as possible.

"MONSTERS DON'T EXIST"

What is it like for a child to grow up on the West Bank? Researcher Marieke Hopman asked Palestinian children and children of Israeli settlers.

"So many of them have panic attacks and nightmares."

Text Maurice Timmermans **Photo** Esther Hertog



Doing this interview? Marieke Hopman was in two minds about it. She does research into the rights of children on the West Bank, of Palestinian children and Israeli settlers' children. "It's such a sensitive issue, and anything you say can have repercussions. Especially now that the conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis in Gaza has flared up in all its intensity. Violence has also intensified on the West Bank, as the largest Palestinian territory is called in English. Many Palestinian children there have been killed this year, the counter now stands at 94. In addition, more children are in Israeli jails, and parents are not allowed to visit them."

Hopman, originally a philosopher and lecturer at the Faculty of Law, is the

first researcher to focus on children's rights in unrecognised states, such as Palestine. She previously did similar research in the Western Sahara and in Somaliland. In unrecognised states, international law does not apply and the UN does not - or does not sufficiently - monitor observance of (in this case) children's rights.

She was doing fieldwork on the West Bank last spring. Just like in other conflict areas, she allows herself to be led in these case studies by the stories children tell. "We speak to children on the street, ask permission from parents, and arrange a time to meet for a chat. In the interview, we ask children what they think the problem is. What rights do they feel are being breached?"

Football training

Palestinian children came up with stories that fall under the right to play. "A boy of 15, who lives in a refugee camp, for example, said that he often can't play football. Or rather, attend football practice. The latter is done outside the camp, while entry into and departure out of the camp is monitored by Israeli guards. All too often, due to local conflicts, the military closes the camp. Children are confronted with the associated violence." Play stimulates imagination, and this is also where Palestinian children feel limited. "Much of what happens on the West Bank is linked to the conflict with the Israelis. So, if children sing a song at school, it's about the occupation. Chil-

dren cannot fully develop in freedom." Hopman works together with Birzeit University, where a group of master's students are helping to interview children. She also taught there about children's rights.

Sacrificing

University collaboration is not a part of the other project, in which Hopman interviewed children from Israeli settlers. "These are strictly religious families, often with many children, who - according to international law and sometimes also according to Israeli law - live illegally on the West Bank. Some travel there at nighttime and build temporary homes, which are sometimes torn down with a bulldozer, and sometimes they are not."



“Also on the West Bank violence has intensified. Many children there have been killed, the counter now stands at 94.”

Besides the fact that living in the Palestinian area is cheaper than in Israel, settlers are proud to sacrifice themselves. “In their words, they form the frontline of the conflict with the Palestinians on the West Bank. They are prepared to receive the first blows, so that Israel remains safe. In doing so, they are also prepared to expose their children to violence.”

Psychological help

Hopman heard this reflected in the children’s stories, touching on the right to be protected against violence. “Sometimes, Palestinians attack families in their settlements. Houses are set on fire, sometimes with the people inside burning alive. Settlers consciously choose to live in a hostile environment and send their children to school in a bus with bulletproof windows.”

Many children grow up in fear, says Hopman, who – as a cultural anthropologist – stayed in two settlements for a few weeks. They are mainly small, cosy villages with a synagogue, a small supermarket and a playground, surrounded by a fence. “The children are scared of ‘Arabs’, as they themselves say. A strikingly large number of them have panic attacks and

nightmares. The right to mental health is at stake here. Their parents tell them that they must be strong, otherwise the Palestinians will win. This is about a higher purpose, the continued existence of the Jewish state. At the same time, paradoxically, the children’s well-being is a primary concern in these communities. As is apparent from the available psychological help.”

Criticism

Hopman has faced considerable criticism for her research on Israeli settler children, including within academic circles. “Some colleagues argue that my research is unethical, even though it was approved by the UM Ethics Review Committee. The argument is that I’m providing a platform for children who might one day become murderers. They also question the goal of my research – am I suggesting that the settlers need more protection, that more Israeli soldiers should be deployed to the West Bank? But you could also conclude that it’s too unsafe for children there, and the families should relocate.” All children have rights, says Hopman, “including the settlers’ children, but

we’re not allowed to discuss that. It’s a taboo. Recently, during a UN meeting, I mentioned these children, and there was complete silence. Nobody had thought about this group. I was scared that they would tell me off, but my remark was regarded as an eye-opener.” Her research is about all children, she says. “Look at what is happening in Gaza now, where thousands of children have already been killed. Imagine how Palestinian toddlers are lying under the rubble for days, without food or water, all alone. Sometimes they may be saved from a bombed building; sometimes they may die alone. But also how fearful the Israeli children must feel who have been taken hostage by Hamas. Children as young as three years.”

Philosopher Kant

In the news coverage, but also in discussions, Hopman sees how black-and-white thinking holds sway over the nuances. “Palestinians and Israelis sometimes portray each other as monsters. In the Middle East but also in our country, we no longer try to understand why the

different parties behave as they do, what the underlying rea-

sons and ideas are. People hardly listen to each other. Only when we do, can we really change things.”

But justice is never that black and white, she says. “It’s extremely complex, especially if you list the many injustices inflicted on both sides, over several decades. We now have to think of the children. What are we going to teach them, how will we educate them? How can we ensure that they grow up safely?”

She paraphrases the German philosopher Immanuel Kant: “Children do not choose to be born. If you have chosen to bring them into this world, it is up to you to make them as happy as possible, to ensure that they can develop themselves freely.”

And no, you can’t brush aside all the injustice. “But let’s think about a way to process the past and to prevent injustice from happening again. That would be in the best interest of all children, but also of adults, of course.”

While doing so, according to Hopman, we should keep in mind that “monsters don’t exist”.

background

Talkshow wellbeing week

Are you no longer allowed to wear plaits in your hair?

What is the line between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation? Kim Kardashian with so-called Fulani plaits, originally worn by West African women, is that okay? Some people feel it is not. Others wonder if a 'fusion' of cultures isn't inevitable, certainly in a multicultural society.

It is Monday evening. The Dominicanerk slowly fills up. The talk show, organised by a group of honours students from the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, is part of the Wellbeing Week at UM, mental health being the focal point. "First they laugh, then they copy, then they cash," the quote used by fashion activist and journalist Janice Deul to start off the evening. By way of example, she shows a picture: to the right Elvis Presley, the King of rock 'n roll, to the left Rosetta Tharp. According to Deul, *she* is the real Queen of rock 'n roll. "And that is exactly what happens to cultural appropriation. How can you possibly 'discover' something that already existed? Tharp never became famous."

Albert Heijn

Words such as racism, stealing, possession and fusion appear on the monitor with the question: "what is cultural appropriation?" And according to Deul (Surinam parents "but I never thought about that then"), that is one of the reasons why this theme is so difficult. "The definition first has to be clear. Also, what are the stakes? People are wiping out history by taking over certain clothing or hairstyles." Still, there are other views from the audience. "So, am I no longer allowed to wear a braided hairstyle, if I think it is beautiful?" That



Photo: Observant

depends on the context, answers panel lid Branco Popovic, founder of *Fashionclash*. Deul adds: "You can actually dress for an Indian wedding. Then you are celebrating their culture, as it were." Panel members Tessa Yen and Yèn-Nhi Lê have Vietnamese parents, but they themselves were raised in the Netherlands. They looked into their origin and Tessa Yen, who recently became a chef, focuses on traditional dishes. "Pho is a Vietnamese noodle soup, which requires a lot of preparation time. Albert Heijn recently sold a steam soup as if it was 'Pho', but that is not what it was. It made me angry, so I wrote them a letter," says Yen. "They took the product off the shelves," Lê adds, smiling.

Nuance

A blonde guy raises his hand. "Is it actually possible for a Western person to appreciate a culture without appropriating it?" Deul thinks it isn't. "You would be better off developing your own style." Still, the question remains for many: where is the nuance and where is the end? "I'm not from here, but I always wear orange clothes to celebrate the King's birthday. I don't think I am appropriating the culture," another student says. There is applause. Someone else adds: "I am from Curaçao, our culture is exactly that, a melting pot of cultures." Emotions are running higher now. "I just don't get what is so difficult about this, why can't we just stop stealing each other's cultures?" an emotional student shouts. This evening will not lead to a broadly supported conclusion.

Lotte van de Loo

THE ANNOUNCEMENTS OF
THE UNIVERSITY, FACULTIES,
SERVICE CENTRES AND
STUDENT ORGANISATIONS
CAN BE FOUND ON
WWW.OBSERVANTONLINE.NL



Maastricht University

Vacatures

Werken voor de meest internationale universiteit van Nederland? Scan de QR-code voor ons actuele vacature overzicht*.

Voor meer informatie over werken bij de Universiteit Maastricht, ga naar <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/nl/werken-bij-de-um>

*Medewerkers van UM kunnen een volledig overzicht van interne- en externe vacatures vinden door in te loggen op SuccessFactors via Umployee.



www.maastrichtuniversity.nl

Agenda academic ceremonies Aula Minderbroedersberg 4-6

23-11, 10.00h	Daan van Kruining	30-11, 16.00h	Christine Kawa	8-12, 10.00h,	Joey Tang	15-12, 10.00h,	Anne-Marije Hulshof
23-11, 13.00h	Tomasz Dolny	1-12, 10.00h,	Carmen F.M. van Hooijdonk	8-12, 13.00h,	Sander Paul Martijn Kramer	15-12, 13.00h,	Lieke Bakker
23-11, 16.00h	Vincent R.A. Moermans	1-12, 13.00h,	Marla T.H. Hahnrahts	8-12, 16.30h,	Dr. Simon Beusaert	15-12, 16.30h,	Dr. Alessandro Bertolini
24-11, 10.00h	Bram M.M. Kremers	1-12, 16.30h,	Dr. Roland Pierik inauguratie		inauguratie		inauguratie
24-11, 13.00h	Alice Giannini Double Doctoral Degree Maastricht University – University of Florence	4-12, 10.00h,	Francesco Giancaterini	11-12, 10.00h,	Agorastos Agorastos	18-12, 10.00h,	Jennifer Monereo-Sánchez,
24-11, 16.30h	Dr. Rory R. Koenen inauguratie	4-12, 13.00h,	Irdanto Saputra Lase, Double Doctoral Degree Maastricht University -Ghent University	11-12, 13.00h,	Shuhe Zhang	18-12, 13.00h,	Cenay Aliye Elisa Akin
27-11, 10.00h	Xu Liu	4-12, 16.00h,	Priscilla Yeye Adumoah Attafuah	11-12, 16.00h,	John Boniface Nakutta	18-12, 16.00h,	Zoë Louise Miller
27-11, 13.00h	Naomi Annie van Westen- Lagerweij	5-12, 10.00h,	Sergey Primakov	12-12, 10.00h,	Eva Helena Harlacher (née Straußfeld) Double Doctoral Degree Maastricht University - RWTH Aachen University	19-12, 10.00h,	Meena Putturaj
28-11, 16.00h	Zeinab Mohamed Mamdouh Abdelkareem Gomaa	5-12, 13.00h,	Styliani- Dialehti Voulgaropoulou			19-12, 13.00h,	Ilishkina Daria Igorevna
28-11, 10.00h	Sriganesh Kamath	5-12, 16.00h,	Rosa Ricarda Leni Charlotte Thielmann	12-12, 13.00h,	Mohamed Kassem	19-12, 16.00h,	Estera Wiczorek, Joint Doctoral Degree Maastricht University - Jagiellonian University
28-11, 13.00h	Wendela M.H. Broers			12-12, 16.00h,	Anouk A.F. Stoffels	20-12, 10.00h,	Cassandra Barber
30-11, 16.00h	Madhura Ramchandra Rao	6-12, 10.00h,	Elena Caporali	13-12, 10.00h,	Xiaodi Zhang	20-12, 13.00h,	Alessandro Cianfoni
30-11, 10.00h	Hidde Pieter van Steenwijk	6-12, 16.00h,	Doke J.M. Buurman	13-12, 13.00h,	Maartje Massen	20-12, 16.00h,	Joey Nicholson
30-11, 13.00h	Hannah Bernhard	7-12, 10.00h,	Michel R.A. van Hooren	13-12, 16.00h,	Jan-Frieder Harmsen	21-12, 10.00h,	Nikki C.C. Werkman
		7-12, 13.00h,	Lianne M. Loosveld	14-12, 10.00h,	Sung Yoon Yang	22-12, 10.00h,	Izabiliza Liliane Mpabanzi
				14-12, 13.00h,	Heike E.F. Becker	22-12, 13.00h,	Melissa J.J. Voorn
				14-12, 16.00h,	Gemma M.C. van Ruitenbeek	22-12, 16.00h,	Ozan Yazar