

The Visual & Digital Cultures Research Center (ViDi) of the University of Antwerp seeks a:

Full-time PhD Candidate to conduct research and write a dissertation on **visual/digital culture in Cuba** within the framework of an FWO-funded project:

“From the Peripheries of the Wired World: An ethnographic study of everyday digital visual practices in Havana (Cuba) and New Delhi (India).”

Goals of the project

The present project aims at exploring the meaning of digital visual technologies from the vantage point of Cuba, a country that is just presently witnessing the public arrival of digital connectivity. Building upon the use of ethnographic research tools and practices the project focuses on 3 main areas:

- ✓ *Photographic practices;*
- ✓ *Film and video practices;*
- ✓ *Spatial practices.*

Dialoguing with the work conducted in India by the other members of the research team this project will contribute in instigating a rethinking of conventional Western assumptions regarding the digital turn from the vantage point of those who inhabit the “peripheries” of the wired world.

The selected candidate is expected to:

- ✓ Conduct ethnographic fieldwork on digital/visual practices in Cuba;
- ✓ Be able to interface the research on Cuba with that on India (carried on by the members of the research team);
- ✓ Write and complete a PhD dissertation within four years and collaborate in the creation of original publications on the topics relating to the main overarching project (see below);
- ✓ Actively participate in the activities of the ViDi and the Dept. of Communication Studies.
- ✓ Participate in conferences, workshops, seminars and other scholarly activities.

The Candidate's Profile

- ✓ A master degree in Anthropology, Sociology, Communication Studies, Film Studies & Visual Culture, Urban Studies, Cultural Geography (or any other degree relevant to the project);
- ✓ A high standard of spoken and written English and Spanish is required;
- ✓ A strong interest in and/or prior experience in the fields of visual and digital culture;
- ✓ Strong analytic and conceptual skills;
- ✓ Ability to carve out an original PhD project in the broad confines of the FWO project;
- ✓ Previous research experience in/on Cuba (or central America) is recommended;
- ✓ Master students in their final year may also apply.

The Team

This research project is funded by the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) and the PhD student will be supervised by Prof. Paolo S. H. Favero (visual anthropologist) and Prof. Philippe Meers (media and film scholar).

The offer

- ✓ A full-time PhD scholarship starting during Spring 2017. The appointment is for one year, but renewable three times (four years in total to complete a PhD);
- ✓ A dynamic and stimulating international work environment of experienced scholars, post docs and PhD candidates;

- ✓ A very competitive gross monthly salary ranging from € 2.280,27 to € 2.744,24.

To apply send:

- ✓ a CV;
- ✓ a short motivation letter (max. half a page);
- ✓ one reference letter;
- ✓ one proof of your writing and research skills (paper, article or thesis) in the areas addressed by the project;
- ✓ evidence of language knowledge;
- ✓ and a preliminary sketch of how you would lay out the research in Cuba. This sketch must be 2 pages long and very concrete.

These materials have to be sent to Prof. Paolo S. H. Favero (paolo.favero@uantwerpen.be) and Prof. Philippe Meers (philippe.meers@uantwerpen.be).

To facilitate our job kindly write *"From the Peripheries of the Wired World"* in the subject of your e-mail.

DEADLINE: 15 March 2017.

A pre-selection will be made from amongst the submitted applications. The next step will involve an interview (possibly via Skype) and possibly also a practical assignment.

Abstract of the Main Project

Questioning the deterministic and Western-centric assumptions that underline the idea of "the digital" as a monolith capable of engendering similar reactions across the globe, the present project aims to offer an ethnographically driven, in-depth analysis of the spread of digital media from a transnational perspective. Focussing on two urban locations representing different types fringes of the global spread of digital media (the cities of Havana, Cuba and New Delhi, India), this study will approach the topic from the particular vantage point of visual culture. The attention to digital visualities, i.e. to instances of production and consumption of images in a digital landscape, constitutes a concrete opportunity for studying what we could call paraphrasing Manovich (2009) practices of everyday digital life. The attention to concrete mundane engagements with images will allow us to generate new insights into the multiple faces of the digital turn. Regarding the sites for the research both Cuba and India host a very rich visual culture, while offering also examples of different trajectories of digital development. While India constitutes a territory where digital technologies are scarce resource but at the same time also a symbol for a rich and powerful future, Cuba is just presently witnessing to the public arrival of digital connectivity, it is facing its own digital turn. This is a unique moment in history for studying these contexts.

The University of Antwerp strives to contribute to an open, democratic and multi-cultural society. We are a family friendly environment and follow an equal-opportunities policy.