

Back to the Roots:

30th Anniversary of the American Studies Day at Radboud University

On June 22, 2023, the American Studies Day returned to Nijmegen, marking the 30th anniversary of its inception. This event provided a unique opportunity for the American Studies staff and students from various programs in the Netherlands to come together, establish connections, and stay informed about the latest developments in different Dutch programs. Alongside keynote lectures, award celebrations, and the NASA general meeting, the heart and soul of the event are the American BA, MA, and PhD students.

This year, fifteen students from American Studies programs in Amsterdam, Groningen, Leiden, and Nijmegen actively participated in panels focusing on the following themes:

1. Political Collectives and Solidarities
2. Authenticity, Violence, and Protest in the Transatlantic Sphere
3. Identity, Race, and Resistance
4. Remapping the Politics and Culture of the Cold War
5. Representation and Subjectivity in American Culture

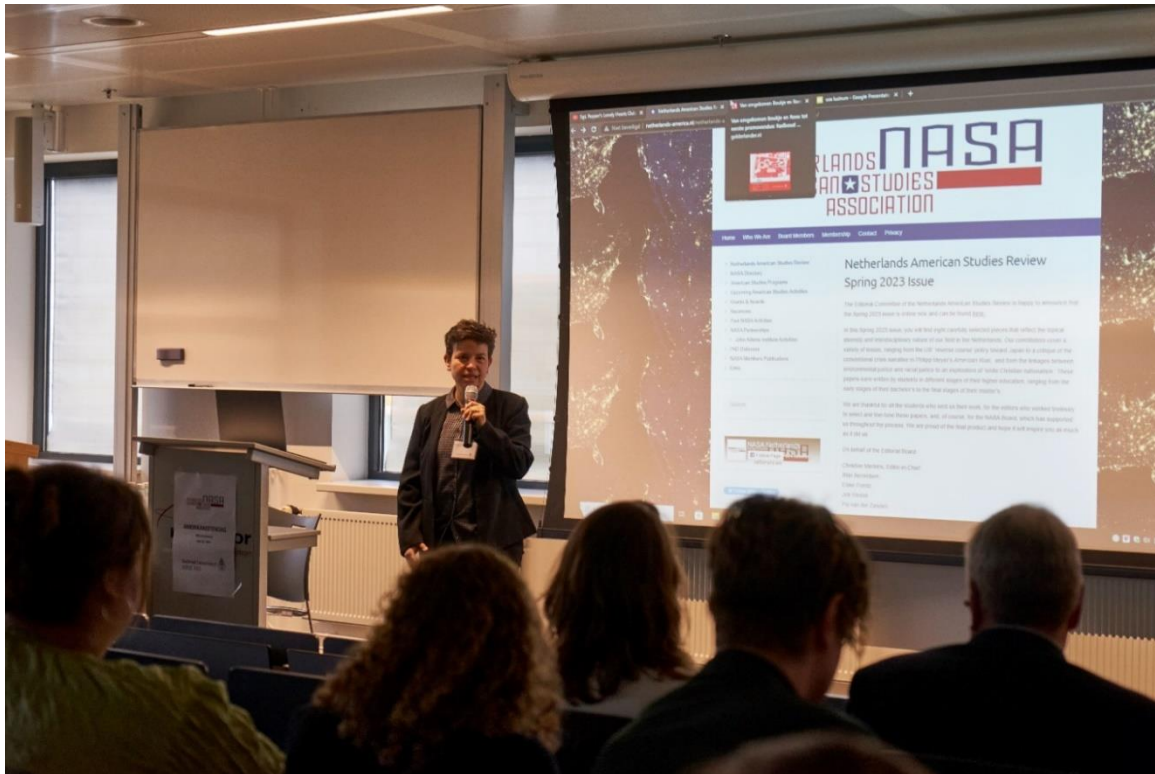
After words of welcome by Frank Mehring, who moderated the American Studies day and traced its roots back to 1993, NASA president Markha Valenta opened the event emphasizing new developments such as American Studies roundtables and the upcoming NASA conference “American Democracy in Action,” followed by an introduction of the USA Nijmegen student board. Other highlights included the Theodore Roosevelt American History Award (TRAHA) 2023, presented and announced by Mary Rodeghier Martin, Deputy Public Diplomacy Section Chief at the US Embassy in The Hague, and Gaetano Di Tommaso, chair of the 2023 TRAHA Jury. Congrats to all of the eight nominees and particularly to Pip van der Zanden who won the award for her excellent MA thesis “Decoding ‘The Iron Curtain’: The Role of Newspapers in Decoding American Propaganda in the United States and the Netherlands.” Afterward, Ian Kenny, Program & Development Coordinator at the John Adam Institute, reached out to the participants by introducing the Young Minds Program, an innovative network which brings together “the best and brightest by connecting young thinkers and professionals.”

The event featured insightful keynote speeches on Transatlantic Relations after 24/2, delivered by Tanja Röling (deputy director of the Western Hemisphere division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) Anna van Zoest (director of the Netherlands Atlantic Association). A particularly significant and emotionally impactful contribution came from Mariia Kravchenko (Fulbright Ukraine’s Program Officer and the RIAS Short-term Fellow). She provided revealing insights into the challenges of conducting research and teaching American Studies in war-torn Ukraine, including a personal account of her American Studies professor who actively joined the war effort at the frontlines.

Mariia concluded her talk and encouraged us to stay in touch, engage in collaborative projects and “meet in victorious Kyiv soon” (see photograph below). The event ended with a reception and a lively audiovisual presentation by USA Nijmegen students and staff members about their American Studies trip to New Orleans earlier this year. The staff members of the American Studies department at Radboud University would like to express their gratitude to all the participants, guests, keynote speakers, moderators, and students for their invaluable contributions in making the event an immense success.

Frank Mehring, prof. of American Studies.

All photographs below © Frank Mehring



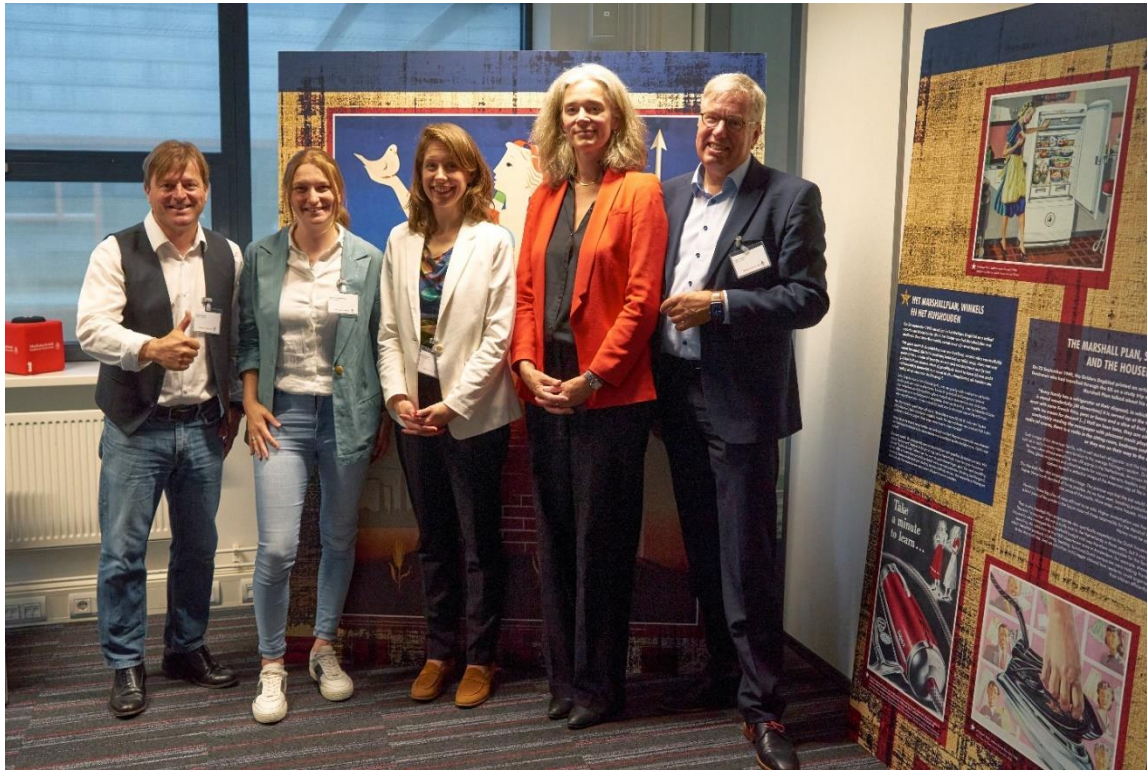
1 NASA President Markha Valenta



2 USA Nijmegen students Jorik Schuirink and Floor Heldens



3 Albertine Bloemendal introducing keynote speaker Tanja Rölling.



4 Frank Mehring, Albertine Bloemendal, Anna van Zoest, Tanja Röling, Jaap Verheul



5 American Studies Day participants in front of panels of the exhibition "Nijmegen en het Marshallplan"



6 American Studies Day audience



7 Student panel with Thomas van Gaalen, Sarah Lallemand, and Kai Hopen, panel 1 on Political Collectives and Solidarities.



8 Kirsten Soer, panel 4 on Identity, Race and Resistance



9 Mary Rodeghier Martin presenting the TRAHA award to winner Pip van der Zanden



10 Ian Kenney introducing the John Adams Institute's Young Minds Program



11 USA Nijmegen students and staff presenting sights and sounds of the American Studies trip to New Orleans



12 USA Nijmegen students and staff presenting sights and sounds of the American Studies trip to New Orleans