

Slow Science

**Invitation WORKSHOP
30/03/2012, 13h-18h, VUB – Brussels**

The controversy around the dismissal of Barbara Van Dyck from KULeuven - for her public support of an action of civil disobedience against a genetically modified potato field in May 2011 - and the arguments used to justify it, is the symptom of a deeper malaise. It reveals the restructuring of the university into a science enterprise, increasingly dependent on industrial and other outsider interests, market mechanisms, and competition. Science has come to be seen mainly as a purveyor of technological innovation and increased competitiveness on a globalized market. This shift not only restricts the choice of research topics and curricula but also threatens the quality of the knowledge produced.

Confronted with this, we need to defend and promote 'slow science'. Just like the 'slow food' movement defends qualitative food against fast food, slow science urges rethinking the current university, against the fast, competitive, benchmarked research. In this workshop we will reflect on different strategies for keeping Slow Science possible.

Praktisch - Practical – Pratique

- When?** 30 March 2012, 13h – 18h
- Where?** VUB, Auditorium QD , Campus Etterbeek, for a map click [here](#)
- Registration?** Participation is free of costs, but please send us an email if you plan to come at threerottenpotatoes@gmail.com, and indicate which Atelier you would like to participate in!
- Support?** If you want to support Barbara Van Dyck's trial and the Slow Science movement you can support us at 'Slow Science Comité' **BE69 5230 8047 1578**
- Language?** English will be the main language but everybody is free to express herself *en français* or *in het Nederlands*. We will organise translation where needed!
- Food for thought?** [Here](#) you find the transcription of the "Plea for Slow Science", which Isabelle Stengers delivered at the Willy Calewaert inaugural lecture at the VUB on December 13th, 2011. We warmly recommend you to read it beforehand! A Dutch version of the lecture text will appear next month in the journal [Oikos](#).

More info and updates at <http://threerottenpotatoes.wordpress.com/>

In collaboration with OIKOS, Fondation Sciences Citoyennes and Cosmopolis!

Programma - Program - Programme

- 13h00 Welcome & Coffee**
- 13h30-14h40 Plenary: Scientific research and the knowledge economy: State of the art and a plea for Slow Science, by Isabelle Stengers (ULB) & Chris Kesteloot (KULeuven). facilitator : Sigrid Sterckx (Ugent)**

15h00-16h30 Thematic Workshops

Atelier 1 *Festina Lento!* Discussing a Slow Science Charter and action plan to work with it

Different manifestos and pleas for Slow Science circulate today. Also within Belgian universities, a growing discontent about the state of affairs has led to a number of scattered initiatives. Discussions and writings on this issue relate to themes as varied as freedom of research, freedom of speech, choices in research priorities, privatisation of knowledge, evaluation and benchmarking, the instrumentalisation of the educational role of the university, the precarisation of the working conditions of university staff, etc. A draft for a Slow Science Charter makes the connection between these themes and helps us to imagine how another science can become possible. In this workshop we will present the draft of the Slow Science Charter, discuss it and develop strategies to work with it.

Atelier 2 *'Citizen Science': bridging the gap*

The workshop will present an analysis of what citizen science is and will argue why its promotion is urgently necessary.

The current narrow framing of the role of research and the focus on new technologies often lead to a piecemeal approach in the design of research agendas, inadequate for tackling the multi-dimensional challenge of moving our societies towards a more just and sustainable world. This lack of relevance of a linear model of research has fostered the emergence of problem-based approaches, that emphasize transdisciplinarity and that see knowledge not only as a product, but also as a process. How can we strengthen practices of science in which scientific knowledge is co-produced by scientists and citizens while acknowledging and integrating other sources of knowledge. How do science shops and regional public programs, for instance, connect research with citizen associations and their needs? How can we develop new forms of socially relevant innovation? How can research foster economic, social and ecological justice?

Atelier 3 *Against commodification and enclosure of scientific knowledge: Towards a University of the Commons*

University research funded with taxpayer's money and public grants is being privatized and made virtually inaccessible by a handful of private Academic Publishers and Corporations. This commercialization of scientific knowledge is happening in a context of increasing Governmental cuts and neoliberal educational policies encouraging aggressive competition between and within Universities and its workers.

Why do Universities pay astronomical prices to Academic Publishers? How do patents and other forms of intellectual property impinge open access to public knowledge? What is the logic behind the coercive accountability of journal rankings and impact factors, and how have these become institutional tools to measure the quality of researchers and their scholarship? In this context, what are our rights and responsibilities as researchers and what can we do to ensure open access to scientific knowledge?

- 16h45-18h Feedback to plenary, chair Eric Corijn (VUB) & Lieven de Caeter (KULeuven)**

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