

**SCIENCE  
FICTION**  
**PROMISES AND POETICS  
OF TECHNOSCIENCE**

**WORKSHOP**

**Monday 15 May 2017, 6.00 pm**  
**Istituto Svizzero di Roma, via Liguria 20**

**“Research is the future of research.” More than a century ago Max Weber mused in these terms on the prospective outlook of modern science (cf. Aron 1967). In hindsight, Weber’s efforts at distinguishing between scientific vocation and political profession may seem vain. His efforts tended indeed to cover up the mutual dependency, common characteristics, and intricate relationships between the two. Yet Weber’s sociological emphasis on the prospective outlook of science still resonates with the “economy of promises” (July 2010) that current technosciences draw upon, not least of which the grand promise of “Converging Technologies for Improving Human Performance” (Roco and Bainbridge 2002). Have nano- and biotechnologies met the expectancies that they continue to nourish? Have cognitive and computer sciences lived up to their promises? And upon which basis is and should that be decided? This research workshop takes up the outlined questions by homing in on the promises and poetics of technoscience. In particular, the workshop examines the discursive promotion of scientific breakthrough and technological innovation, whilst making explicit the imaginaries, intricacies, and ironies that this promotion entails. Discursive moves and political resonances, in and through rhetorical gestures of “science fiction,” will be examined more closely. Therefore, the workshop brings together leading and upcoming scholars in Science and Technology Studies (STS) from Switzerland, Italy, and Austria. The workshop is organized by the Swiss Institute in Rome, in collaboration with STS Italia and Interface Science-Sociétés of the University of Lausanne.**

## PROGRAM

- 6.00 pm Welcome  
Joëlle Comé (Swiss Institute in Rome)  
Introduction  
Philippe Sormani (Swiss Institute in Rome)
- 6.15 pm *Anticipation, promise and speculation:  
Narrative practices at the science-society interfaces*  
Ulrike Felt (University of Vienna, Austria)
- 7.15 pm *Scientific promises and literature: fiction as method*  
Marc Audétat (University of Lausanne, Switzerland)
- 7.45 pm *A technocultural short-circuit: Black Mirror, Google Glass  
and the Anxiety for Posthuman Media Technology*  
Paolo Magaudda (University of Padova)
- 8.15 pm *Final Discussion*  
Chair: Assunta Vitteriti (Sapienza University Rome)

**Ulrike Felt** is Professor of Science and Technology Studies and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Wien, Austria. After having earned a PhD in theoretical physics and gained interdisciplinary experience at CERN in Geneva, she has been visiting professor in a number of institutions. She has served as member of the council of the European Association for the Study of Science and Technology (EASST), of the Society for the Social Studies of Science, and as editor of the international peer-reviewed Journal *Science, Technology, & Human Values*. In 2017, she coedited the 4th Edition of the *Handbook of Science and Technology Studies* at MIT Press.

**Marc Audétat** holds a PhD in Sciences on the technological risks of biotechnologies and climate change. He is currently Lead Researcher in social sciences at the Institute *Interface Science-Sociétés* and at the Sciences and Technologies Studies Lab, University of Lausanne. He teaches courses on Biology and Society, Governance and Expertise, as well as Environmental Risks, and has widely published in these domains. In 2015, he coedited *Sciences et technologies émergentes: pourquoi tant de promesses?* (Paris: Ed. Hermann).

**Paolo Magaudda** works as Senior Post-doc Researcher at the University of Padova in Italy. He is also Lecturer in Sociology of Consumption at the IUSVE University in Venice. His research focuses on the relationship between society, technology and culture, drawing upon science and technology studies, as well as media, consumer and cultural studies. In the STS field he co-founded the open access Journal *Tecnoscienza: the Italian Journal of Science & Technology Studies* of which he is currently co-editor-in-chief. Since 2013 he is also national Secretary of STS Italia, the Italian society for the social study of science and technology. Among other memberships, he is member of the Directors Board of the journal *Studi Culturali* (Il Mulino), of the Editorial staff of *Sociologica* (Il Mulino).

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**Workshop languages will be Italian and English,  
with simultaneous translation**

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