



InCognito

For your monthly study-related needs and feeds.

April 2014

Suggestions, feedback or comments? Let us know at newsletter.cognito@gmail.com.

Incognobel Prize

This month the very professional and objective judges of the InCognobel committee decided to assign the InCognobel prize to an extraordinary achievement in the field of the most underestimated branch of art: Fashion. For her incredibly dutiful work it is therefore awarded to none other than our very own Marthe! She tells the success story that earned her this nomination.

Maybe you have already seen the beauty of Cognito fashion. As you can see in the picture, it is breathtaking. However, as we all know, beauty comes with a price. Which was high in this case, as the following story will demonstrate.

It all started at a cold night in November. The board came together to eat and to discuss how they could raise the awareness of the association. Shockingly, it had turned out that many people at the Science Park never heard of Cognito. In order to brighten those people's life by making them aware of Cognito's existence, the idea of sweaters came to mind and we were all enthusiastic about it. Then you would think it is easily settled in a week or two, but it became three months.

At first, our idea was just to make sweaters for ourselves as the board. One thing was certain: the colour would have to be 'Diva blue'. As time went by, we came to the conclusion that we are too committed as Cognitians (sorry for this word) to make clothing for the board only, neglecting the hard working committee members. To thank all of them, we wanted to arrange and sponsor sweaters for them as well.

Next, the brilliant idea came up to print a brain on the hood. Andrews brain, because it is a pretty one. It would be so cool! From that moment



*Board and committee members rocking their Cognito clothing
Photo by Myrthe Knetemann*

on, the problems started. The cheapest printerdude said this was impossible, as the next four printerdudes did. The fifth was Ben from Baflo. If you have never been to Baflo, it is up north and almost the end of the Netherlands. And that is just the way it feels when you are there.

Ben told us printing the brain was possible and he could give us a great price deal. At that moment, I loved him. Besides, he was one of the few that could print our logo without white background. Gooo Baflo! (I won't bore you with the conversations I had with the other printerdudes about this). Two months had gone by already, but we found Ben! Finally.

In the beginning, Ben was great. He could order sweaters in the Diva blue colour (at least

I believe it was diva-ish), black sweaters for the social committee and grey ones for the newsletter. I thought we would become best buddies... But, then the relationship with Ben got worse: he emailed that the brains would be very tiny on the hood, because of technical limitations. To parade as smart neuroscientist with those teeny-tiny brains on our head would be a bit ironic, so this plan fell through.

The conversations with Ben became less frequent and the virtual examples of the sweaters became stranger. After he ordered a wrong size sweater and one of the prints wasn't correct, I decided to put an end to this long distance relationship. The only memory I have from Ben are the Cognito clothing. Therefore, I want to ask you to treat the clothing with respect and wear it proudly.

AGENDA

Drinks @ CREA

Every Tuesday, 21:00-late

Cognito presents: Brain slicing event

April 2, 19:00, Science Park 402

Cognito, Congo and the Research Master's of Psychology worked together to organize this awesome calf brain slicing event. Registration has closed, but you can always join for drinks at the Brainwave bar afterwards!

ABC lecture: Dr. Marius Peelen

April 8, 16:00-17:00, location tba

Dr. Marius Peelen's lab is part of the CIMeC, an interdisciplinary research institute studying the mind and the brain. His research is mostly on the neural mechanisms that underlie visual attention and perception.

Brain and Cognition Festival

May 9, 10:30-17:00

The IIS celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Masters of Brain and Cognitive Sciences by organizing a symposium. Several speakers will talk about topics in the field of cognitive neurosciences. There will also be creative activities and the special edition almanac will be presented. For more information on the programme, take a look on the website: abc.uva.nl/education/10-year-mbcs

Cognito Presents:

Cognito Trip

May 16-18, secret location

Make sure to apply for this supercalifragilisticexpialidocious weekend! Send an email to cognitosocial@gmail.com with your name, food allergies or other dietary requirements and the amount of beer you expect to drink. Costs will be around 80 euros.

Brains Abroad

Laurens Kemp in Lund, Sweden

Having spent three months in Lund, Sweden now, I think I have learned some things. Or at least I hope so! What's definitely evident is that I probably couldn't have picked a spot with a smaller cultural difference than this one, while still being separated from Holland by at least one other country. I haven't had to speak a word of Swedish, and when I was introduced at the psychology department they told me that Lund University was totally laid-back, that your teachers are your equals, and that you shouldn't be afraid to speak up.

So far, so Dutch, right? Well... almost. The thing is, my supervisor's basically the top dog at the psychology department and a professor of parapsychology, and I'm, well, me, so our interactions haven't been all sweet and sugary every time. But we're working things out and it's going well so far!

There is one major difference between Dutch and Swedish universities, though, and that's the lack of tuition fees. For me, that only means that I get to spend my Erasmus funds on something else, but for the people who haven't already spent years studying, it means anyone can just waltz in and pick up a course that interests them. In the one course that I'm taking (the one my supervisor teaches) there's already a surprising variety of



Laurens on a day out in Gothenburg

people, some of whom haven't had higher education of any level. Judging by the results of the first exam, that also means they might not be doing all that well, but it's great that the opportunity is there.

What's also noticeable is that there's a lot of social activism

in Lund. Sweden may have a public image as a progressive role model but nonetheless, in the recent past there have been a number of clashes between fascist and anti-fascist groups, something that other parts of Sweden are still dealing with. I haven't witnessed any such thing myself but there's a student organization (a so-called nation, of which there are many) that's very dedicated to progressive politics, to the point where Lund University itself didn't want to associate with them anymore. I immediately thought that made them by far the most interesting, so that's where I'm now a member. I don't get a chance to participate all that often, but when I do it's great.

So, good experiences abound, and I'm very glad I was able to stumble into this situation.



Photo by Magnus Bäck. Lund University's main building

BIRTHDAYS

Yvette de la Fosse

April 1

Ilva Grond

April 2

Tara van Viegen

April 2

Joelle Lafeber

April 5

Jonathan Krikeb

April 12

Benjamin Germain

April 16

Daniel Lindh

April 17

Renée Schreurs

April 18

Henrijk Kroese

April 27

Annemarie Horn

April 28

HOROSCOPE



Taurus

21 April - 21 May

The start of this month offers a much needed opportunity for releasing some of that tension that has been building up. You will get a unique chance to split and splatter some vital organs (although they may not be human, and they may also not actually be vital anymore...).

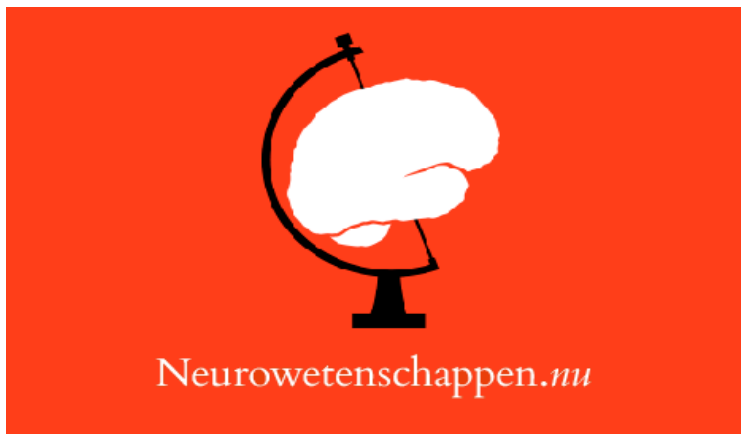
Also, later this month, you will get a perfectly fine excuse to enjoy some of that good food and wine that Tauri love so much. This opportunity is not unique, as it comes every year at a predictable moment, but the stars are ok with you enjoying some reassuring predictable party every once in a while!

Neurowetenschappen.nu

By Jan Koeleman

Neurowetenschappen.nu is a new Dutch website about the increasing involvement of neuroscience in society and business. Each week, a new statement is posted online with the goal of starting interdisciplinary discussions. For example, should we allow the exploitation of neuroscientific data for use in marketing? Or should all fMRI and EEG data be made anonymous so that researchers can freely access it, or is this a breach of privacy?

Although you can always react to the statements that have been posted, we are also inviting people of various backgrounds to write short reactions which



we post online with the statement to kickstart discussions. These reactions will be accompanied with your name, a photo, a short description and (optionally) a link to your website.

Are you interested in writing invited reactions, or do you have an idea for writing an article or other suggestions? Please send me an email at jan@neurowetenschappen.nu!

The Real Cause of Corporophobia

Column by Annemarie Horn

I temporarily lived in a sustained state of euphoria after I finally found the money and courage to buy a new laptop, because it had not been easy. After thorough research and the help of several smart guys (not obstructed by the digital illiteracy I suffer from), I had finally chosen one out of countless options. But at the very moment I wanted to press 'order', it – of course – turned out to be out of stock. At that one website, as well as on any other website offering the model. Moreover, at the shop in Utrecht every single specimen had been sold. Apparently, the whole country had decided on buying that particular laptop on that particular day. In the end, I managed to buy the very last copy the shop in Amsterdam had in store. Even accepting the fact that having to cope with Windows 8 was inevitable. But finally I could watch tv-shows in bed again. And in order to celebrate that, I did nothing else for a couple of days. The hollow feeling left by my old laptop tumbling down the stairs, was finally filled again.

However, as I could have

predicted based on former experiences with electronic devices, my good luck was doomed to be short-lived. Microsoft Office was barely installed on my brand new touch screen beauty, when I got betrayed by my very closest friend: my phone. Or actually, he might have thought I betrayed him, when I tossed him into the toilet. At first, everything seemed fine and after washing my hands for at least 15 minutes using a liter of hand soap, I continued sending messages, reading the news and checking my mail. But when it seemed to start developing a will on its own, I ran to the closest shop and bought rice. Loads of rice.

After the torture of having to live without a phone for more than 24 hours, I dared to turn it on again. None of the overjoyed success stories on internet forums were wrong, a miracle indeed unfolded in front of my eyes: my beloved Samsung worked as never before. Of course, this was just too good to be true (again!) and after a few days of intensive use – I had to make up for the time we missed – it started failing its daily tasks.

Since then I have been trying many different things, but nothing seems to work. It feels as if I'm seriously injured, suddenly I have a handicap. I know I receive hundreds of WhatsApp messages every day, but can't read them, I know all of my friends are desperately hoping for an answer, but I can't even reach them to offer the comfort that it's nothing personal. And my Mum, she must be dying by now, wondering whether I'm still alive.

I'm suddenly aware of my own dependence on that tiny little apparatus, because I'm too late for my trains and get lost in town, due to the lack of access to public transport information and Google Maps. By the slip of attention for the tiniest period of time, the era of ultimate mobility can turn into a gaping black hole of disconnection. I'm to blame myself for my vulnerability entirely, since I gave my phone this power by allowing it to be my only door to the whole world. So beware – and ideally avoid – toilets, they're monstrous and will swallow your beloved devices, and thereby your door to your social life, mercilessly!

Food for Thought

Here's one for the vegetarians and lovers of spicy food. The main ingredient, okra, is a peculiar vegetable and quite a treat if you know where to find it. Okra is also an esteemed health food, full of vitamin C, fiber, folates and a whole lot more. There's even a study by Tongjaroenbuangam et al (2011) suggesting neuroprotective effects in mice!

Okra Masala

Ingredients

450 gr. okra
0.5 teaspoon turmeric (kurkuma, koenjit)
1 teaspoon (mild) chili powder
1 tablespoon cumin (powdered)
1 tablespoon coriander (ketoembar; powder)
0.25 teaspoon salt
0.25 teaspoon sugar
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon (dried) coconut shavings
2 tablespoons fresh coriander (chopped)
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
0.5 teaspoon cumin seeds
0.5 teaspoon black mustard seeds
Fresh tomatoes, diced

Preparation

Wash the okras, dry them and remove the tips.

In a bowl mix the turmeric, chili powder, cumin powder, coriander powder, salt, sugar, lemon juice, cumin seeds and fresh coriander.

Heat the oil in a big pan, add the black mustard and cumin seeds and stir fry for about 2 minutes, until they start to jump.

Add the spices and fry for 2 more minutes. Add the okras, turn down the heat and let them cook for about 10 minutes until they're done.

Put into a bowl and add the fresh tomatoes. Serve with rice and pappadums or naan bread.