

Abstract for Session 1 – Intimate Technologies: Embodying Artefacts, Remaking Bodies, Enacting Norms

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Title: Affected bodies and adjusted bike: Finding the perfect fit on a bike and imagined trail

The increasing importance of leisure activities, of having fun, of getting or staying fit, and exploring nature, is suggested by the media and a plethora of highly technologized and diversified artefacts as found in mountain biking. Driven by constant innovation, changes in bike technology indicate how meaningful yet re-/negotiable the relation of body and bike can be and matter for subjectivities, if (even) a slight increase in wheel size can cause heated controversies. My ongoing PhD investigates how riders' experiences of body, bike, and landscape are trans-/formed in practice by changes in bike technology.

From a multi-sited ethnography in California – spanning bike trails, shops, and companies – I present an encounter with so-called bike-fitting done in a shop, and taught at a company. In this process of first assessing the body and then adjusting a bike-setup, an array of artefacts and imaginations is mobilized to obtain an individually yet temporally ideal posture for healthy and/or efficient cycling. By delving into empirical material I explore how and what bodies emerge through being affected by differences in and beyond this setting, how intimacy of the situation is enacted, and how it matters for the re-/negotiation of bike-body relations?