



## **Academia Europaea The Academy of Europe**



Presentation of an Academia Europaea Erasmus Medal  
Wednesday 23 October 2019, at the *Atenau of Barcelona*.

The Academia Europaea are pleased to award an  
Erasmus Medal to the internationally renowned  
Professor of Social Psychology at the London School of Economics and Political Science

**Professor Sonia Livingstone MAE**

The medal is awarded on the recommendation of an independent search committee of the Board of Trustees, to a member who has maintained over a sustained period, the highest level of international scholarship and recognition by their peers.

Professor Livingstone will also give the 2019 Heinz-Nixdorf Erasmus Lecture entitled:

**Realising children's rights in relation to the digital environment**

Sponsored by

 **Heinz Nixdorf Stiftung**

The laudation will be given by Professor Kirsten Drotner MAE, University of Southern Denmark  
Academia Europaea Chair of the Section Film, Media and Visual Studies

Professor Sonia Livingstone MAE



**AFFILIATION:** Professor of Social Psychology in the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science

**LINK TO WEBPAGE:** <http://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/people/academic-staff/sonia-livingstone>

[https://www.ae-info.org/ae/Member/Livingstone\\_Sonia](https://www.ae-info.org/ae/Member/Livingstone_Sonia)

**TITLE OF PRESENTATION:** Realising children's rights in relation to the digital environment

**ABSTRACT OF PRESENTATION:**

The key human rights framework for children is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It has been visionary, authoritative, comprehensive and influential. Yet it was written in 1989, when the internet was just beginning and its significance much underestimated. Since then questions have arisen as to whether and how the Convention applies in the digital age. This lecture critically evaluates the challenges for States, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other relevant stakeholders (including parents and children themselves) of interpreting and implementing a human rights framework that recognises children as independent actors and rights-holders in relation to the fast-evolving, complex and global digital environment. It draws on the voices of children, the views of experts, and the latest empirical research to suggest a way forward for realising children's rights in the digital environment.

**AWARD NOTE:**

Sonia Livingstone is a world-leading scholar of Media Studies. She has made a stellar, international career merging original and pioneering research on audiences' meaning-making practices across a number of media (film, tv, computers, mobile phones, the internet) with theoretical innovations in public sphere theories, mediated risks and, increasingly, transnational media ethics. Few media scholars have a higher profile beyond the discipline, both in academia more generally and in public discourse.

Her originality and her unique scientific contribution rest not with her invention or advancement of a single concept or theoretical tenet. Rather, her research is distinguished, first, by her truly original research questions – often asked well ahead of any academic trend, yet paving the way for further studies. This is admirably demonstrated in her early work on audiences where she asked critical questions on the relevance of public sphere theories for mundane television routines and grounded her answers in systematic, qualitative studies.

Her inclusive methodological approach is her second mark of distinction. Unlike mainstream media studies, Livingstone has advanced, and demonstrated the validity of, inclusive methodologies basing her choices in an unbiased fashion on the research questions at hand, not on prior notions of correct methodologies, be they textual analysis, ethnographic interviews or large-scale surveys. She often mixes all of these.

Last but not least, Livingstone's scientific originality rests with her outstanding empirical work. Media are transnational phenomena now as in the past; and to study transnational media requires transnational research. Livingstone is one of the few media scholars who has acted on this

requirement rather than talking about it. She has directed a number of large-scale, transnational studies on risks and opportunities of children's internet use whose results have been agenda setting for scholars, policy-makers and industry alike. She currently directs the Global Kids Online project (co-funded by UNICEF) which has developed a research toolkit for free use by academics, governments and civil society wanting to conduct comparative, critical and contextualized studies of children's digital media uses. Always mindful of the ethical issues involved when speaking in the interests of children, she grounds her advice and counselling on robust research.

Livingstone's unique contributions to international media scholarship have had wide societal impact. She is an expert advisor to the Council of Europe on the digital environment, and her advisory expertise has been exerted with UNICEF, ITU, OECD, the European Parliament, the European Commission inc. membership of an advisory group for Horizon 2020 grand challenges pillar.

Closer to home, Livingstone serves on the Executive Board of the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (for which she is the Evidence Champion) and on the Internet Watch Foundation's Ethics Committee. In the recent past, she was special advisor to the House of Lords' Select Committee on Communications, she served on the UK Department of Education's Ministerial Taskforce for Home Access to Technology for Children, just as she has advised the UK communications' regulator Ofcom, the Home Office and the BBC. In 2014, she was awarded the title of Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) "for services to children and child internet safety."

She is an excellent and prolific, public speaker and runs a popular blog: [www.parenting.digital](http://www.parenting.digital). Livingstone's exceptional and unique research record is equally acknowledged by the international, academic community. She holds honorary doctorates from the University of Montreal, Université Panthéon Assas, the Erasmus University of Rotterdam, University of the Basque Country, and the University of Copenhagen. She is past president of the International Communication Association, the leading scholarly society within media and communication studies (and only the second European to be elected to that position) and is an elected fellow of the Association.

In the UK, Livingstone is a fellow of the British Academy, the Royal Society for the Arts, the Academy of Social Sciences, and the British Psychological Society.

Taken together, these distinctions demonstrate that Livingstone is a world-leading scholar who has not merely made truly ground-breaking contributions to Media Studies but has been instrumental in carving out new vistas for the discipline impacting how we think about and act on important phenomena well beyond the academy.

#### BIOGRAPHY:

##### **Academic education**

1987, D Phil in social psychology, University of Oxford. Doctoral research funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, UK

1982, BSc in psychology, University College London, honours.

##### **Academic career**

2003-, full professor at the newly founded Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

1999, full professor, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

1997, senior lecturer, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

1993, lecturer, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK.

##### **Research leadership**

Large-scale, comparative projects: Children and their Changing Media Environment (1995-2001), EU Kids Online (2006-14), Global Kids Online (2016- ), Preparing for a Digital Future (2014-17).

Director, 2012-17, ECREA's (European Communication Research and Education Association)

Children, Youth and Media Temporary Working Group  
Co-director, 2010-14, the European COST network, Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies.

**Honours and distinctions**

Fellow of the British Academy

Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE)

Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts, UK

Member of the Academy of Social Sciences, UK

Member of the British Psychological Society, UK

Fellow of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, DK

Fellow of the International Communication Association.

**Honorary doctorates**

The University of Montreal, Université Panthéon Assas, the Erasmus University of Rotterdam,

University of the Basque Country, and the University of Copenhagen

The Award is sponsored by the Heinz-Nixdorf Stiftung



1. Heinz Nixdorf Stiftung is - together with Stiftung Westfalen - one of two non profit foundations, which have been established from the assets of the estate of the entrepreneur Heinz Nixdorf, who died in 1986. The foundation promotes the following purposes:
  - a) the (advanced) professional education, especially in the field of modern technology,
  - b) the sciences in respect of research and teaching, especially in the field of information technology,
  - c) the liberal and democratic governmental system, especially the „Soziale Marktwirtschaft“,
  - d) public health,
  - e) sports.

The foundation realizes its purposes primarily in cooperation with other non profit institutions.

2. Heinz Nixdorf Stiftung promotes among others the Heinz Nixdorf MuseumsForum in Paderborn. This is a non profit institution combining in a unique way the classic historic dimension of a museum with the current and future-oriented topics of a forum.

Heinz Nixdorf MuseumsForum is the largest computer museum of the world.

Further information about the Heinz-Nixdorf Stiftung can be found at:  
<http://www.heinz-nixdorf-stiftung.de>

Erasmus Medal 2019

Laudator



TITLE AND FULL NAME: Professor Kirsten Drotner

AFFILIATION: Professor and chair of media studies, University of Southern Denmark

LINK TO WEBPAGE: <https://portal.findresearcher.sdu.dk/en/persons/drotner>

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:**

**Kirsten Drotner** is professor of media studies at the University of Southern Denmark and director of two national R&D programmes [DREAM](#) and [Our Museum](#). Her research interests include children's media and information literacies, digital co-creation and creative learning, and digital heritage communication. She has lectured and taught in more than 20 countries around the world, and she has been a research fellow and visiting professor in Canada, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom and the USA. She is (co-)author and (co-)editor of over 200 scholarly articles and book-chapters and more than 30 books, most recently *The Routledge Handbook of Museums, Media and Communication* (co-edited, 2018). She has served on a number of national and European research councils, committees and panels including being chair 2012-15 of the Humanities Scientific Committee at Science Europe. An elected fellow of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, the Academia Europaea, the International Communication Association and recipient of the Association's Applied Research Award, she is passionate about bringing research evidence to bear on policies and practices.