

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE KICK-OFF EVENT OF THE
“RESEARCH NETWORK FOR CRITICAL TRANSCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON
ARTISTIC AND AESTHETIC PRACTICES”,
26 - 28 NOVEMBER 2015, HAUS DER KULTUREN DER WELT BERLIN

The initiators of the “Research Network for Critical Transcultural Perspectives on Artistic and Aesthetic Practices” welcome applications by post-doctoral researchers and advanced doctoral students with a strong profile in critical transcultural research to become members of the network and to actively participate in its kick-off event. The event will take place from 26 - 28 November 2015 at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, Germany. It consists of two segments: a public conference followed by closed workshop sessions for invited participants, to be chosen from applicants responding to this call.

The conference “Present’s Disjunctive Unity. Constructing and Deconstructing Histories of Contemporary Cultural and Aesthetic Practices” explores cultural and aesthetic theories and practices in different contemporary contexts around the world and strives to develop appropriate categories for the different historiographical genealogies that shape their concepts of “the contemporary”. With the aim to unpack related power relations and to reconsider epistemological and methodological problems, the conference consciously brings together socio-political, historical and further theoretical perspectives.

The emphasis on exploring contemporaneity in historical perspectives resonates with the agenda of the “Research Network for Critical Transcultural Perspectives on Artistic and Aesthetic Practices” that intentionally includes researchers working on both contemporary as well as historical subjects.

Future network members are expected to actively engage in the closed workshop sessions, which are designed to critically explore sub-themes in connection with the public programme. The six cross-disciplinary workshops address the specific methodological challenges that transcultural phenomena and transcultural research pose. They unfold around thematic foci related to queer studies, studies on objects and things, animal studies, representational critique, topologies of art in relation to life and concepts and histories of the transcultural.

OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH NETWORK FOR CRITICAL TRANSCULTURAL
PERSPECTIVES ON ARTISTIC AND AESTHETIC PRACTICES

The network is conceived of as a critical, interdisciplinary and international research association of post-doctoral researchers who examine phenomena and processes of cultural exchange. It shall provide a communicative platform that enhances peer-to-peer dialogue and horizontal academic exchanges with the aim to intensify research discussions and to grant greater visibility for innovative transcultural approaches within the academic community as well as within a non-academic public. An international board of senior advisers will support the network facilitating vertical academic exchanges, fostering a greater institutional openness for transcultural research and the creation of career opportunities for early career scholars.

Overcoming the institutional confines of projects, departments and universities, the network aims at providing an international and interdisciplinary forum for open and critical debate on how to identify and cope with common pressing, often methodological problems brought forth by this research perspective. The network therefore intentionally welcomes academics working in (research) institutions other than universities, such as museum staff whose practical professional experience – e.g. the visual and textual mediation of transcultural phenomena –

offer many valuable links to university-based research. The interdisciplinary set-up of the international network – which is emphasized and guaranteed by the various scholarly and institutional backgrounds but also by the manifold thematic projects of the network members – shall constitute a collective platform of diverse voices.

The research network will hold regular annual meetings ideally organized by one or more members and hosted in different research institutes, to be chaired by affiliated senior scholars. In addition the formation of smaller working groups that elaborate on specific sub-topics and questions of transcultural research which might lead to separate conferences and/or joint publications is also being planned. The conference organizers envision the network as a channel to foster innovative, interdisciplinary formats of joint talks and teaching. These will be explored during the annual conferences and in further collaborations of the network members.

The conference in Berlin serves as kick-off event for the network whose future funding is a topic to be discussed by its founding members. Ideally, the network's annual conferences will be financed by the hosting network members' institutions and/or third party funding. The continuing collaboration at the level of thematic working groups and their joint publications, teaching or other academic activities might take on an informal, low-budget working mode or be based on funds raised from within and outside affiliated home institutions and projects.

APPLICATION FORMALITIES

Applications might respond to, but do not need to be limited to the following workshop themes and should explore transcultural phenomena and/or employ transcultural research perspectives. Suggestions for alternative themes that engage with the conference's topic and the profile of the network are welcome.

Workshop themes and chairs:

1. The 'Discovery' of Queerness. Intricate Trails of a Travelling Concept (Melanie Klein, Berlin)
2. Objects, Cultures and Transcultural Contemporaneities (Philippe Cordez, Munich)
3. Are Animals Cultural Brokers? (Silke Förschler/Stephanie Zehnle, Kassel)
4. Topologies of Art in Relationship to Life. Transcultural Negotiations of Art's Social and Critical Function (Birgit Hopfener, Berlin)
5. The Cruelty of the Other (Culture/Religion/Group) (Liesbeth Minnaard, Leiden/Kea Wienand, Oldenburg)
6. Repetition, Acceleration, Disruption. Time structures and time perception in the visual arts from a transcultural perspective (Annette Bhagwati/Kirsten Einfeldt, Berlin)

Each workshop will consist of a maximum of 18 participants, three workshops will take place at a time. The workshop organizers expect participants to give short input presentations and engage in structured discussions (possibly based on shared readings).

For detailed information about the workshops see <http://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/presents-disjunctive-unity>.

Applicants might also have a look into the cross-disciplinary research perspectives offered by the public speakers' programme (see: <http://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/presents-disjunctive-unity>). Speakers of the conference are:

Knut Ebeling (Prof. of Media Theory and Aesthetics, Kunsthochschule Berlin Weißensee)
Paul Gladston (Prof. in Culture, Film and Media, Nottingham University)
Atreyee Gupta (Art Historian, Fellow of the Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin)
Milumbe Haimbe (Artist, Lusaka, Zambia)
Fabian Heubel (Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Research Fellow of the Academia Sinica, Taipei)
Monica Juneja (Prof. of Global Art History, Heidelberg University)
Ato Malinda (Artist, Nairobi, Kenia/Rotterdam, Netherlands)
Lourdes Morales (Postdoctoral Fellow, Art History and Communication Studies Department, McGill University)
Sarah Nuttall (Prof. of Literature and Cultural Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg)
Philip Rosen (Prof. of Modern Culture and Media, Brown University)
Francesca Tarocco (Ass. Prof. of Chinese Religious and Visual Studies, New York University Shanghai)
Tobias Wendl (Prof. for the Arts of Africa, Free University Berlin)

Applications must include:

- Abstract of max. 800 words outlining the applicant's (current) project(s) and the motivation for becoming a network member and participant of its kick-off conference. You might indicate in which workshop you would like to participate and briefly articulate your interest in the topic.
- Short CV of 500 words indicating the topic/year of dissertation (if applicable), disciplinary backgrounds as well as institutional affiliation(s) (if applicable), research interests, and including up to three relevant publications.

They are to be sub-mitted in electronic form via e-mail, addressed to network-transculturality@hkw.de.

Deadline: 10 July 2015

Please note:

Applicants will receive an electronic acknowledgement of receipt and further information only after the end of the selection process.

The organizers will assess the applications in an anonymised procedure chaired by staff of the Haus der Kulturen der Welt Berlin in order to ensure a fair selection process.

The organizers are unable to cover travel and accommodation costs of successful applicants, although they are currently striving to raise funds that might eventually allow for partial reimbursements.

This event is conceptualized by Birgit Hopfener (Free University Berlin), Franziska Koch (Heidelberg University) and Kerstin Schankweiler (Free University Berlin).

It is organized in cooperation with the DFG funded research unit "Transcultural Negotiations in the Ambits of Art" at Free University Berlin, the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context" at Heidelberg University and the Haus der Kulturen der Welt Berlin, represented by Kirsten Einfeldt and Annette Bhagwati.

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