

Program

Thursday, Dec. 13

19.00  
Susan Neiman  
Welcome

Robert Pfaller, Wien  
Die Augenhöhe des Lebens. Über Souveränität und subalterne Identität

Friday, Dec. 14

10.00  
Rüdiger Zill, Potsdam  
*Intime Feiern – rauschende Feste. Zur Kultivierung der Gefühle*

11.00  
Froma Zeitlin, Princeton/Berlin  
*Dionysus, Theater, and Festival in Ancient Athens. Tragic and Comic Perspectives*

12.30  
Michael Maurer, Jena  
*Emotionen und Identität in der öffentlichen Festkultur*

13.30 – 15.00 Lunch break

15.00  
Winfried Gebhardt, Koblenz-Landau  
*Der erlaubte Exzess. Über das Management der Gefühle in Festen, Feiern und Events*

16.00  
Annalise Acorn, Edmonton  
*Confronting Banquo's Ghost. Reflections on the Ruined Feast*

17.30  
Günter Schenk, Mainz  
*Feste im Wandel. Kulturkritische Anmerkungen eines reisenden Brauchbeobachters*

18.30  
Reception

19.00  
Opening of the exhibition

Saturday, Dec. 15

10.30  
Kelly Askew, Ann Arbor / Berlin  
*Into-nations: Musical Articulations of Populist vs. Official Politics in Tanzania*

12.00  
Bruno Preisendörfer, Berlin  
*Von der Senatsflocke zum Riesenstadtplan. Berlin als politisches Festival 1987/2012*

13.00 – 14.30 Lunch break

14.30  
Yvonne Niekrenz, Rostock  
*„Karneval is'n Gefühl“. Emotionale Bedeutungen kollektiven Berauszens im rheinischen Karneval*

15.30  
Joe Perry, Atlanta  
*The Discrete Charm of the Sentimental. Christmas in Germany*

17.00  
Birgitt Röttger-Rössler, Berlin  
*Wenn Wege sich trennen. Abschiedsfeste aus sozialanthropologischer Sicht*



# Zum Fest Heyday of Emotions

media-partner

**DRadio Wissen**

International Conference  
Einstein Forum, Potsdam

December 13 – 15, 2012

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FORUM

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**Rüdiger Zill, Potsdam**

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Annalise Acorn

### **Confronting Banquo's Ghost: Thoughts on the Ruined Feast**

As an attempt to realize the ideal, the feast is a kind of boast, hence its vulnerability to humiliation. Both big and little things can ruin a feast, but whether the ruin is caused by catastrophe or trifle our inclination is to interpret the ruined feast as having symbolic or perhaps karmic significance. Drawing on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Dickens's *Great Expectations*, William Dean Howell's *Rise of Silas Lapham*, Michel de Montaigne, and a few personal anecdotes, I map the variable meanings of the ruined feast. In conclusion, I take inspiration from Adolf Menzel's masterpiece *Supper at the Ball* (in the Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin), which suggests a shift to the comic register in our response to the feast's inevitable imperfections.

*Annalise Acorn* is Thomas W. Lawlor Professor of Law and Ethics in the Faculty of Law at the University of Alberta, Canada. She was H.L.A. Hart Fellow at the Oxford Center for Ethics and Legal Philosophy in 2009 and was Visiting Professor at the University of Michigan Law School in 2000. Her main research interest is the philosophy of the emotions of conflict and justice. She has recently published extensively on the theory of the insanity defense as well as on various issues of legal ethics, including the relation between procrastination, legal education, and lawyer misconduct. She is co-editor of *Passions in Context: International Journal of the History and Theory of the Emotions*. Recent publications include *Compulsory Compassion: A Critique of Restorative Justice* (2004) and "Eine verborgene Meßlatte? Über Mitleid in der Rechtsprechung" (2006).

Kelly Askew

### **Into-nations: Musical Articulations of Populist vs. Official Politics in Tanzania**

The political landscape of Tanzania has shifted in multiple ways since the quiet abandonment of socialism in the mid-1980s and subsequent acceptance of economic and political liberalization. How Tanzanian citizens have responded to these changes has received scant scholarly attention, the focus typically being on macro-level shifts in public policy. Yet popular music offers access to how ordinary Tanzanians articulate their understandings of and reactions to the changes in their country. This presenta-

tion will explore how citizens, in particular, sign and sing about their first president, Julius Nyerere, who committed his life to the establishment of the variety of socialism known as “Ujamaa.”

*Kelly M. Askew* is Associate Professor of Anthropology and Afroamerican/African Studies and Founding Director of the African Studies Center at the University of Michigan. At the moment she is a fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. She received her B.A. in Music and Anthropology from Yale University (1988) and her Ph.D. in Anthropology from Harvard University (1997). Her publications include two edited volumes, *African Postsocialisms* (co-edited with M. Anne Pitcher, 2006) and *The Anthropology of Media: A Reader* (co-edited with Richard R. Wilk, 2002), articles on topics ranging from nationalism to gender relations to Hollywood film production, and a book on music and politics in Tanzania titled *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Production in Tanzania* (2002), a finalist for the 2003 African Studies Association Herskovits Award for best scholarly work on Africa. In addition to her research in East Africa on performance, nationalism, media, postsocialism, and the privatization of property, Kelly Askew has pursued various film and video projects. Most recently, she has worked on a four-part video documentary series, RHYTHMS FROM AFRICA (2004), which explores music in South Africa and in Zanzibar, and a full-length feature documentary film POETRY IN MOTION: 100 YEARS OF ZANZIBAR’S NADI IKHWAN SAFAA (2011) covering the history of Zanzibar’s oldest taarab orchestra.

Winfried Gebhardt

### **Der erlaubte Exzess: Über das Management der Gefühle in Festen, Feiern und Events**

#### **(Permitted Excess: On the Management of Emotions in Celebrations, Ceremonies, and Public Events)**

Extreme feelings can be dangerous, threatening not only the social order but also our identities. Celebrations and ceremonies are social institutions that permit the expression of feelings while robbing them of their anarchistic force. They represent special rituals, held at specific times and places outside the everyday, meant to contain the explosive power of our emotions. Celebrations and ceremonies differ from each other in the feelings they permit, as well as in their ritual and aesthetic form. In the first part of my talk I explore how such occasions help us manage our feelings.

In the second part I discuss what might happen to this system of emotional management as multiplication, economization, and profanization – what sociologists call eventization – blur the traditional lines of celebration and ceremony. Can the new latitude lead to social problems down the road?

*Winfried Gebhardt* has been Professor of Sociology at the University of Koblenz-Landau since 1998. Before that he served as an assistant professor at the University of Bayreuth and as a visiting professor at the University of Kosice (Slovak Republic). His publications include *Fest, Feier und Alltag* (1987); *Zwei Dörfer in Deutschland: Mentalitätsunterschiede nach der Wiedervereinigung* (co-written with G. Kamphausen, 1994); *Charisma als Lebensform: Zur Soziologie des alternativen Lebens* (1994); *Pilgerfahrt ins Ich: Die Bayreuther Richard Wagner-Festspiele und ihr Publikum* (co-written with A. Zingerle, 1998).

Michael Maurer

### **Emotionen und Identität in der öffentlichen Festkultur (Emotions and Identity in the Culture of Public Celebration)**

The media can shape public displays of emotion, as the mourning of Princess Diana's death, in 1997, shows. Yet in today's media, public celebrations (especially when sports related) generally lack a higher purpose. The public celebration derives its legitimacy from its past without being conscious of it. In the bourgeois age no celebration was conceivable without having a message, and political power manifested itself in displays of celebration and highly controlled direction of emotion. The control enabled individual participation in collective experiences while relieving people from the burden of individualization. Such participation assumed identification with a group, community, or society. As the institutionalization of the nation, the state brought together the identification offered by associations and other groups, both spanning and superseding them. In the age of nationalism, public ceremonies secularized and transcended the prior unity of celebration and religion.

As a rule, the history of public celebration must be thought together with the history of media culture, the development of media transforming celebratory practice at every step along the way. Although the emotionality of celebration depends on individuals, the media offers new possibilities for emotional direction, for synchronizing moods, and for ideological con-

trol. Politically, it is in all of our interest that the emotional extremes produced by the media are only loosely connected today with identity.

*Michael Maurer* is Professor of Cultural History at the Friedrich Schiller University Jena. Previously he served as its Friedrich Schiller instructor for history and was a recipient of the Bennigsen and Heisenberg scholarships. He is the author of *Geschichte Englands* (2000); *Aufriß der Historischen Wissenschaften* (seven volumes, 2001–2005); and *Eberhard Gothein (1853–1923): Leben und Werk zwischen Kulturgeschichte und Nationalökonomie* (2007). He has coedited *Das Fest: Beiträge zu seiner Theorie und Systematik* (2004) and *"Im Schaffen genießen": Der Briefwechsel der Kulturwissenschaftler Eberhard und Marie Luise Gothein (1883–1923)* (2006).

Yvonne Niekrenz

**"Karneval is'n Gefühl". Emotionale Bedeutungen kollektiven Beraus-  
schens im rheinischen Karneval**

**("Carnival is a Feeling": The Emotional Meanings of Collective Ecstasy at  
the Rhenish Carnival)**

Carnival is a yearly celebration that provides a space for participants to have fun and experience good cheer in a state of exuberance. Its songs, costumes, dances, and rituals promote an ecstatic and out-of-the-ordinary atmosphere permitting experimental and unrestrained behavior. But the exuberance is also accompanied by sentimentality and melancholia, born from the awareness of both the limited duration of the celebration and the transience of existence. My talk draws on ethnographic investigations of the Rhenish Carnival to explore its ecstatic character, with a particular emphasis on the emotional significance of collective states of exception.

*Yvonne Niekrenz* is a teaching assistant and researcher in sociological theory at the University of Rostock. Her dissertation, *Rauschhafte Vergemeinschaftungen. Eine Studie zum rheinischen Straßenkarneval*, which she completed in 2010, studied the social importance of the Rhenish Carnival.

Joe Perry

### **The Discrete Charm of the Sentimental: Christmas in Germany**

In this paper, I will use the history of Christmas in Germany to explore some connections between emotions and communities. I begin by suggesting that an interpretative method of discursive ethnography, drawn from the work of Barbara Rosenwein and Victor Turner, is an effective way to approach this theme. Then I apply this method to three case studies: the crystallization of the modern Christmas in the first half of the nineteenth century; advertising campaigns for holiday gifts around 1900; and the holiday observances of National Socialist SA-men in the 1920s and early 1930s. At the same time, I offer an analysis and critique of various appropriations of sentimentalism, the dominant emotion engendered in Christmas celebration, in these three cases. Sentimentalism — exaggerated expressions of feelings tied to family, love, and domesticity — provided the powerful feelings at the base of the “emotional communities” evoked “around the Christmas tree.” Despite the private, apparently innocent nature of domestic sentimentalism, I conclude that competing social groups readily used and abused this cluster of feelings, the central mood of the modern age, for a variety of public purposes.

*Joe Perry* is Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of History at Georgia State University, Atlanta. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2001. His teaching and research concentrate on modern European social and cultural history, German history, and world civilization. He is currently working on a book on the history of television in West Germany in the 1950s and 60s. His publications include *Christmas in Germany: A Cultural History* (2010) and *A History of Western Society, Combined Edition* (co-author 2010).

Robert Pfaller

### **Die Augenhöhe des Lebens: Über Souveränität und subalterne Identität (At Eye-Level with Life: On Sovereignty and Subaltern Identity)**

Johan Huizinga believed that the game was a basic element of society. His explanation would not have been complete without a reference to the celebration. According to Huizinga, the game produces a specific festive atmosphere distinct from the everyday world in which “sacred earnestness” – a mood generated by the strongest affects – prevails. Decisive in

Huizinga's notion of the game is that it contains a specific transparent illusion – an “as if” that its players take pleasure in preserving. The psychoanalyst Octave Mannoni argued that some types of illusions we believe; others we do not. The former type, *croyances*, produce pleasure; the latter, *foi*, self-respect. Celebrations follow a similar typology. With phenomena like the Olympics, New Year's, Santa Claus, and the Easter Bunny, the illusions are either unconscious or absurd, and hence delegated to others, preferably children. In others – Reformation Day, national holidays, May Day – adults present themselves as proud bearers of illusion. If we accept the psychoanalytic belief that adult perception is structured by the loss of an original object, then celebrations can be understood as events that temporarily recover our original perfection in a way that is neither unpleasurable nor uncanny.

Georges Bataille described this kind of perfection – detached from the moderating circumstances of reality – as sovereignty. In view of today's pseudo politics, pleasure shyness, and love of prohibition, this notion assumes special importance. Accordingly, celebrations are moments in which we can feel ourselves to be something other than biopolitical clerks and subaltern upholders of biological functions. When we participate in celebrations we become managers of our own life. We meet it as equals, and at eye-level.

*Robert Pfaller* is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. Previously he was Professor of Cultural Studies and Cultural Theory at the University of Art and Design Linz. His recent publications include *Die Illusionen der anderen: Über das Lustprinzip in der Kultur* (2002); *Das schmutzige Heilige und die reine Vernunft: Symptome der Gegenwartskultur* (2008); *Ästhetik der Interpassivität* (2009); and *Wofür es sich zu leben lohnt: Elemente materialistischer Philosophie* (2011).

Bruno Preisendörfer

**Von der Senatsflocke zum Riesenstadtplan: Berlin als politisches Festival, 1987/2012**

**(From City Senate Snowflake to Enormous City Map: Berlin as Political Festival, 1987/2012)**

For Berlin's 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary, in 1987, André Heller used a giant plastic snowflake to signal the capital's fantasy. 25 years later, Berlin marked its anniversary with an enormous city map created at a scale of 1:775. My



talk compares the public displays of urban identity in West Berlin and East Berlin in 1987 with those of the German capital today. The story I tell is one of the production of history in celebration – and of the commotion and defiance that accompanied it.

*Bruno Preisendörfer* is a Berlin-based freelance writer and journalist, with a background in political science, sociology, and German literature. His recent books are *Das Bildungsprivileg: Warum Chancengleichheit unerwünscht ist* (2008); *Manneswehen* (novel, 2009); *Candy oder Die unsichtbare Hand: Nach einem berühmten Vorbild des Herrn von Voltaire erzählt und auf den Stand der neuen Weltordnung gebracht* (2011); *Fifty Blues* (novel, 2012); *Der waghalsige Reisende: Johann Gottfried Seume und das ungeschützte Leben* (2012).

Birgitt Röttger-Rössler

**Wenn Wege sich trennen: Abschiedsfeiern aus sozialanthropologischer Sicht**

**(Going Separate Ways: Farewell Parties from a Sociological and Anthropological Perspective)**

Many societies celebrate farewells, whether the resulting absence is permanent (a job in another city) or temporary (a long journey). In my talk I shed light on an Indonesian farewell ritual from a sociological and anthropological perspective. My aim is to show how rituals generate emotions that draw communities closer while facilitating departure.

*Birgitt Röttger-Rössler* is a professor in the DFG-funded cluster Languages of Emotion at the Freie Universität Berlin's Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology. Before that she taught ethnology at the University of Cologne, served as a senior research fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Ethnology, and directed the international research unit Emotions as Bio-Cultural Processes at the University of Bielefeld's Center for Interdisciplinary Research. Her dissertation, completed in 1988 at the University of Cologne, explored social standing in the Makassar tribe of Sulawesi (Indonesia). Her recent publications are *Die kulturelle Modellierung des Gefühls: Ein Beitrag zur Theorie und Methodik ethnologischer Emotionsforschung anhand indonesischer Fallstudien* (2004); *"Tell Me About Love": Kultur und Natur der Liebe* (co-edited, 2006); and *Emotions as Bio-Cultural Processes: An Interdisciplinary Approach* (co-edited, 2009).

Günter Schenk

**Feste im Wandel: Kulturkritische Anmerkungen eines reisenden Brauchbeobachters**

**(Changing Celebratory Customs: Some Critical Remarks from a Travelling Observer)**

Many social commentators today, cultural anthropologists most of all, speak of an emotional turn: feelings and emotions dominate the public sphere like never before – even on the Continent. In my talk I discuss this turn, especially the increasing displays of physical affection in our celebratory culture. My central claim is that these behaviors are not as new as they seem. Until the Protestant Reformation, emotions set the tone during public celebrations. Today customs have shifted again, and passionate ecstasy is granted wide latitude, much to the consternation of those entrusted with keeping the peace. Pleasure – *Lust* – has become the new motor of behavior. Behind this development lies a need for physical closeness and a deep-seated desire to be noticed.

*Günter Schenk* is a journalist and writer whose reports have appeared in Germany's leading newspapers, as well as on radio and in television. His work has taken him across Europe, where he has investigated and photographed celebrations in all their variety. He is the author of *Mainz, wie es singt und lacht* (2004); *Christliche Volksfeste in Europa: Prozessionen, Rituale, Volksschauspiele* (2006); *Fastnacht zwischen Brauch und Party: Karneval total* (2007); *Mainzer Fastnachts-ABC* (2011); and a number of city guides (Antwerp, Bruges, Gent, Brussels, Liverpool, Rotterdam, Heidelberg, and several other cities).

Froma Zeitlin

**Dionysus, Theater, and Festival in Ancient Athens: Tragic and Comic Perspectives**

*Festival:* To begin at the beginning. Theater, arguably the invention of ancient Athens, probably in the 6th century CE, was performed at festivals of the god Dionysus, both rural and urban. The best known was the City Dionysia, which took place in the theater of Dionysus close to the Acropolis, the heart of the city. The festival was a public state-sponsored institution of the city, which supplied the funds, the poets, the actors, the chorus, the stage, and the majority of the audience for its theatrical productions.

It was both a vehicle of important competition among the dramatic poets in the agonistic circumstances of performance and a form of popular entertainment. While the festival was timed to take place in March at the beginning of the sailing season, to allow visiting dignitaries and other outsiders to attend, the majority of the audience consisted of Athens citizens, whose participation underwrote its civic, social, and political functions in the context of these public performances. In the first part of my talk, I address the circumstances of the festival and the numerous events that surrounded it.

*Dionysus:* In the second part, I raise the question of why Dionysus? What is the relationship between the god and the dramatic arts (including dance and music), still a controversial issue: the god of wine, drunkenness, madness, and ecstasy; the god of masks, impersonation, estrangement, and otherness; the god who transgresses all boundaries between mortals and immortals, male and female, high and low, and thereby unsettles conventional authority and revels in freedom from the constrictions of everyday life.

*Emotions:* In the third part, I address the emotional valences aroused by tragedy and comedy (including the lesser known but immensely important satyr play). Looking briefly at the influential theories of Plato and Aristotle in regard to such concepts as mimesis and catharsis, to say nothing of the famous “pity and fear” in the case of tragedy, I also include the significance of comic misrule and the emotional satisfactions of libidinal excess and ribald laughter, albeit not without its serious side for the body politic.

*Tragedy and Comedy:* If time permits, I would like to look at two instances of comedy’s view of tragedy, notably, in Aristophanes’ *Frogs* and his *Thesmophoriazousae*, which takes place in the play world while women are celebrating another festival, that of the *Thesmophoria*, dedicated to the goddess Demeter.

*Froma Zeitlin* is Ewing Professor of Greek Language and Literature and Professor (emer.) of Comparative Literature at Princeton University. She is currently a fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. Her publications include: *Under the Sign of the Shield: Semiotics and Aeschylus' Seven Against Thebes* (1982); *Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature* (1995); *Nothing to Do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama in Its Social Context* (co-edited, 1990); *Before Sexuality* (co-edited, 1991); and *Narrating Desire* (co-edited, 2012).

Rüdiger Zill

**Intime Feiern – rauschende Feste. Zur Kultivierung der Gefühle**

**(From Intimate to Ecstatic Celebration: On the Cultivation of Emotions)**

*Feste* – parties, celebrations, feasts, fêtes – can be defined in many ways. For some, they are times of rapturous ecstasy; for others, inward reflection and contemplation. Both definitions are correct, as each draws on a different celebratory paradigm. Most generally, celebrations are events that stand out from everyday life and aim to cultivate specific emotions in exemplary fashion. Together, our forms of celebration amount to an emotional division of labor. Ecstatic events, like Carnival or New Year's, promise to free us from the ordinary; intimate celebrations (birthdays, weddings, Christmas) focus on our ideas of love and interiority; days of national commemoration and victory celebrations are exercises in pride; funeral celebrations help us cope with sadness and pain. I will show how feelings become thematized during, and in connection with, celebrations by considering a few examples from love related festivals such as weddings and Christmas.

*Rüdiger Zill* has been on the research staff at the Einstein Forum since 1997, where in addition to his other work he runs the Passions in Cultures series. Before that he taught philosophy at the Technische Universität Dresden. His dissertation, completed in 1994, explores the function of models and metaphors in affect theory. His publications include *Hinter den Spiegeln: Zur Philosophie Richard Rortys* (co-edited, 2001); *Gestalten des Mitgefühls* (edited, 2006); *Ganz Anders? Philosophie zwischen akademischem Jargon und Alltagssprache* (edited, 2007); *Zum Lachen!* (co-edited, 2009); *Metapherngeschichten: Perspektiven einer Theorie der Unbegrifflichkeit* (co-edited, 2011); *Wahre Lügen: Bergman inszeniert Bergman* (co-edited, 2012). Together with Annalise Acorn he is also coeditor of the journal *Passions in Context*.

Exhibition

**Celebrations Unite. You are the Celebration.**

Europe's largest public celebrations – the legendary running of the bulls in Pamplona, Valencia's Falles, Dublin's St. Patrick's Day – have become mass events. Though most developed over centuries to commemorate pious individuals, saints, local patrons, or important dates in the liturgical calendar, their Christian origins are barely perceptible today. Globalization, changing lifestyles, and rampant commercialization have fundamentally transformed how people perceive them.

The journalist and writer Günter Schenk has travelled through Europe capturing its celebratory culture in photographs from over 70 public festivals.



