

# Passion(s) in Culture(s)

Exploring the Emotional Signature of the 21st Century





Cover illustrations: U I: Augenblicke, Stuttgart 1972, Barbara Klemm/FAZ. U II: Mary Pickford and Clare Eames in *Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall*, Marshall Neilan (1924). U III: Ivor Novello and Isabel Jeans in *Downhill*, Alfred Hitchcock (1927). U IV: Odysseus and the Sirens, Friedrich Preller the Elder (Schlossmuseum Weimar, 1855-69). Grafik-Design: Margret Schnitt, Berlin

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**Passion(s) in Culture(s)**  
Exploring the Emotional Signature of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
An Einstein Forum Conference Series Conceived by Rüdiger Zill

# To Every Age Belongs Its Own Emotional Signature

**The collective psyche:** While feelings like fear, anger, love, compassion, and sadness are no doubt rooted in biology, the ways humans feel can and do change. Emotional forms and colors are shaped by experiences unique to each society and era. Ostensibly individual, our feelings are in reality part of a larger historical phenomenon—call it a collective mood, the emotional signature of an age. Which feelings and passions have prevailed at which times? Were there periods shaped principally by fear or by greed, by love or by melancholy? What about cultures and societal groups? Do they also have their particular feelings and passions? How do the rules and norms governing what we are supposed to feel change? And how do our real feelings change? What happens to the rest of our emotions when a single feeling comes to dominate an era? Do emotional economies pass through different states of equilibrium? Can their taxonomies shift altogether? Have there been particularly intense phases for certain emotions?

Does our society, for instance, contain more anger and fear now in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century than it did in the 1990s? Have current levels of envy and greed changed in comparison to the 1980s? How have the new digital media affected emotional states? What about the visual arts, film, literature, and music—do particular media accompany particular emotions? Aside from such relatively brief spans of time, are there also long-term changes in the way we feel? Do we really, as many claim, control our emotions more than in past centuries? Or are we—on the contrary—much better at permitting them?

**Studying emotions:** In recent years, the emotions and their variability have gained increased attention in cultural studies, sociology, political science, art history, and literature as well as in many other fields. The same trend can also be seen in philosophy, a discipline that for the longest time not only ignored the emotions, but regarded them as downright detrimental. Reason represented the traditional philosophical ideal, while the emotions were seen to disrupt reason's work and thus to be overcome. Today this rigid opposition between (good) reason and (bad) inclination is being abandoned in favor of a view that promotes the rationality of feeling. Prompted in part by recent discoveries in neurology, this development has created new pathways between the arts—the traditional representatives of the emotions—and science, with researchers making great strides in understanding the connections between them.

In December 2003, the Einstein Forum began a series of conferences and workshops on the emotional signature of our age. It began with a general overview, *Passion(s) in Culture(s)*, and has been followed by conferences devoted to specific emotions, such as compassion, envy, fear, anger, sadness, pride and first love. More recently the series changed its focus to institutions and events creating emotions.



# Making Visible the Collective Psyche

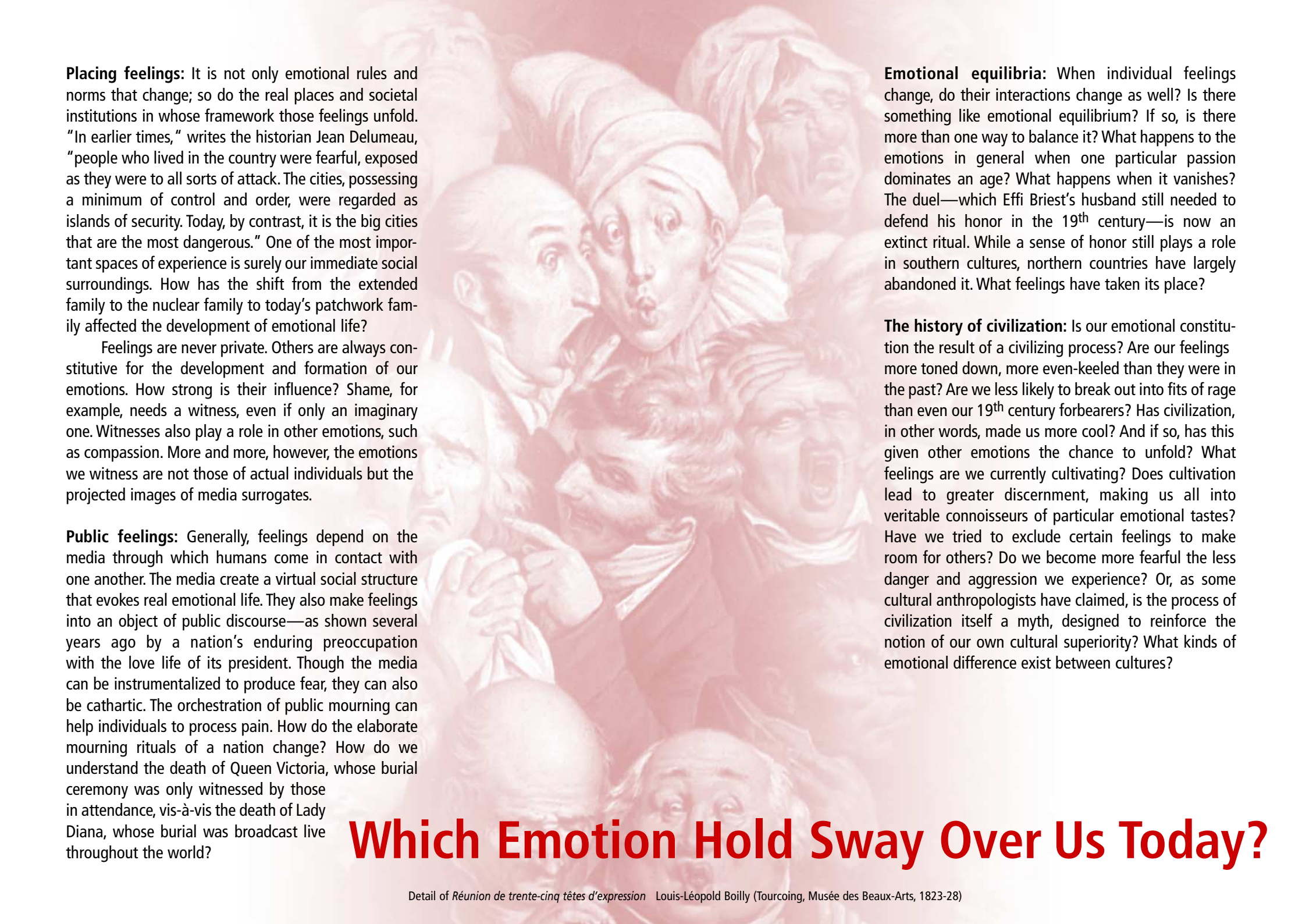
**The history of emotion:** To speak of the history of an emotion—let alone the history of *the* emotions—assumes there exists something to study that all humans throughout the centuries have shared. It assumes for instance that the Greek *pathos* is ultimately akin to the English *passion*, *emotion*, and *feeling* or the German *Gefühl*, *Emotion*, *Affekt*, and *Leiden-schaft*—all semantic differences aside. At the same time, such a history implies that this thing all humans share also changes. What Homer felt will be different from what Ovid, Petrarch, Montaigne, Rousseau, Proust, or Houellebecq felt. not only because they are different people, but because they lived in different ages. This view was not always as self-evident as it appears today. For centuries, feelings were thought to be natural, innate, and unvarying, a universal human phenomenon grasped privately and intuitively. Opposite to this belief is the more recent development that regards emotions as cognitively mediated, which is to say not given but learned, socially constructed, and historically generated. No matter which way one conceives of the emotions, however, there always remains something incommensurate and individual about them. Everyone appears to feel for themselves—and yet we still sense what others are feeling.

**Showing feelings:** Feelings show themselves—first and foremost through the body. Recently, the embodiment of emotional experiences and their physical signs have become objects of extensive study, with histories of tears appearing alongside those of fear and sorrow. There has also been an unexpected renaissance of interest in physiognomy. Bill Viola's ambitious 2003 work *The Passions*, for example, reinterprets Charles Le Brun's famous physiognomic studies, translating etching and panels into dynamic video segments.

**Regulating feelings:** Differences in how humans have understood feelings emerge most clearly in the changing history of emotional norms. In ancient Rome, anger was an indispensable attribute of full-bodied masculinity. For the average European of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, anger has long since lost this function, while the Utku Inuit have always regarded irate behavior as childish, believing pride and self-control to be the more appropriate expressions of adulthood. The emotional history of compassion has followed a reverse trajectory. In ancient Greece, showing pity was taboo and considered a sign of weakness, whereas Christianity, particularly the culture of compassion that developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, made feeling our neighbor's pain into one of the most noble affects of all. In contrast to the vicissitudes of anger and compassion, societies throughout history have been virtually unanimous in condemning fear. Its only valorized manifestation has been respect for authority, whose fear-fueled origins reveal themselves most overtly in the German *Gottesfurcht* and *Ehrfurcht*. Only of late has fear been reconsidered as a rational and moral response to certain kinds of threatening situations.

Just as attitudes about anger, compassion, and (to a lesser extent) fear are susceptible to historical change, so too are our sexual desires. Those before us who internalized the idea of original sin desired very differently than those today who haven't. Romantic love is another case. Once the loftiest of the passions, many regard it today as kitsch. These developments in love and desire—a process Anthony Giddens describes as the “transformation of intimacy”—constitute some of the defining characteristics of modern society. Why shouldn't we expect to find similar culturally-significant transformations in other emotions as well—in jealousy and envy, sadness and melancholy, self worth and shame?





**Placing feelings:** It is not only emotional rules and norms that change; so do the real places and societal institutions in whose framework those feelings unfold. “In earlier times,” writes the historian Jean Delumeau, “people who lived in the country were fearful, exposed as they were to all sorts of attack. The cities, possessing a minimum of control and order, were regarded as islands of security. Today, by contrast, it is the big cities that are the most dangerous.” One of the most important spaces of experience is surely our immediate social surroundings. How has the shift from the extended family to the nuclear family to today’s patchwork family affected the development of emotional life?

Feelings are never private. Others are always constitutive for the development and formation of our emotions. How strong is their influence? Shame, for example, needs a witness, even if only an imaginary one. Witnesses also play a role in other emotions, such as compassion. More and more, however, the emotions we witness are not those of actual individuals but the projected images of media surrogates.

**Public feelings:** Generally, feelings depend on the media through which humans come in contact with one another. The media create a virtual social structure that evokes real emotional life. They also make feelings into an object of public discourse—as shown several years ago by a nation’s enduring preoccupation with the love life of its president. Though the media can be instrumentalized to produce fear, they can also be cathartic. The orchestration of public mourning can help individuals to process pain. How do the elaborate mourning rituals of a nation change? How do we understand the death of Queen Victoria, whose burial ceremony was only witnessed by those in attendance, vis-à-vis the death of Lady Diana, whose burial was broadcast live throughout the world?

**Emotional equilibria:** When individual feelings change, do their interactions change as well? Is there something like emotional equilibrium? If so, is there more than one way to balance it? What happens to the emotions in general when one particular passion dominates an age? What happens when it vanishes? The duel—which Effi Briest’s husband still needed to defend his honor in the 19<sup>th</sup> century—is now an extinct ritual. While a sense of honor still plays a role in southern cultures, northern countries have largely abandoned it. What feelings have taken its place?

**The history of civilization:** Is our emotional constitution the result of a civilizing process? Are our feelings more toned down, more even-keeled than they were in the past? Are we less likely to break out into fits of rage than even our 19<sup>th</sup> century forbearers? Has civilization, in other words, made us more cool? And if so, has this given other emotions the chance to unfold? What feelings are we currently cultivating? Does cultivation lead to greater discernment, making us all into veritable connoisseurs of particular emotional tastes? Have we tried to exclude certain feelings to make room for others? Do we become more fearful the less danger and aggression we experience? Or, as some cultural anthropologists have claimed, is the process of civilization itself a myth, designed to reinforce the notion of our own cultural superiority? What kinds of emotional difference exist between cultures?

## Which Emotion Hold Sway Over Us Today?



# I. Passion(s) in Culture(s)

December 11–14,  
2003

Conceived by **Eva Illouz** Jerusalem, and **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

How are the passions being seen, heard, and perceived in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? How do we explore the collective psyche? And how do we understand our discoveries? This conference marks the beginning of a series exploring the emotional signature of our time. This opening program collects questions regarding the entire spectrum of emotions—from love, shame, and anger to sadness, fear, and compassion—and then presents some of their likely interrelations and economies. Which language(s) do they speak? Which media do they make use of? What distinctions can we make between passions, emotions, and feelings?

**Mieke Bal** *What If? The Language of Affect* **Jack Barbalet** *From Passions to Emotions; from Emotions to Feelings. Transitions in Early Modern and Late Modern Affective Cultures* **Stephen Greenblatt** *The Death of Hamnet and the Making of Hamlet* **Valentin Gröbner** *Compassion. A Feeling for Images* **Klaus Herding** *Severed Heads. The Medusa Myth and its Displacement in Modern Society* **Thomas Hauschild** *Passions and Politics* **Axel Honneth** *Culture and Emotion. A Comment on Eva Illouz* **Eva Illouz** *The Stability of Volatility. Imagination, Emotion, and Consumption* **Martha Nussbaum** *Shame in Public Life. Protecting the Vulnerable* **Robert Solomon** *Emotional Experience and Artistic Expression* **Rüdiger Zill** *Medea vs. Odysseus. Models of Emotion.*  
*The Roth Explosion. Confessions of a Writer*, a film by **Christa Maerker**

For details see: <https://einsteinforum.de/tagung/passions-in-cultures/?lang=en>

Anna Magnani in *Mamma Roma*, Pier Paolo Pasolini (1962)

*Heavenly Love and Earthly Love*, Giovanni Baglione, c. 1602/03; Staatliche Museen, Berlin





# II. Zivilisationsbruch mit Zuschauer?

## Gestalten des Mitgefühls

December 9–11,  
2004

### Witnessing Suffering: Figures of Compassion

Conceived by **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

Suffering strikes a chord in its witnesses. By identifying with sufferers, we feel for them, with them. Yet ever since modern media broadened our horizons, countless sources of suffering have struggled for our attention—and our compassion. If it is true that we feel more with those close to us, how do we respond to the constantly growing number of outlets for our sympathy? What happens when visual imagery—from its beginnings always a medium for emotion—gets multiplied? Do the media really bring us closer to suffering? Or does the sheer quantity of suffering they portray only serve to distance us emotionally, bringing about what could be called a crisis of pity? Does compassion require human mediators? If so, what gives them their credibility? What means may they apply? Can compassion still be regarded as the foundation of morality?

A joint conference with the Akademie der Künste, Berlin

**Annalise Acorn** *Compassion. A Warped Ruler?* **Doris Bischof-Köhler** *Empathy, Compassion, and Cruelty, and How they Connect* **Erik Durschmied** *"I thought those guys were with us." What it is Like to Be a War-Cameraman* **Georg Franck** *Compassion and the Economy of Self-Esteem* **Luca Giuliani** *Ancient Greek Representations of Suffering and Death. Did the Beholders Feel No Compassion?* **Ruth HaCohen** *Compassion from a Musical Point of Hearing* **Hilge Landweer** *Resonance or Cognition? Two Concepts of Sympathy* **Tom Lutz** *Why They Call it Compassion. Internet Responses to the George W. Bush Reelection* **Reinhart Meyer-Kalkus** *Between Pity and Horror. Liminal Phenomena of Sympathy and the Critique of Pity (Aristotle, Lessing, Benjamin)* **Adolf Muschg** *Mitleid – muss das sein?* **Ruth Padel** *Tiger Rag, Tiger Bone. Needing and Using the Wild* **David Shulman** *Hungry Mountain. Vedanta Desika's Hundred Poems on Compassion* **Anne Vincent-Buffault** *Compassion and the Sharing of Sensibility in the Eighteenth Century*

Photo by Barbara Klemm /FAZ, U-Bahn, Frankfurt, 1974

Photo: Antonella Nusca/Gamma (Reprinted in 50 Jahre. Das Beste vom Stern, Hamburg, 1998)





# III. Evil Eyes. On Envy

February 2–4.2006

Conceived by **Susan Neiman** and **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

Envy is one of the seven deadly sins, something that mythological and literary texts since Cain and Abel do not tire of reminding us. Only seldom does envy appear in a positive light, say as the motor of economic competition. Today envy again figures prominently in political debates over class resentment and distributive justice. What distinguishes envy from its neighboring emotions—grudgingness, jealousy, resentment, and Schadenfreude? Can we make a clear separation between a negatively-valued envy and a positively-valued sense of justice or moral outrage? Is envy always accompanied by the wish to harm the person who is envied? Can envy be collective, or are concepts like class resentment mere polemical inventions? Are there cultures in which envy is particularly widespread?

With generous support from the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung

**Aleida Assmann** *In the Beginning was Envy. Metaphysical and Social Aspects of a Strong Emotion* **Daniel Brudney** *Envy, Grudgingness and Political Philosophy* **Raimond Gaita** *Hope, Envy, and Love of the World*

**Thomas Hauschild** *Invidia – Kultur und Raum.*

*Praktiken des (Bösen) Blicks* **Amir Kassaei** *Neid und Missgunst für 49 Euro. Neid als großer Verführer* **Nils Minkmar** *Der geilste Stoff.*

*Neid und die Medien* **Glenn Most** *Envy and Jealousy* **Susan Neiman** *Evil as Envy. Ayn Rand or How a Russian Emigré*

*Shaped the American Consciousness* **Rainer Paris** *Neid. Inspektion eines Gefühls* **Hartwig Schmidt** *Der Neid unter den Angeleglichenen. Vom Schicksal einer "Todsünde" in der DDR-Gesellschaft* **Elke Schmitter** *Der Neid und ich, wir zwei: Ein Erfahrungsbericht* **Peter Schneider** *Ich sehe was, was ich nicht hab, und das ist ... Sexual- und Penisneid, psychoanalytische Anthropologie und der Mythos vom Neidgesellschaftsvertrag* **Daniel Zizzo** *Shadows in the Dark. An Economist's View on Envy and Situational Aggression*

Jamaican Carnival, 2005



Amoris domitrix invidia, Daniel Heinsius, (Nederduytsche poemata, 1616)

Invidia, Giotto (Capella degli Scrovegni, Padua, c. 1305)





# IV. Angst

## Kon(junk)turen eines Gefühls

February 1–3, 2007

### On Fear and Anxiety

Conceived by **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

Fear is a primal response, anchored deep within our nervous systems, whose purpose is to safeguard our survival. But that which scares us and the extent to which we fear differs from age to age and society to society. Though scholars have studied the history of fear in the West and in other cultures for some time now, the question remains whether or not we have fewer reasons to be fearful today than in the past. Might we have become more fearful with less reason? Is fear the dominant feeling of our society? How is it put to use politically? Through what means is it disseminated? To what extent can fear also be pleasurable?

With generous support from the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung

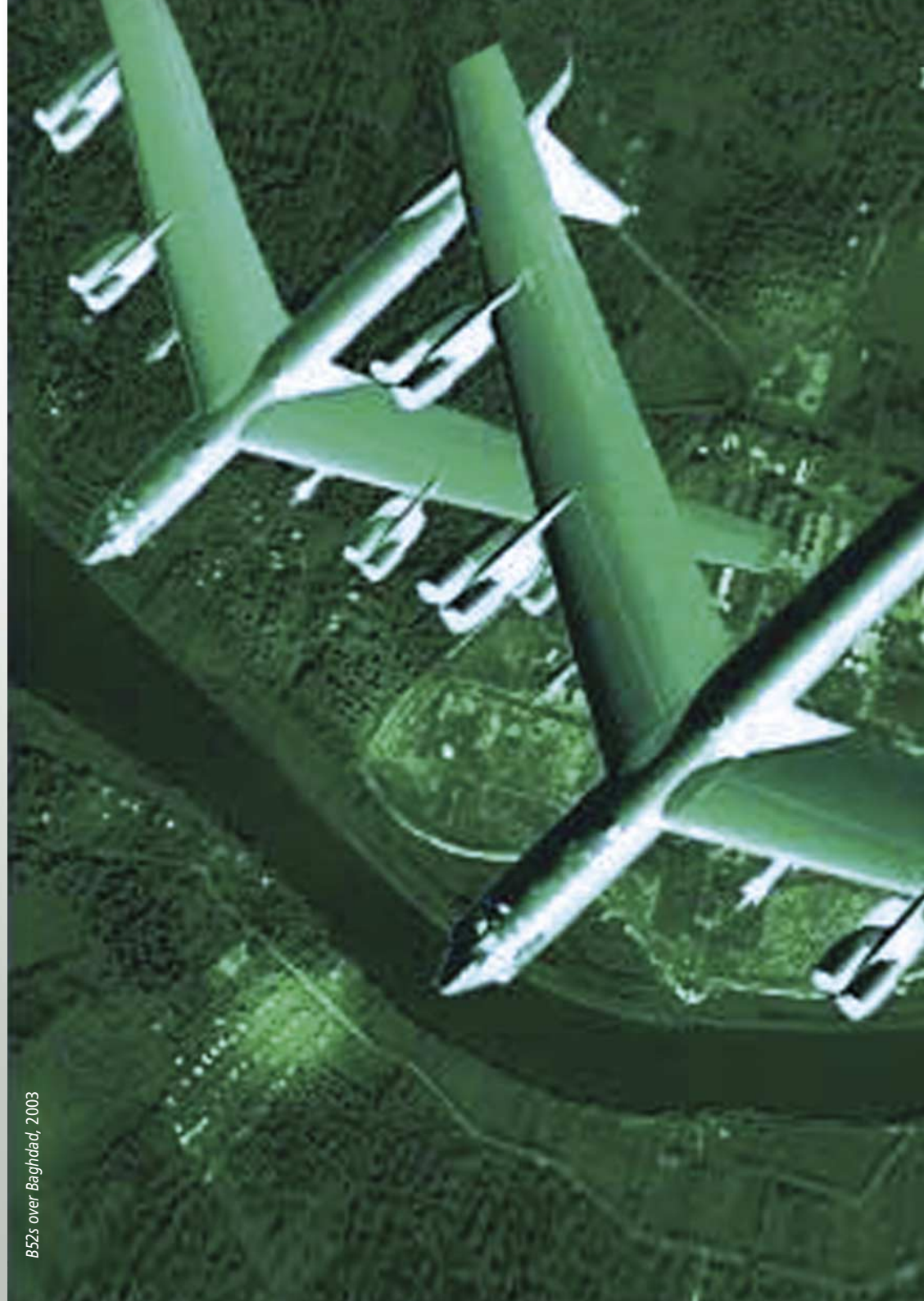
**Jan Assmann** *Über das Phobische* **Borwin Bandelow** *Krank vor Angst*  
**Elisabeth Bronfen** *Fears of the Night* **Christa Ebert** *Poesie gegen die Angst. Die Dichtung von Anna Achmatova und Ossip Mandelstam in der Zeit des Terrors* **Konstanty Gebert** *Too Much to Feel? On the Delayed Experience of Fear in Traumatic Situations* **Eva Horn** *WTC Paranoia. Politische Ängste nach 9/11* **Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner** *Die*

*Angst in der Geschichte* **David Konstan** *Fear and Anxiety. The View from Ancient Greece* **Joachim Radkau** *Diffuse Angst und Sehnsucht nach Leidenschaft* **Corey Robin** *Language of Fear. National Security in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* **Eviatar Zerubavel** *Silence and Fear. The Social and Psychological Consequences of Co-Denial*  
**Rüdiger Zill** *Waves of Fear*

For details see: <https://einsteinforum.de/tagung/angst-konjunktoren-eines-gefuehls/>

Karl Meixner, in *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, Fritz Lang (1933)

B52s over Baghdad, 2003



# v. Apatheia – Besonnenheit – Coolness

## Das ABC der reduzierten Gefühle

Apatheia—Detachment—Coolness: The ABCs of Attenuated Feelings

December 7, 2007

Conceived by **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

Coolness is as cool as ever. Cool people impress others precisely because they aren't easily impressed; they keep their feelings in check, put on nonchalance. Even so, the long-term historical trend points to the sinking value of detachment and the rising value of emotion. Coolness, it would seem, has become uncool. Feelings were once regarded as a disturbance, a threat to mental stability and the social order. Now not feeling is seen as the source of evil itself and doctors treat alexithymia—the inability to recognize and express emotions—as a medical disorder. Are there significant national and cultural differences in how people express coolness? Is it a product of a subculture, or an essential part of adolescence? What roles do class and social strata play?

In cooperation with the Deutsche Kinemathek –  
Museum für Film und Fernsehen

**Judit Árokay** *Kitano Takeshi—Aspekte der japanischen Kultur der Coolness* **Heike Behrend**

*"Coolness" in Afrika. Eine Spurenlese in afrikanischer Kunst und populärer Kultur*

**Michael Haneke** *Caché* (2005) Filmvorführung und Diskussion mit **Bert Rebhandl** **Michael**

**Huber** *Fähigkeit und Begrenzung – Neurobiologische und psychologische Gründe für emotionale Kälte und Wärme in zwischenmenschlichen*

*Beziehungen* **Eva Illouz** *From Homo Economicus to Homo Communicans* **Helmut Lethen** *Das*

*Pathos der Kälte und seine anthropologische Fundierung* **Peter Stearns** *Recent Trends in*

*American Cool* **Rüdiger Zill** *Cool Typen. Kleine Phänomenologie reduzierten Fühlens*



left: Alain Delon, *Le Samouraï* (1967); right: Uma Thurman, *Pulp Fiction* (1994); © Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen



Lieutenant Commander Data, *Star Trek*





# VI. Von Achilles bis Zidane

## Zur Genealogie des Zorns

December 11–13,  
2008

From Achilles to Zidane: On the Genealogy of Fury

Conceived by **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

Today when we describe outpourings of anger, we are more likely to resort to notions like aggression and outrage than to fury, which recalls divine wrath and the intemperate outbursts of mythological heroes. Yet despite its archaic associations, fury is back in the public eye. Does the renaissance indicate a new way of managing our feelings? What are the links between anger, fury, wrath, aggression, and outrage? How do they originate? Has fury, once a mark of poor upbringing and dysfunction, become socially acceptable? Does its rehabilitation result from a new interpretation of societal behavior or political expression? What are the moral connotations of fury?

**Gerd Althoff** *Aufgeführter Zorn. Zur Inszenierung von Emotionen im Mittelalter* **Elke Buhr** *Rage Hard! Heavy Metal, Punk und Co. Zorn in der Popkultur* **Heiko Christians** *Aufsteigen, aufwallen, entbrennen? Zur medialen Zubereitung des Zorns* **Ute Frevert** *Zorn und Ehre. Eine geschlechterhistorische Perspektive* **William V.**

**Harris** *The Angry Emotions and their Historical Explanation* **Theodor Itten** *Jähzorn. Das seelische Feuer des Absoluten* **Veena Kade-Luthra** *Phoolan Devi. Eine Saga der Rache* **Hermann Kappelhoff** *Kalkulierte Raserei. Der Zorn des Rekruten im Kriegsfilm* **Gerben van Kleef** *The Interpersonal Effects of Anger. Insights from the Emotions as Social Information (EASI) Model* **Hermann Schmitz** *Die Hegung des Zorns* **Jonathan Shay** *Thumotic Emotions. Culture, Society, Mind, and Brain* **Rüdiger Zill** *Look Ahead in Anger. The Renaissance of an Emotion* **Glenn Most** *Final Commentary and Discussion*



Zidane/Materazzi, WM 2006, © John Macdougall, AFP  
Protest against G8 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, 2005  
Photo: Julian Röder; Exhibition at the Einstein Forum

*Achilles dragging the body of Hector around the Walls of Troy,*  
Donato Creti, 1710-20





# VII. Zum Lachen!

On Laughter

April 24, 2009

Conceived by **Peter Paul Kubitz**, **Gerlinde Waz** Berlin, **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam  
There are many forms and prefigurations of laughter: Mona Lisa's smile, the schoolgirl's giggle, the Cheshire cat's grin, Lorient's smirk, Stefan Raab's convulsive fits. Laughter can be sneaky—a good joke hides in a dry delivery and then takes you by surprise—but it can also be contagious, which is why American sitcoms employ laugh tracks. Psychologists and doctors today confirm what people have believed since antiquity: laughing is good for your health. But laughter also has a dark side. Smiling at someone can always give way to laughing at someone; light-hearted exuberance and innocent joking, to bitter satire, biting irony, and insulting caricature.

In cooperation with the Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen

**Julian Hanich** *Es muss nicht immer komisch sein. Über Formen des Lachens im Kino* **Carey Harrison** *Kritische Kultur. Humor im amerikanischen Fernsehen* **Harald-Alexander Korp** *Worüber lacht der Prophet Mohammed? Die schwere Leichtigkeit im Islam* **Stefan Lukschy** „... des Ernstes Lebens ...“. *Anmerkungen zu Lorient* **Barbara Merziger** *Was Sie schon immer über lachende Frauen wissen wollten ...* **Willibald Ruch** *Lachen und Auslachen* **Barbara Sichtermann** *Humor markiert Milieus. Die inkorporierende Funktion des Gelächters im Fernsehen* **Marleen Stoessel** *Das Kichern im Gebüsch. Von der Geburt des Humors aus dem Zwerchfell des Trickster*

Audience at the German Opening Night of *The Fuller Brush Man*, 1950; © M. Marszałek, Berlin

*The laughing jester*, 15th century, Art museum of Sweden, Stockholm





# VIII. Forsaken and Forlorn

## On Sadness, Grief, and Mourning

February, 4–6,  
2010

Conceived by **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

More so than other emotions, sadness and mourning have distinct individual and collective manifestations. Sadness is closely connected to despondence, melancholia, desperation, and depression, but also to apathy, fear, anger, and guilt. The rules of decorum tell us how to express grief, whether we can suffer in silence or express our sorrow openly, and give rise to complicated rituals, political symbols, and societal institutions. Which conventions help us express sadness and process loss? Which do we regard as inappropriate? How do codes and conventions change over time? How do they differ from culture to culture? How is sadness institutionalized in politics? How is it evoked, represented, and orchestrated in the media? And how does media's portrayal of sadness shape the way we experience it?



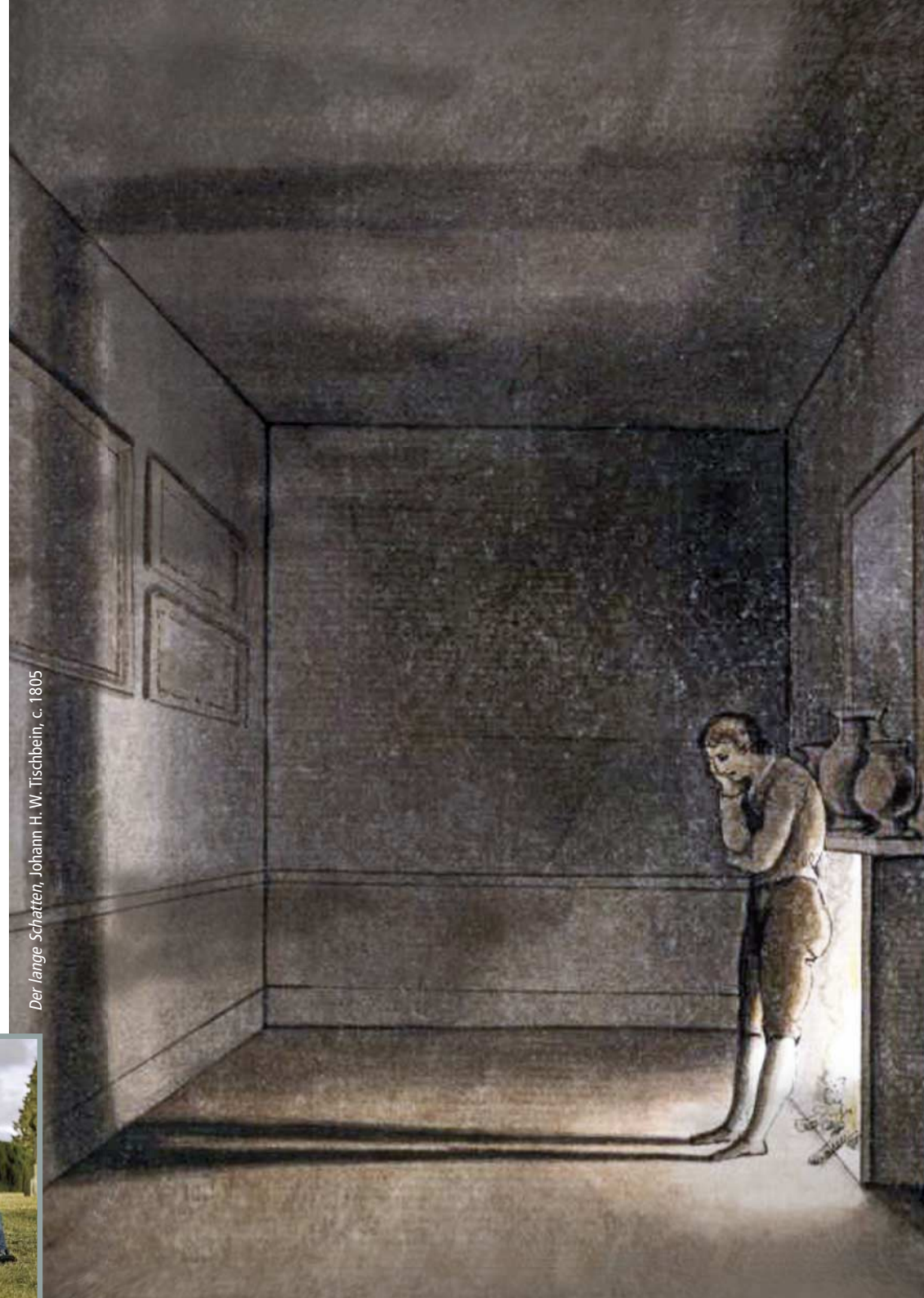
**Annalise Acorn** *Blood Money. Some Thoughts on Law, Bereavement and Compensation for Grief* **Hinderk M. Emrich** *Resignation and Grief. Emotional Responses in Situations of Failure* **Philip Fisher** *The End of Mourning* **Helena Flam** *Grief—*

*Forbidden, Postponed, and Resented. A Source of Angered Political Mobilization* **Peter Goldie** *The Narrative of a Grieving* **Carol Lansing** *Rituals Change. Restraint of Male Grief in Late Medieval Italy* **Claudio Lomnitz** *Horror, Irony, Sadness, and Grief in the Formation of Mexican Public Discourse* **Gesine Palmer** *Undressing and Dressing the Dead. Professional Approaches to the Work of Sorrow* **Donald Sutton** *The Emotions of Chinese Mourning and the Question of Sincerity* **Christiane Voss** *Endlich – Finally. The Limits of Mourning or. How to Deal Emotionally with Human Corpses?* **Trio Fado** *Concert*



*Morning Sun*, Edward Hopper, 1952. *Funeral Mixtape*, The Pack A.D. (2008)

*Der lange Schatten*, Johann H. W. Tischbein, c. 1805





# IX. Proudly Presenting

## Pride between Arrogance and Self-Respect

Conceived by **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

For many central Europeans, pride is a feeling that is supposed to have been surmounted. Once so common that it figured among the seven deadly sins, pride today is thought to be confined to Asia, the Mediterranean and other societies that overvalue honor. Yet the feeling is more familiar, and more positive, than it might first appear. Think of the connotations of being proud of something, the proud heroes of young adult literature, and the national pride felt during the world cup soccer tournament, to which even Germans are susceptible. How is pride connected with phenomena like honor, self-respect, arrogance, vanity, assumption, or shame? How do ideas of pride differ from culture to culture?

**Rolf-Bernhard Essig** *Die Ausgezeichneten und die Gezeichneten. Über Heldenstolz im Bereich der Jugendliteratur* **Ottmar Ette** *Stolz und Konvivenz / Stolz auf Konvivenz. Zu Findung und Erfindung einer prospektiven Kraft* **Nick Fisher** *Ancient Greek Ideas of Pride, Self-esteem and Honour* **Gunter Gebauer** *Stolz auf die Anderen. Epische Gefühle im Sport* **Jack Katz** *Pride in Practice. Paths to the Acquisition of Competencies Known Only in the Doing* **Susan Neiman** *Of Fear, Pride and Shame* **Friedrich Schorlemmer** *Die Ambivalenz des Stolzes* **Jessica Tracy** *The Psychological Nature of Pride* **Haci Halil Uslucan** *Zwischen Berlin und Istanbul. Der Stolz in seiner interkulturellen und intergenerationalen Dimension*



For details see: <https://einsteinforum.de/tagung/proudly-presenting-pride-between-arrogance-and-self-respect/>

January 27–29,  
2011

Petri Heil/ Frank mit 75er Seeforelle, Biggese, März 2010



Pumped with National Pride! Foto: Sean Clissmann, July 2009 (IBF Ultimate Rideout)



# x. First Love

## On Second Thought

January 26–28,  
2012

Conceived by **Wolfgang Hörner** Berlin, and **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

Is first love one of the most important events in our lives or a myth fabricated from old memories? In countless novels and stories first love is portrayed at turns as a traumatic experience and a romanticization of an irretrievable past—but either way it's supposed to be deeply formative. Is first love only conceivable against the backdrop of Western individualization? Does the concept of first love necessary imply a second? One of first love's distinguishing features is that it develops only after we've achieved a certain reflective capacity, permitting conscious search for its linguistic expression.



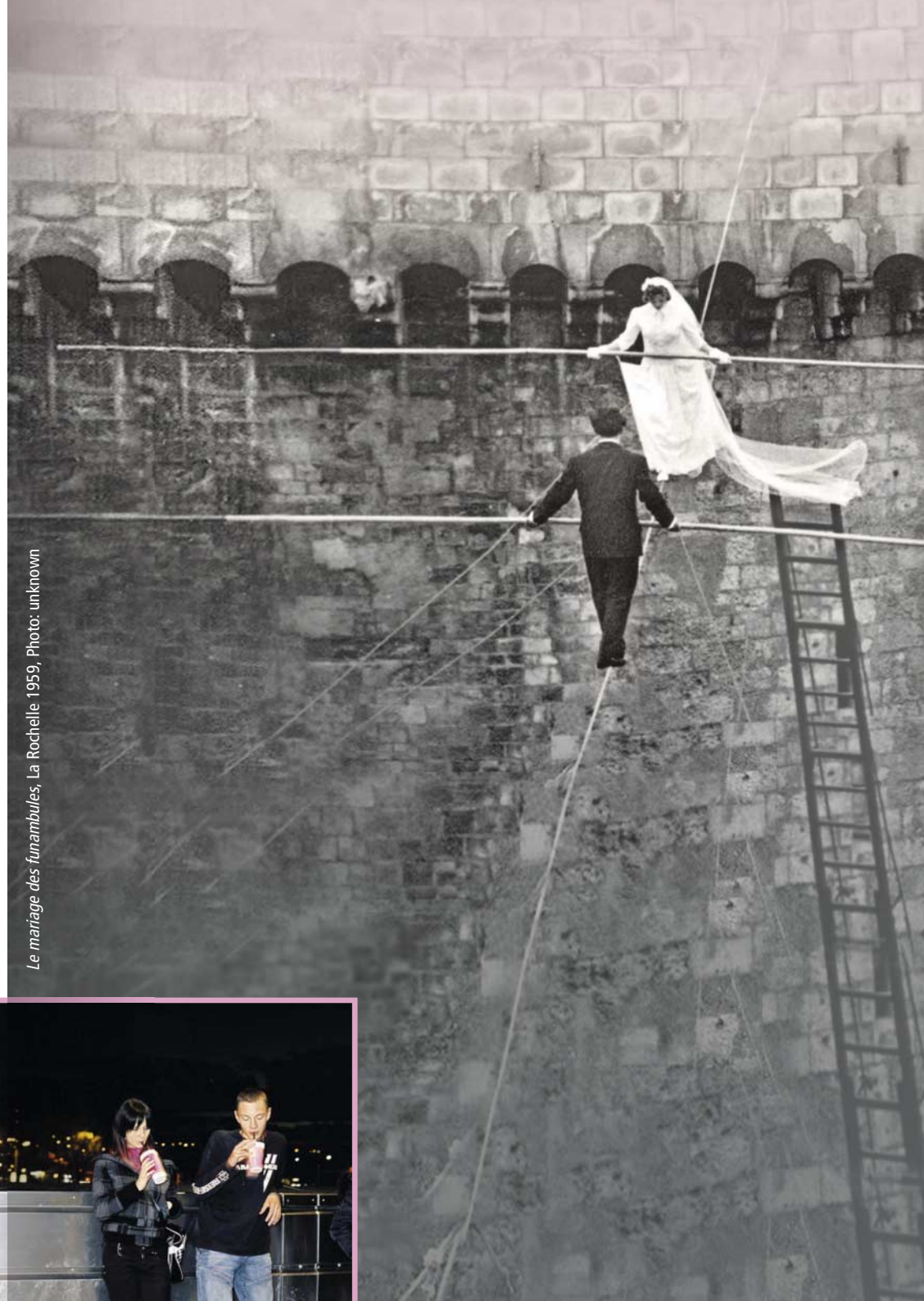
**Maria DiBattista** *First Love and Last Things*  
**Katharina Döbler** *Und das soll es jetzt sein*  
**Jenny Erpenbeck** *John*  
**Victoria von Flemming** *Erste Liebe, letzte Liebe. Bilder zu einem ernüchternden Entwurf*  
**Benno Gammerl** *Uneigentliche erste Liebe? Wie Lesben*

*und Schwule über ihre frühen gegengeschlechtlichen Erfahrungen reden*  
**Millay Hyatt** *Fernsehen, Fernschreiben. Strategien der Distanzwahrung in der ersten Liebe*  
**Eva Illouz** *Why is First Love the Paradigm of Love?*

**Peter Stephan Jungk** *San Gimignano und die Folgen*  
**Peggy Mädler** *Lewin oder die Suche nach einer Geschichte*  
**Elke Schmitter** *„In Honig getauchter Schmerz“. Die erste und die letzte Liebe bei Heinrich Heine und überhaupt*  
**Alain Claude Sulzer** *Maxim oder von der Erotik der Namen*  
**Peter Wawerzinek** *Erste Liebe. Part eins zwei drei und vier*  
**Nikolaus Wegmann** *Erste Liebe. Eine Wandererzählung*  
**Rüdiger Zill** *First Love's Discourse—Fragments*

*La lettre d'amour*, Jean-Honoré Fragonard, c. 1770; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York  
*First Love*, Berlin 2007, Photo: Annette Hauschild/Ostkreuz; Exhibition at the Einstein Forum

*Le mariage des funambules*, La Rochelle 1959, Photo: unknown





# xi. Zum Fest

Heyday of Emotions

December 13–15,  
2012

Conceived by **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

Celebrations, festivals, ceremonies, feasts—the semantic range comprised by the German word “Fest”—are temporary emotionally communities that foster long-term emotional bonds among their members. The emotions these event cultivate are specific: Christmas is about love and intimacy; Carneval and New Year’s Eve offer ecstatic escape from the everyday; funeral rituals channel sorrow; national anniversaries are exercises in pride. The division of labor is not always strict, however, and sometimes multiple emotions occur at once. The festive event is proleptic, raising hopes, making demands, and funneling enthusiasm during the period that precedes it.



**Annalise Acorn** *Confronting Banquo’s Ghost. Thoughts on the Ruined Feast* **Kelly Askew** *Into-nations. Musical Articulations of Populist vs. Official Politics in Tanzania* **Winfried Gebhardt** *Der erlaubte Exzess. Über das Management der Gefühle in Festen, Feiern und Events* **Michael Maurer** *Emotionen und Identität in der öffentlichen Festkultur* **Yvonne Niekrenz** *„Karneval is’n Gefühl“. Emotionale Bedeutungen kollektiven Berausens im rheinischen Karneval* **Joe Perry** *The Discrete Charm of the Sentimental. Christmas in Germany* **Robert Pfaller** *Die Augenhöhe des Lebens. Über Souveränität und subalterne Identität* **Bruno Preisendörfer** *Von der Senatsflocke zum Riesenstadtplan. Berlin als politisches Festival, 1987/2012* **Birgitt Röttger-Rössler** *Wenn Wege sich trennen. Abschiedsfeiern aus sozialanthropologischer Sicht* **Günter Schenk** *Feste im Wandel. Kulturkritische Anmerkungen eines reisenden Brauchbeobachters* **Froma Zeitlin** *Dionysus, Theater, and Festival in Ancient Athens. Tragic and Comic Perspectives* **Rüdiger Zill** *From Intimate to Ecstatic Celebration. On the Cultivation of Emotions*

For details see: <https://einsteinforum.de/tagung/zum-fest-heyday-of-emotions/>

Festa de Flor, Funchal 2004, Photo: Günter Schenk; Exhibition at the Einstein Forum



Ceremonial hall, Wernigerode palace, 2012. Hochzeit von Neptun und Amphitrite, Johannes Rottenhammer, 1600



## XII. Masses in (E)motion

January 30–  
February 1, 2014

Conceived by **Mischa Gabowitsch** and **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

Strictly speaking, only individuals have emotions. And yet, wherever many people congregate, common moods spread: there is contagion of enthusiasm, outrage, or fear. Be it open air concerts, sports events, demonstrations, or pilgrimages: each type of event is dominated and defined by a different set of emotions. Organizers may welcome these emotions while still fearing that they might spiral out of control. For centuries, police forces and crowd control experts have been discussing whether to ban certain types of events altogether in order to prevent upheaval, or whether orchestrating emotions in crowds might on the contrary help prevent turmoil. Can emotions in crowds be controlled and regulated? Can individuals resist collective moods or even influence them? What makes excitement suddenly veer into panic, mirth “turn” to wrath, and involvement give way to apathy?



**Ute Frevert** *Crowds and Executions* **Ansgar Gilster** *The I in the We. Collective Certainty of Individual Existence at the Protestant Kirchentag* **Johannes Knutsson** *Supporting Passionate Protesters with Dialogue Policing—A Means for less Crowd Violence?* **Ehrhart Körting** *Emotion und Gegenemotion. Strategien zur Steuerung störungsanfälliger Massenveranstaltungen* **Catherine Lutz** *The Emotional Life*

*of the Uniformed Crowd* **Felix de Mendelssohn** *Alone Together. How Does it Feel to be (in) a Crowd?* **Donatella della Porta** *Emotions in Movements. Eventful Protests as Passionate Politics* **Bruno Preisendörfer** *Die Polizei der Freuden. Wie kommen Massen in Bewegung?* **Stephen David Reicher** *The Passion and the Reason. Understanding the Emotionality of Crowds and Masses* **Malte Rolf** *Bewegte Massen – bewegende Emotionen? Festplanung und Emotionsmanagement in der Sowjetunion*

For details see: <https://www.einsteinforum.de/tagung/masses-in-emotion/>

Papier-Ballett, Cécilie Davidis, 2007, Photo: Chris Komer, 2008; Exhibition at the Einstein Forum

Dahi Hand-Festival, Mumbai, Photo: Sanket K. 2012





# XIII. Ansteckend

## Vorbilder des Gefühls

Learning to Feel. Role Models of Emotion

Conceived by **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

Emotional communities are groups of people who share the same or similar norms for the expression of feelings. Together, those norms strike a certain affective tone that not only shapes how people talk about and appraise emotion but also generates an entire way of life. A crucial part of that process is the embodiment of a community's affective tone in books, music, and film, where protagonists serve as role models—and sometimes idols—of emotional behavior. Just as important as—perhaps even more important than—what they say is how they say it, how they look, how they move, and the explicit and implicit signals they send.

**Annette Geiger** *Die Diva im Säulenkleid. Mode und Gefühlsarchitektur im Kino der 1930er Jahre* **Thomas Macho** *Gespenster im Kino. Zu zwei Geschichten von Horacio Quiroga* **Bjørn Melhus** *"The feeling is so strong..."* **Claudia Wegener** *Helden, Idole, Vorbilder – Aneignung und Identität* **Rüdiger Zill** *King of Cool und Königin der Herzen oder Wie emotionale Gemeinschaften ihre Vorbilder im Blick haben*



For details see: <https://einsteinforum.de/tagung/ansteckend-vorbilder-des-gefuehls/>

May 5, 2015



The Royal Family on the Buckingham Palace balcony, London, June 11, 2016; Photo: Facundo Arizabalaga

It's a Complicated World, © Keystone



# XIV. Herztöne

November 11, 2016

## Inszenierungen der Liebe in der populären Musik

Heartbeats. Love in Popular Music

Conceived by **Martin Schaad** and **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

Whether it is *Kann denn Liebe Sünde sein?* or *Love is Just a Four-Letter Word*, *Nathalie* or *Nine Million Bicycles*—no other feeling has been sung about as often as love. There is no desire, no hope, no disappointment, no doubt that has not found expression in a song. And no song captures the feeling as deeply as the love song, which combines the sensuality of music with the poetry of lyrics. A particular feature of love songs is their ability to contain a message that seems personal—lovers who receive or send a mixed tape or a YouTube video think it captures their relationship in all its idiosyncratic quirkiness—yet also tell us something about an entire generation, about the private and political moods, desires, and Weltschmerz of an era. Sometimes, they even stand the test of time. *All you need is love*.

**Ralf von Appen** "Love etc." – *Liebe in den Songs der Pet*

*Shop Boys* **Elisabeth Bronfen** *Abgebrochene Melodie –*

*Marlene Dietrichs und Zarah Leanders Liebeslieder an die*

*Nation* **Bernd Greiner** "Imagine" ... *Liebeslieder im Kalten Krieg*

**Nimrod Reitman** "I am Walking Back to Myself"—*When Love Stops*

*Singing* **Martin Schaad** *Choirboys – Vom Nachklingen des*

*Religiösen im Liebeslied* **Henning Wellmann** "This is not a Love

*Song" – (Nicht-)Thematisierungen der Liebe im Punk*

**Rüdiger Zill** *Can a Song Save Your Love? Oder wozu sind*

*Liebeslieder sonst gut?* **Inga Humpe** *im Gespräch mit*

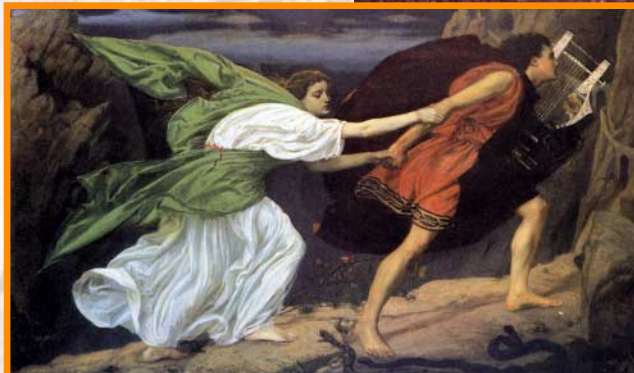
**Susan Neiman** "Something Stupid like I Love You"

– *Liebeslieder mit Humor? Das geht doch*

*nicht...*

Hermes, Eurydice and Orpheus, ca. 430–400 BC: Relief (replica) © Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples  
Orpheus and Eurydice, Edward Poynter, 1862

Jane Birkin and Serge Gainsbourg; Photo: Patrick Bertrand, 1969





# xv. Angst machen

## Koproduzenten eines Gefühls

January 25–27,  
2018

### Agents of Fear

Conceived by **Martin Schaad** and **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

Today, the feeling of fear has come to seem ubiquitous as its triggers have multiplied in recent years. An ongoing financial crisis, terrorist attacks around the world, and many other examples both large and small have conspired to create a climate permeated by angst. We fear social decline, poverty in old age, foreigners, the loss of identity, epidemics, dementia, nuclear war, mass extinctions, climate change, and catastrophes of all kinds. Multiple factors explain fear's rise to predominance at this historical juncture. Which combination has been decisive in spreading this general climate of fear? Which societal and cultural changes have promoted it? What role have old and new media played? Do merchants of fear seek to derive political and economic capital from its dissemination? How rational are our fears?

**Harro Albrecht** *Von Journalisten als Gefühlsverstärkern* **Frank Biess** *Angst und Demokratie in der Bundesrepublik. (Dis)kontinuitäten seit 1945*  
**Heinz Bude** *Die Angst nach dem Ende des Neoliberalismus* **Jens Eder** *Medien der Verunsicherung* **Dirk Gieselmann** *Atlas der Angst. Die Vermessung eines Gefühls* **Bettina Hitzer** *Angst essen auch Körper auf? Die Krebskrankheit und die Macht der Angst* **Lars Koch** *Popkulturelle Notstandsimaginationen. Angstvolle Phantasmen eines drohenden Überlebenskampfes* **Philipp Stoellger** *Religion als Angstbewältigung? Zur Ökonomie der Angstbewirtschaftung* **Bernd Zywiets** *Die Angst der Anderen. Zur direkten und indirekten Furcht vor Propaganda, Terrorismus und ihren „bösen Bildern“*



Shining, Stanley Kubrick (1980)

Woman at the shooting range, Photo: toodupphoto © fotolia





# xvi. (K)ein zweites Ich

## Freundschaft zwischen geschäftlichem Kalkül und innigem Gefühl

(No) Alter Ego. Friendship Between Social Calculus and Inner Feeling

Conceived by **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

December 6–8,  
2018

As the role of the family in everyday organization, social life, and elderly care has declined across much of Europe, another social relationship has come to the fore: friendship. A flood of self-help books has hit the market to instruct the public on what true friendships are and how to cultivate them. Much of this advice rests on a romantic idea of intimacy. A very different model is provided by Leon Battista Alberti, who a century earlier described friendship as a calculated means of securing power and influence, especially in societies whose state institutions are weak. Today, friendship appears to be flourishing in the digital age, though many have wondered whether Facebook "friends" still merit the name. The conference investigates friendship in all its forms, the importance of emotion as a binding force, and the validity of earlier concepts of friendship in a rapidly changing world.

**Petra Boden** *Heidelberger Zement. Vom langen Halt einer frühen Mischung*  
**Anne Cronin** *Experiencing Friendship's Contradictions—Creating New Spaces of Connection*  
**Oleg Kharkhordin** *Personal and Political Friendship. How Does it Matter for the Classical Republican Tradition?*  
**Andreas Kraß** *„Mein Prinz, ich sterbe mit tausend Freuden für Sie!“ Die Katte–Tragödie in der Literatur*  
**Katja Kraus** *Freundschaft: Geschichten von Nähe und Distanz*  
**Sebastian Kühn** *Trinken mit Gelehrten. Über Freunde, Feinde und "andere Freunde" in der Frühen Neuzeit*  
**Peggy Mädler** *Wohin wir gehen*  
**Angela von Rahden** *„... daß mich dünkt, ich sei nur noch zur Hälfte“ Totengespräche unter Freunden*  
**Janosch Schobin** *Symbolische Lebenspfänder und Intimkommunikation. Versuch einer verallgemeinerbaren soziologischen Theorie der Freundschaft*  
**Björn Vedder** *Warum Facebook–Freunde echte Freunde sind*  
**Tanya Zaharchenko** *The Culture(s) of Human Connections. Expectations and Stereotypes*  
**Rüdiger Zill** *Wann ist der Freund ein Freund?*

A Group of Danish Artists in Rome, Constantin Hansen, 1837; Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen

Week end à Rome, 1955; Photo: Jacques Rouchon/akg-images





# XVII. Gefühl zeigen

## Emotionen im Kino

Showing Emotion. Passions in Cinema

Conceived by **Ursula von Keitz** and **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

For many centuries, showing emotions was taboo. Now admonitions against their repression are the norm. Part of what shaped the dramatic change has been the display of emotion in public, particularly on screen. Indeed, nowhere are emotions more on view today than in film and television, where actors not only perform feelings for the camera but also elicit them in audiences. In doing so, they draw directly on tested practices from the traditions of theater, opera, dance, and the visual arts. How has the range of expressive possibilities changed from stage to film, and from silent movies to productions with sound and finally in color? What is the relationship between emotional conventions in society and those in theater and film? How do casting, make-up, and other staging elements influence the cinematic representation of passion? How are emotions codified? When is it possible to break existing codes and establish new ones?

In cooperation with the Filmuniversität Babelsberg Konrad Wolf

**Annette Dorgerloh** *Bastien und Bastienne 1953. Liebe im Spannungsfeld zwischen Ost und West: „Am grünen Strand der Spree“* **Julia Dufek** *Von der Beseelung lebloser Objekte oder Wie Animatoren Gefühle gestalten* **Fabienne Liptay** *Vom Testen. Affekt und Ökonomie in Hollywood* **Stephen Lowry** *Is Revenge a Dish Best Enjoyed 'Cool'? Nähe und Distanz – Strategien der Emotionsdarstellung und -lenkung in "Django Unchained"* **Stefan Schmidl** *Musik im großen filmischen Moment. Zur Technik der klanglichen Emotionalisierung im Kino* **Dieter Thomä** *Geld und Gefühl im Film. Erich Stroheims "Greed" und seine Nachfolger* **Ingrid Vendrell Ferran** *Gefühle zeigen – Gefühle verstehen: Das empathische Spektrum* **Isa Willinger** *Filmausschnitte und Diskussion Künstliche Intelligenz, echtes Gefühl?*

January 23–25,  
2020

*The Frankenstein's Bride, RetroAtelier, 2016 © getty images*

*Deceptively Yours, Ariana Jordan Photography 2009*





# XVIII. Einsamkeit

## Von der Versenkung in Gott zum sozialen Problem

December 10–11,  
2021

Solitude and Loneliness: From Divine Immersion to Social Problem

Conceived by **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

Solitude originally meant intimate immersion in God. Later it became, along with intellectual freedom, a precondition of academic independence. Solitude in a forest represented the idyll of an intact world. Today solitude has become loneliness, the root cause of boredom and agonizing depression, a social problem that government agencies have been created to tackle. Is loneliness a new phenomenon, the result of diminishing traditional ties and a concept of individuality that relies on ever-greater levels of self-actualization? Have we become incapable of making friends? Can we return to the creative potential that solitude once offered?

**Fay Bound Alberti** *Loneliness. The Birth of a Modern Emotion* **Eckart Goebel** *Die Einsamkeit der Ambition. Alexis de Tocqueville über den Ehrgeiz in einer Gesellschaft der Gleichen* **Nicola Graef** *Eine einsame Stadt* (Dokumentarfilm, 2020) **Diana Kinnert** *Die neue Einsamkeit als politische Herausforderung* **Denis Newiak** *Bates Motel. Televisuelle Ausdrucksformen moderner Einsamkeit* **Pamela Qualter** *Children's Experiences of Loneliness* **Janosch Schobin** *Emanzipation und Isolation. Zur Genese der Einsamkeitsangst moderner Gesellschaften* **Lars Fredrik Händler Svendsen** *The Politics of Trust and Loneliness* **David Vincent** *Solitude and Loneliness. The Epidemic and the Pandemic. Was macht die Einsamkeit mit Dir?* Fotografien von **Maxi Martha Hötzel**, **Emma Lou Larsen**, **Anton Roentz**, **Louis Roth**, **Emilia Stroschein** und **Claire Weber**



*L'enigma di una giornata*,  
Giorgio de Chirico, 1914.  
MAC USP Collection  
© VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021



# XIX. A Matter of Feeling?

## Recent Perspectives in the Study of Emotions

February 1–3,  
2024

Conceived by **Rüdiger Zill** Potsdam

Twenty years ago, when we started our series *Passions in Cultures*, emotions were at best one topic among many for researchers. Today it is ubiquitous in academia, having received increasing amounts of attention in both the sciences and the humanities. What is the current state of research on the theory of emotions? Can we identify key developments, discoveries, and syntheses that have emerged in the last two decades? Are there feelings that have received special attention? Did the methods used for studying the history and theory of emotions change? Are there specific studies considered paradigmatic? Did the kinds of questions raised over the years change? Have recent developments in politics and society influenced the subjects that researchers have chosen to pursue? Are there signs that researchers are becoming exhausted with the subject? Which questions need considering now?

**Rob Boddice** *Transdisciplinary Implications of a Biocultural Consensus in Emotion Research* **Fritz Breithaupt** *Narrative Emotions in the Age of ChatGPT* **Josef Früchtel** *It Needs an Art of Translation: Critical Theory and Feelings* **Valentin Groebner** *Nostalgie als historischer Bastelbogen* **David Konstan** *Emotions across Times and Cultures* **Eva Menasse** *Das eitle Ich. Lesung aus: Alles und nichts sagen* **Glenn Most** *Final Commentary* **Catherine Newmark** *"Things got emotional...". On Historical Cycles of Interest in Feelings and Passions* **Barbara Rosenwein** *Theories and Methods: How Medievalists (and Others) Write the History of Emotions* **Christian von Scheve** *Gefühle auf dem Prüfstand. Zur Streitbarkeit von Emotionen in gesellschaftlichen Konflikten* **Philipp Stoellger** *Gewalt der Gefühle und gefühlte Gewalt. Zur Verschränkung und ihren Eskalationen* **Christiane Voss** *Gastlichkeit als Szene der Affektpolitik. Eine medienphilosophische Perspektive* **Tiffany Watt Smith** *Stolen Feelings in an Age of Consent: Projection, Intimacy, and Historical Trespass*

For details see: <https://www.einsteinforum.de/tagung/a-matter-of-feeling-recent-perspectives-in-the-study-of->

Detail of *Réunion de trente-cinq têtes d'expression* Louis-Léopold Boilly (Tourcoing, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1823-28)



## Other Talks of the Series

November 13, 2007  
**Joanna Bourke** *Fear in a Gendered World. Women and Violence in Modernity*

April 4, 2008  
**Ruth Leys** *History of Emotions. Theory and Practice from Guilt to Shame*

May 27, 2009  
**Beate Söntgen** *Auftritte vor dem Bild. Die Leidenschaft der Kunstbetrachtung in der Moderne*

July 7, 2009  
**Barbara H. Rosenwein** *The History of the Emotions. Narratives Old and New*

December 12, 2009  
**Zoltán Kövecses** *The Conceptualization of Emotional Experience*

June 1, 2010  
**Thomas Brudholm** *The Anatomy of Hatred*

December 11, 2012  
**Heiko Christians / Thomas Macho** *Weihnachten – Ein Fest der Liebe?*

July 20, 2013  
**Hans Dieter Huber** *Edvard Munch – ein Maler zwischen Gefühl und Geschäft*

November 14, 2013  
**Fabienne Liptay** *Face to Face. Beobachtungen am Zuschauer in Abbas Kiarostamis Shirin*

November 24, 2015  
**Gisela Trommsdorff** *Lassen sich Emotionen zähmen? Selbst- und Emotionsregulation als Aspekte kultureller Sozialisation*

May 10, 2017  
**Barbara H. Rosenwein** *The Bodily Turn. New Directions in the History of Emotions*

June 22, 2021  
**Fritz Breithaupt** *Stille-Post-Spiele. Emotionen und das narrative Denken*

June 22, 2022  
**Felix Heidenreich** *Demokratie als Zumutung. Politik des Unangenehmen*



## Publications:

### Angst machen Koproduzenten eines Gefühls

A documentary by Christoph Rüter, Einstein Forum 2018 (1:31)  
With Harro Albrecht, Frank Biess, Heinz Bude, Jens Eder, Bettina Hützer, Lars Koch, Martin Schaad, Philipp Stoellger, Rüdiger Zill and Bernd Zywiets  
See: <http://www.einsteinforum.de/tagung/angstmachen/>

### Angst – Kon(junk)turen eines Gefühls

DVD by Peter Schnappauf, Einstein Forum 2007  
A short documentary of the conference (9 min.) as well as interviews with participants and short clips from the presentations.  
With Jan Assmann, Borwin Bandelow, Elisabeth Bronfen, Christa Ebert, Konstanty Gebert, Eva Horn, Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner, David Konstan, Joachim Radkau, Eviatar Zerubavel and Rüdiger Zill

### Peter Paul Kubitz, Gerlinde Waz and Rüdiger Zill (eds.): Zum Lachen!

Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen and Einstein Forum, Berlin 2009, 80 pages. ISBN-Nr.: 978-3-9812601-2-0  
Essays by Julian Hanich, Carey Harrison, Harald-Alexander Korp, Stefan Lukschy, Barbara Merziger, Willibald Ruch, Barbara Sichtermann, Marleen Stoessel and Rüdiger Zill

### Gestalten des Mitgefühls

Selected contributions in: *Berliner Debatte Initial*, I–II/2006, Berlin 2006, 76 pages. ISBN-Nr.: 978-3-9363824-4-0  
Essays by Annalise Acorn, Doris Bischof-Köhler, Reinhart Meyer-Kalkus, Adolf Muschg, David Shulman, Angela Spahr and Rüdiger Zill

For more detailed documentations of the programs and videos of selected presentations, click a picture on the right, or see <http://www.einsteinforum.de/programmreihen/passions-in-cultures/>

Scenes from *Passions in Cultures* conferences





**Reviews:** At the Einstein Forum's international conference *Passion(s) in Culture(s)*, Mieke Bal presented lucidly on art's so-called language of affect, a concept that theories of literature and art are taking ever more seriously these days. In exploring the affects, Bal has tried "to understand art beyond the separations of mind and body or knowledge and feeling." To achieve this understanding, Bal thinks we must not regard affect as a primitive coping strategy, but as a praxis of attention, a kind of affective participation. Babette Kaiser Kern, *Potsdamer Neueste Nachrichten*, December 15, 2003

Those who tout the complexity of the emotions must not in return attempt to simplify art. The Harvard literary scholar Stephen Greenblatt brilliantly illustrated this point by telling a seemingly ordinary story. William Shakespeare's only son, Hamnet, died in 1596 at the age of 11. Shortly after, Shakespeare wrote some of his most light-hearted comedies. Five years later, however, he began a period of activity that led to *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *King Lear*. In places where scholars have previously failed to find expressions of mourning Greenblatt discovers radical changes in Shakespeare's representation of emotion: 600 new words appear; plot motives decrease drastically; opaque, multifaceted passions dominate the stage; Hamlet contemplates suicide; and Lear sinks into a storm of dark and violent emotions—"Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life, / And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more, / Never, never, never, never, never!" Some members of his audience were moved to tears: Greenblatt's Shakespeare electrified heart and mind. Natascha Freundel, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, December 16, 2003

Compassion can be aroused by the mass media (or a tragic play, but that was a while back). Like the other emotions, however, it can't be called up at will. It's thus doubtful whether, as Schopenhauer believed, the edifice of ethics can be built on its foundations. On the other hand, compassion, sympathy, and empathy are currently sought-after—some might say, lionized—abilities, believed to facilitate cultural understanding in our globalized times. Does compassion belong to the emotional signature of our age? Rüdiger Zill, who was responsible for the planning and conception of the Potsdam conference, put it upon himself to decode this signature. If compassion is indeed a sign of our times, the skepticism we show toward it is no less so.

Uwe Justus Wenzel, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, December 15, 2004

The writer Elke Schmitter had the first word at the conference *Evil Eyes*, held at the Einstein Forum in Potsdam, and used it to describe her early experiences with that consuming and demonized affect, envy. Over the next two days, the invited speakers presented careful and precise analysis, demonstrating once again why the Einstein Forum enjoys such a fine reputation as an intellectual think tank, despite its small size. The Einstein Forum regularly invites thinkers from a multitude of disciplines and regions, who are then asked to tell about their discoveries—and leave behind academic formalities. *Evil Eyes* was no different. Its focus was on what the literary theorist Aleida Assmann called the "elements of a psychosocial theory of envy." What is envy, where does it come from, when does it occur, what are its consequences? Elke Schmitter's opening confession contained the leitmotifs for the talks that followed: comparative evaluation, perception of what one doesn't have, anguish, taboo feelings, and the splitting of the subject. Dorion Weickmann, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, February 10, 2006

Those who harbor envy fall prey to their own emotions. They do neither themselves, nor the ones they envy, any good. The phenomena of "evil eyes" made its appearance early in art history: Giotto's 1305 *Invidia* shows a horrifyingly empty gaze directed maliciously toward its object. In a 1980s field study carried out in Naples, the Tübingen cultural anthropologist Thomas Hauschild investigated the strategies people have employed to ward off those evil glances. During a talk at the Potsdam Einstein Forum's top-class conference *Evil Eyes. On Envy*, Hauschild discussed some of his findings. To avoid envious glances, children from wealthy families have been dressed in rags and beautiful faces have been marred with scratches. The tinted windows of limousines and luxury cars, one might add, serve a similar purpose. Their shiny surface reflects the gazes of others, and thus prevents them from reaching the owner within. Guido Kalberer, *Tages-Anzeiger*, February 7, 2006



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