Annual CrossArea conference 28 and 29 November 2024

Practices of Distribution and the Reconfiguration of Culture

Normative Orders Building, Campus Westend at Goethe University

Max-Horkheimer-Straße 2, 60323 Frankfurt am Main

The event will be in hybrid format.

Zoom-Link for the entire event:

https://uni-frankfurt.zoom-x.de/j/62744443247

Meeting ID: 627 4444 3247
Passcode: 556110

Technical assistance: Bowe@tfm.uni-frankfurt.de, Schoeneberg@tfm.uni-frankfurt.de

Program

Thursday, November 28, 2024

12:00 – 13:00	**Light Lunch, registration**

13:00 – 13:30   **Welcome Addresses**:
- Vinzenz Hediger, Project leader CEDITRAA
- Hans Peter Hahn, Director of ZIAF
- Doris Löhr – Chairperson of CrossArea

13:30 – 14.30   **Keynote Talk 1** | Paul MacDonald (King's College London): Media Industries, Cities and the Place of Flows
Chair: Vinzenz Hediger

14:30-15:00   **Coffee Break**

15:00 – 17:30   **Early Career Researcher Panel**
- Neha Bhatia (Antwerpen): Disruptions and Distribution of Indian Cinemas Beyond Bollywood.
- Patricia Lenz (Zürich) Remnants of the Empire: Addressing Asia-Pacific War Memories in Contemporary Japanese Art from 1980 to Today
- Katharina S. Rode-Kaya (Heidelberg): Dead-end Innovation—Akita Ranga School Painting and Edo Fashion
- Maj Hartmann (KU Leuven): Shaping Children's Privacy Rights in Japan: Historical Roots and Global Influences in Data Protection Policies
- Natalia Intja (Rundu, Namibia): Exploring the Role of TikTok and Facebook in Perpetuating Namibian Culture Among the Youth

Chair: Tom Simmert (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)

17:30 – 18:30   **Reception & Book Launch: "Dis/Ordering Distribution":** **Normative Orders Lounge**

18:00 – 19:15   **CrossArea Members' internal General Meeting**

19:30   **Dinner** at Demera Restaurant (http://demera.b2lfilms.de/)

09:00 – 10:00	**Round Table 1: Infrastructures: The In/Visible Hand of Distribution** Distribution relies on infrastructures, which in turn shape the flows of goods, people and ideas. In the field of cultural industries, infrastructures now comprise digital alongside physical infrastructures. How can we understand the role of platforms, portals and other digital infrastructures in shaping the circulation of cultural goods? Marc Boeckler (Goethe University), Nathan Taylor (Goethe University), Bakar Abdul-Rashid Jeduah (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz) Chair: Matthias Krings (Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz)
10:00 – 11:00	**Keynote Talk 2 (online):** Vili Lehdonvirta (Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford): Where in the world is AI? The political geography of digital infrastructures Chair: Cornelia Storz (Goethe University)
11:00 – 11:30	**Coffee Break**
11:30 – 12:00	Project report Kathleen Schlütter, Leipzig University: The Production of World Knowledge Transformed (Part of National Research Data Infrastructure for the Historically Oriented Humanities (NFDI4Memory) https://4memory.de/
12:00 – 13:30	**Round Table 2: Formats and Institutions: Restricting and Facilitating Distribution** The distribution of cultural goods requires the creation and standardization of formats like the 8mm, 16mm or 35mm film or the mpeg and jpeg files. How do formats shape distribution and production in the field of culture? Global cultural flows and the circulation of goods and ideas require institutional and regulatory framework which enable, shape and stabilize practices of distribution. How can we understand the nexus of norms, institutions, formats and infrastructures in the distribution of cultural goods? Oliver Hinz (Goethe University), Olga Moskatova (University of Art and Design, Offenbach), Nico Nassenstein (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz), Alexandra Schneider (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz) Chair: Vinzenz Hediger (Goethe University) and Cornelia Storz (Goethe University)
13.30 – 14:30	**Closing remarks. Farewell Lunch**

Abstracts in chronological order:

Keynote 1:

Paul McDonald (London): Media Industries, Cities and the Place of Flows
Media research employs the language of 'flow' and 'streaming' to productively communicate how media transcend territorial borders. This liquid terminology implies a vision of media 'floating' free from attachments to place. When analysing media industries, however, we're immediately confronted with how these industries forever remain anchored in places. From an industry perspective, flows don't eliminate place but rather are the product of places. Although media industries take form in many locations, historically, it has been an enduring tendency for these industries to congregate and concentrate in cities. Naming certain media industry formations 'Hollywood' and 'Bollywood' presents just the most obvious expressions of a more generalized linkage between media industries and cities. Contrary to assertions that globalization or digitalization disembed media from attachments to place, media industries remain firmly emplaced in urban centres. Accounts of 'media clusters', 'media capitals', 'global media cities', 'global production networks' and 'film-induced tourism' variously address relationships between media industries and the city. Critically reflecting on conceptual and methodological blind spots in this work, however, this presentation theorizes cities as urban media industries ecosystems. Whereas existing studies tend to generalise the city/media relationship by concentrating on single industries, invariably cities are home to multiple co-located industries in the media sector operating by differing logics. Analysing of media industries as urban ecosystems therefore enriches understanding of cities as the place of flows.

Paul McDonald is Professor of Media Industries at King's College London. His most recent publications include editing The Routledge Companion to Media Industries (Routledge 2022) and co-editing Digital Media Distribution: Portals, Platforms, Pipelines (New York University Press 2021). Paul is a founding member of the Editorial Collective for the open access journal Media Industries.

Early Career Researcher Panel:

Neha Bhatia (Antwerp): Disruption and Distribution of Indian Cinemas Beyond Bollywood
The most challenging, dynamic and marginalized area of research in India's film cultures and media industries at large–is online distribution. Many Indian art-house/independent films particularly make the rounds of film festivals, but they fail to get a wider release. The subscription-video-on-demand (SVOD) distribution services, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video, initially disrupted this trend and distributed Indian indies on their platforms. Over the past decade, the discourse on the disruptive potential of online distribution, however, has been under scrutiny.

Combining insights from media industry studies, film trade reports, press articles, and personal interviews with Indian producers, this paper challenges the "either/or" narratives of streaming culture and examines the potential of SVOD services in supporting Indian cinemas beyond Bollywood. Streaming has undeniably transformed the film industry culture, providing support to regional/local content, but the anticipated support for independent film culture has not fully materialized. The focus of global SVOD services has increasingly shifted to commercially viable, star-oriented, popular creators/actor-driven content aligning with India's political environment. As a result, this paper argues that international film festivals will continue to remain relevant in the production, exhibition and distribution of Indian independent and art-house cinema in the age of streaming era.

Neha Bhatia is a Postdoc Fellow supported by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Co Fund Program in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Antwerp. Her postdoc research project, broadly speaking, examines the global circulation of contemporary Indian cinemas beyond Bollywood, particularly in the context of ongoing digital transformations in the film and media industries.

Patricia Lenz (Zürich): Remnants of the Empire: Addressing Asia-Pacific War Memories in Contemporary Japanese Art from 1980 to Today
In 2019, the exhibition "After 'Freedom of Expression?'" opened as part of the international art festival The Aichi Triennale in Nagoya, Japan. The show was conceived to encourage public discussion on the state of freedom of expression in Japan by displaying artworks on contested topics. Within three days of its opening, the festival's management office received a flood of complaints by phone and e-mail from right-wing groups and after an arson threat, the organisers closed the show due to security reasons. This cancellation incident is a recent example of the importance of contemporary art for the discussion of Asia-Pacific War memories in Japan. My dissertation examines how Japanese artists have played an active and important role in addressing war-related topics since the 1980s. Based on the concept of postmemory as appropriated memory, I carried out three focused examinations to show the various ways in which artists have tried to make sense of Japan's wartime past from a contemporary perspective. The chronological structure of my chapters demonstrates common concerns among artists born in a certain time period as well as changes in the approach over time, so that my thesis also provides the larger outlines of Japanese art history of the last four decades.

Patricia Lenz is a PhD candidate in Art History at the University of Zurich. Her thesis examines Asia-Pacific War memories in contemporary Japanese art since the 1980s, focusing on artists from the first postwar generation and younger. Her research explores artists such as Ōura Nobuyuki, Aida Makoto, Dokuyama Bontarō and Fujii Hikaru.

Katharina Rode-Kaya (Heidelberg): "Dead-end Innovation—Akita Ranga School Painting and Edo Fashion".

The style of Akita Ranga painting is unique to a very small group of men who engaged in painting, and treated as outstanding in Japanese art history. It is the result of artistically minded feudal lords taking an exclusive interest in imported knowledge that travelled from Persia, European countries, Africa, and South Asia to Japan via the traders on Dutch and Chinese ships, usually in the form of books. Books are tangible, traceable items, which enabled art historians to connect specific sketches to books that then must have this particular group, like the Het Groot Schilderboek by Gérard de Lairesse (1640-1711), an established international bestseller. Akita Ranga painting was special, because it only existed in one generation, its core period spanning all but twelve years. Amalgamating Chinese subjects with European techniques, it connected to a fashion for botany. The style's end still being treated as a mysterious, this study argues that several socio-historical factors were responsible for its short life: Exclusivity of taste, access to materials, and social constrains had the painters work outside of any usual artisanal framework. Rather than wondering why it ended so abruptly, it's discontinuity should be acknowledged as the only logical outcome.

Katharina Rode-Kaya is Assistant Professor for Japanese Art History at the Institute of East Asian Art History at Heidelberg University. Aside from her main focus—the modernization of Japanese painting at the end of the nineteenth century on the example of Kawabata Gyokushō—she looks into different preceding visual fashions in the eighteenth century that prepared and abetted the shift into realism.

Maj Hartmann (Leuven): "Shaping Children's Privacy Rights in Japan: Historical Roots and Global Influences in Data Protection Policies"

In June 2024, Japan's Personal Information Protection Commission reviewed Japan's 2003 Act on the Protection of Personal Information and recommended amending regulations on children's privacy rights. This recommendation cites international frameworks, like the 2021 amended UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and highlights the need for Japan to enhance protections for children's data privacy. The Interim Report suggests that so far, children's privacy rights have not been considered relevant in Japan, and that foreign examples and international guidelines might cause a shift when it comes to the protection of children's data privacy. This project examines the historical evolution of Japan's data protection, arguing that Japan's focus on the regulation of children's privacy has its roots in the domestic privacy protection movement that began in 1972. Drawing on personal papers, governmental reports, and media sources, this project contends that Japan's early privacy advocates, including school teachers and housewives, were driven not by foreign pressure but by the growing bureaucratization and computerization of the state and large corporations. Following the historical path Japan has taken, I ultimately argue that the resurgence of children's privacy rights today is driven by more complex and nuanced factors beyond the apparent influence of foreign guidance and pressure.

Maj Hartmann is a postdoctoral researcher in political history in the Japanese Studies Research Group of the KU Leuven Faculty of Arts.

Natalia Intja (Rundu/Windhoek): Exploring the Role of TikTok and Facebook in Perpetuating Namibian Culture among the Youth

This study aims to compare the role of TikTok and Facebook in perpetuating Namibian culture among the youth. This is a quantitative study embedded in positivist paradigm. The theoretical framework of the study was based on the Uses and Gratifications approach, which was used to interpret the results. The sample consists of 250 final year Namibian language students from the Faculty of Education and Human Sciences at the University of Namibia's Rundu Campus. The data collection method used is a questionnaire. The findings indicate that while TikTok and Facebook plays a pivotal role in perpetuating Namibian culture amongst the youth, TikTok appears to be the most preferred social media platform compared to Facebook due to its flexibility in short video creations and it plays a major role in preserving the multi-cultural diversities in Namibia. The study underscores the need for social media host companies to improve internet security by installing firewalls that prevent hacking of data and customer accounts. Further, the researcher recommends that law makers should ensure that the regulation of social media does not infringe on the citizens' rights to freedom of expression.

Natalia Intja is a Namibian and a language lecturer since 2016 to date at the University of Namibia in the Department of Intermediate and Vocational Education in the school of Education and Human Sciences. She is also a final year candidate of the Philippines Christian University in Manila pursuing a PhD in Curriculum Design, Development and Supervision.

Keynote 2:

Vili Lehdonvirta (Aalto/Oxford): Where in the world is AI? The political geography of digital infrastructures

Today's societies are highly reliant on digital services, but the nature of our digital services is undergoing a silent revolution: data storage and computation are moving "into the cloud". This means that instead of data being stored and processed on users' own devices and on servers situated at organizations' own premises, storage and processing is concentrating into ever larger "hyperscale" data centres operated by cloud computing providers. This concentration generates significant economies of scale, but it also means that critical services are increasingly reliant on a fairly small number of firms and physical locations around the world. This is especially the case for new AI services requiring extraordinary amounts of computing power. Where is AI? Where is the cloud? Who controls the data centres that are their physical manifestations? And what implications does this have for geopolitical relations of power and dependence? In this talk professor Vili Lehdonvirta will present emerging findings from pilot studies of his new ERC Advanced Grant "The Geopolitics of Cloud Computing", starting in January 2025.

Vili Lehdonvirta is Professor of Technology Policy at Aalto University, Finland, and Professor of Economic Sociology at University of Oxford, UK. He is the author of Cloud Empires (MIT Press).

CrossArea e.V. was founded in Leipzig in 2014 as a result of an initiative for stronger and long-term cooperation between BMBF-funded area studies centers and networks with corresponding university and non-university institutes. This association sees itself as an umbrella organization of research institutions, projects and undertakings active in Area Studies (https://www.crossarea.org/). Together with the Forum Transregionale Studien (Berlin) and the Max Weber Stiftung (Bonn), it curates the discussion platform Trafo https://trafo.hypotheses.org/, on which news, contributions and event announcements as well as research results from the field of transregional studies are published. The goal of CrossArea e.V. is to give a voice to the common concerns of Area Studies, which are organized in such diverse ways, in order to expand the radius of action and intensify networking.

Organizers of the Conference 2024: The Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Afrikastudien (ZIAF), the Interdisziplinäre Zentrum für Ostasienstudien (IZO), the research initiative "ConTrust – Trust and Conflict. Political Life under Conditions of Uncertainty" at the research center Normative Orders, and "CEDITRAA – Cultural Entrepreneurship and Digital Transformation in Africa and Asia (www.ceditraa.net)" at Goethe University Frankfurt together with the Georg Foster Zentrum at Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz are hosting the 2024 CrossArea conference in Frankfurt titled "Practices of Distribution and the Reconfiguration of Culture". Organizers: Vinzenz Hediger, Matthias Krings, Stefan Schmid, Cornelia Storz.

Rationale: For most of the post-WW II period the debate about culture centered on notions of hegemony and "cultural imperialism". The focus was on the global dominance of the United States and what the Frankfurt School described as the "culture industries", commercial entities producing commodified forms of culture and experience at the expense and exclusion of regional and local varieties.

But more recently, the emergence of digital technologies appears to have introduced a new dynamic into the organization of cultural spaces and flows, to the point where some observers announce the dawn of a "New World Order of Cultural Production". However, cultural production and culture more broadly speaking are ultimately shaped by distribution, i.e. the pathways through which cultural expressions reach audiences (and through which audiences respond to, and thus shape cultural production in turn). Any analysis of a recalibration of cultural spaces and flows will have to start with an analysis of the infrastructures, formats and institutions of distribution.

Taking the paradigmatic status of cultural production and cultural flows for the contemporary transformations in area studies as its starting point, the CrossArea symposium 2024 discusses the challenges of the study of practices of distribution in an interdisciplinary perspective.

Practical Information

The conference takes place at the **Normative Orders building**, Nr. 20 on the following map and marked with a red circle.

How to get the venue with public transport:

The nearest stops (*Holzhausenstraße* and *Miquel-/Adickesallee*) are about a five-minute walk. In fact **Miquel-Adickesallee** is the shortest distance to the building !

Underground (U) and suburban (S) rail

- **Frankfurt Central Station: S1 – S9 train** via *Taunusanlage -> Hauptwache ->* **U1, U2, U3, U8 train** via *Eschenheimer Tor and Grüneburgweg -> Holzhausenstraße* or *Miquel-/Adickesallee*

- **Frankfurt Airport: S8, S9 train** via *Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof* and *Taunusanlage -> Hauptwache ->* **U1, U2, U3, U8 train** via *Eschenheimer Tor* and *Grüneburgweg ->Holzhausenstraße* or *Miquel-/Adickesallee*

By bus

- **No. 36 bus** to *Uni Campus Westend* (IG Farben Building) from *Westbahnhof* (via Bockenheim Campus) or *Sachsenhausen Hainer Weg*
- **No. 64 bus** to *Bremer Platz* (IG Farben Building) or *Bremer Straße* (Gisèle-Freund-Platz) from *Hauptbahnhof Südseite* in the direction of Ginnheim
- **No. 75 bus** from *Bockenheimer Warte* to *Max-Horkheimer-Straße* (Seminar Building, PEG Building, ExNO)
- **No. 32 bus** from *Westbahnhof* or *Ostbahnhof* to *Miquel-/Hansaallee* (Seminar Pavilion)

Taxi/Uber

- Use the address ″**Max-Horkheimer-Straße 2**″

Map of the venue

WESTEND CAMPUS
(in alphabetical order)

Auditorium Complex (HZ)	13
Canteen (Casino)	7
Canteen Annexe (Casino Annexe)	8
Childcare Centre (Kita)	5
DIPF	Leibniz Institute for Research and Information	23
Equal Opportunities Office	26
Goethe Card	18
Goethe Welcome Centre (GWC)	6
Hall of Residence (church-run) (ESG/KHG)	15
Haus der Stille (Multi-Faith and Intercultural Centre)	16
House of Finance (HoF) Leibniz Institute for Financial Research SAFE	9
House of Labour	25
IG Farben Building	1
IG Farben Building, Side Building (NG)	3
International Study Centre (ISZ)	17
Landesbetrieb Bau und Immobilien Hessen (LHIB Container)	22
Languages, Cultures & Arts	26
Law, Economics & Business Administration (RuW)	14
Max Planck Institute for Legal History and Legal Theory (MPI)	11
Norbert Wollheim Memorial	2
Normative Orders	Research Centre of Goethe University (FNO)	20
President's Office & Central Administration (PA)	10
Psychology, Educational Sciences, Social Sciences (PEG)	12
Seminar Building	19
Seminar Pavilion	21
Students' Union Campus Office (AStA)	6

P Parking after prior notice for authorised persons only	**🍴** Canteen/Restaurants
▶ Entrance	--- Barrier	**○** Cafeteria
≡ Stairs	**○** Library