

Call for Papers

**International Conference
Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg
19–21 March 2020**

Imagining Migration, Knowing Migration: Intermedial Perspectives

In view of the current socio-political and economic prevalence of global migration movements, modes of representation, medialisation, and interpretation regarding individual and collective migration have been discussed controversially. Whether and how the experience of flight, exile, or everyday migratory realities – often determined by traumatic and violent contexts – can be conceptualised is as contested as the question of what influence such representations have on the formation and distribution of knowledge about migration. Artistic approaches to phenomena of migration – within literary texts, visual and experimental art, or theatre and film – are usually considered within the conceptual parameters of articulation, reconstruction, and critical reflection. Less common, however, are studies that address the interplay between artistic *imaginings* of migration and specific migration *knowledges*.

What assumptions are being held about the forms, causes, and effects of global migration? Is knowledge about migrants and migration merely coded or rather produced? How can we grasp the relationship between processes of recording and acts of creating migration knowledges? Which role do the different media and aesthetic practices play in the regime of situated migration knowledges? Despite the breadth of studies from various disciplines within the humanities, the complex interplay between artistic approaches to migration, their specific medial contexts, and their epistemic foundations have not yet been sufficiently explored. It remains unclear how artistic-imaginative portrayals of migrants and migration and the construction of knowledge about migration interact and how imagination relates to the lived realities of migration more generally.

The international and interdisciplinary conference *Imagining Migration, Knowing Migration: Intermedial Perspectives* focuses on this gap and thus offers an important contribution to the investigation of the forms and effects of the migration imaginary and its cultural representations. It will feature keynote lectures by **Professor Mieke Bal** and **Professor Ananya Jahanara Kabir** and a reading/performance with **Olumide Popoola**. For more info, see our website at <https://imaginingmigration2020.wordpress.com/>.

We invite contributions from the fields of art history, literary and cultural studies, film, performance and theatre studies, and media studies to address the following or related questions:

- Which kinds of aesthetic, imaginative approaches to migration can be distinguished, and what are their epistemological causes and effects?
- What role does the medium of representation (text, image, film, stage, etc.) play and which possibilities as well as restrictions are linked to these different representational processes?

- What is the significance of language and non-linguistic expression within different medial representations of migration?
- How can we approach the relation between a specific medium and how certain spaces ('home', 'exile', 'here', 'there'), memories, and experiences (taking refuge, cultural conflict, marginalisation, xenophobia) are imaginatively constructed? Which figurations of migration ('the refugee', 'the asylum seeker', 'the migrant worker') are linked to a specific medium?
- Which procedures, such as intervention, reflection, and subversion are connected to the imagination and artistic representation of migration?
- To what extent do knowledges about migration come to matter within artistic-imaginative forms of representation of migration, and how can we conceptualise the influence these forms of representation exert on processes of knowledge formation?
- Which forms of knowledge (popular vs. scientific, inductive vs. deductive, empirical vs. prejudiced, etc.) can be differentiated with respect to aesthetic and rhetorical engagement with migration?
- How can we theoretically and methodologically approach the relationship between imaginations and knowledges of migration within their respective historical and cultural contexts? How can we address related issues of ideological and socio-cultural categories such as 'gender', 'race', 'class', 'age', 'ability', and 'political and religious affiliation'?

Please submit abstracts of no more than 300 words and a short biographical note to **imagining.migration.2020@gmail.com**. The costs and expenses for invited speakers (travel, accommodation, meals) are expected to be covered entirely.

Closing date: Saturday 20th April 2019.

Conference Organisers:

Jennifer Leetsch (JMU Würzburg), Frederike Middelhoff (University of Hamburg), Miriam Wallraven (JMU Würzburg)