

12. Oktober 2023, 17:15 Uhr

9. Tag der Junior Fellows

Forschungspool WBKolleg, Muesmattstrasse 45

Dr. Meike von Brescius

Bourgeois Interiors as Colonial Contact Zones

Respondenz: **Prof. Dr. Joachim Eibach**

Dr. Zuzanna Sarnecka

Artistic Failures in Renaissance Ceramic Workshops

Respondenz: **Prof. Dr. Christian Rohr**



Interdisziplinäres Forschungs- und Nachwuchsnetzwerk IFN

Das Interdisziplinäre Forschungs- und Nachwuchsnetzwerk (IFN) am Walter Benjamin Kolleg ist eine integrierte Einrichtung zur Nachwuchsförderung auf den Stufen Doktoratsausbildung und Postdoc-Förderung. Dem IFN ist die Graduate School of the Arts and Humanities mit den vier interdisziplinären Doktoratsprogrammen Global Studies, Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies, Studies of Language and Society und Studies in the Arts sowie ein Fellowship-Programm für Junior Fellows (Postdocs) zugeordnet. Im Herbstsemester 2023 bietet das IFN zwei vielversprechenden Forschenden eine akademische Heimat während der Übergangsphase nach dem Doktoratsabschluss. Ziel ist die Erarbeitung eines Antrages für den nächsten Karriereschritt oder die nächste Qualifizierungsarbeit.

Prof. Dr. Serena Tolino, Direktorin GSAH/IFN
serena.tolino@unibe.ch

Dr. Mike Toggweiler, Koordinator IFN
michael.toggweiler@unibe.ch



Programm

17:15 Uhr Begrüssung und Einführung

Prof. Dr. Serena Tolino, Direktorin GSAH/IFN

17:30 Uhr Unsere neuen Junior Fellows am IFN

Präsentationen mit Respondenz und Diskussion

Dr. Meike von Brescius

Bourgeois Interiors as Colonial Contact Zones

Respondenz: [Prof. Dr. Joachim Eibach](#)

Dr. Zuzanna Sarnecka

Artistic Failures in Renaissance Ceramic Workshops

Respondenz: [Prof. Dr. Christian Rohr](#)

19:00 Apéro

Projekte

Meike von Brescius

Travel in place/travel afar: bourgeois interiors and the material culture of mobility in the long nineteenth century

The project entitled "Travel in place/travel afar: bourgeois interiors and the material culture of mobility in the long nineteenth century" is devoted to the interdisciplinary interest in Europe and its interconnections with the rest of the world. It takes a close look at the European bourgeoisie (including colonial elites) and examines the connections between bourgeois self-assurance and the representation/presentation of the "other" in private and public spaces. The study argues that the furnishing of living and exhibition spaces in nineteenth-century Europe were both crucially shaped by experiences of overseas travel, colonial encounters, and material accumulation. The work analyzes the material cultures of colonial expansion and European domesticity in a consistently dialogical manner. The interplays and repercussions studied in the work allow to capture many – at first sight – contradictory figures of thought in the bourgeois appearance and material lifeworld. The rejection of nomadic societies and ways of life, to name one example, experienced its inversion in the fashion for tent rooms, tent beds, and draperies inside middle class homes. The mobile inventory of colonial campaigns, explorations, and big-game hunts (from folding furniture, weapons, and animal skins) transformed salons and exhibition halls even in countries that did not have colonies themselves. The interest in supposedly "primitive" means of transportation (such as beasts of burden, sedan chairs,

canoes, sledges, etc.) increased parallel to the nineteenth-century technological revolutions in transportation, including railroads and steamships, and found expression not only in museums, but also left countless traces in private interiors, as well as in travelogues and aesthetic treatises published at the time. Conceptually, I work with Mary L. Pratt's notion of the "contact zone" and draw on a broad interdisciplinary literature on the perception of things in the nineteenth century, thus working at the intersection of the fields of material culture studies, cultural history of colonialism, social history and the history of world exhibitions and museums.

Meike von Brescius

After studying cultural studies, sociology and global history in Frankfurt (Oder), Florence and at the University of Warwick (UK), Meike von Brescius completed her doctorate at Warwick in 2016 as part of an ERC-funded project with a dissertation on the European maritime trade with China in the 18th century. The thesis was published in substantially revised book form in 2022 by Brill under the title: *Private Enterprise and the China Trade: Merchants and Markets in Europe, 1700–1750*. From 2017 to 2018, Meike von Brescius was a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Konstanz in the field of Global Economic History and subsequently took up an assistant position (ongoing) in the Department of History at the University of Basel, where she teaches a broad set of courses in cultural and economic history with particular interest in material culture. Her research spans the early modern and modern eras. As a visiting researcher, she benefited from extended research stays at the European University Institute (2011–2012) and the History Department of the University of Cambridge (UK) between 2012–2014.



Meike von Brescius

Zuzanna Sarnecka

Artistic Failures in Renaissance Ceramic Workshops (AFIRE)

The history of Renaissance art is a story of triumph, of technical problems solved, perhaps laboriously, but successfully. But could Renaissance artists ever afford to fail? The proposed project will analyze ceramic workshops that operated in different parts of Central Europe during the sixteenth century to integrate failed experiments and non-linear processes of artmaking into the history of European art. The making of tin-glazed earthenware was a lengthy and complex process and sixteenth-century ceramicists remained uncertain about the outcome of their efforts, as they had to rely on many variables, including the quality of clay bodies, pigments and glazes, and on the skill of professional kiln masters responsible for firing of their ware. The chronological span corresponds with the increased experimentation and attempts at establishing new local tradition of production of high-quality ceramics in Central Europe. The project aims to conduct a pioneering systematic analysis of ceramics combining the traditional methods of art history and the scientific investigations using the non-destructive and non-invasive technique of X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectroscopy.

The project seeks to create a synthetic overview of the types of technical mishaps across artistic workshops in geographically varied areas, as distant from each other as Lesser Poland and Istria, characterised by different geological conditions, political systems, economic potential, and religious contexts. In order to determine technical failures, the

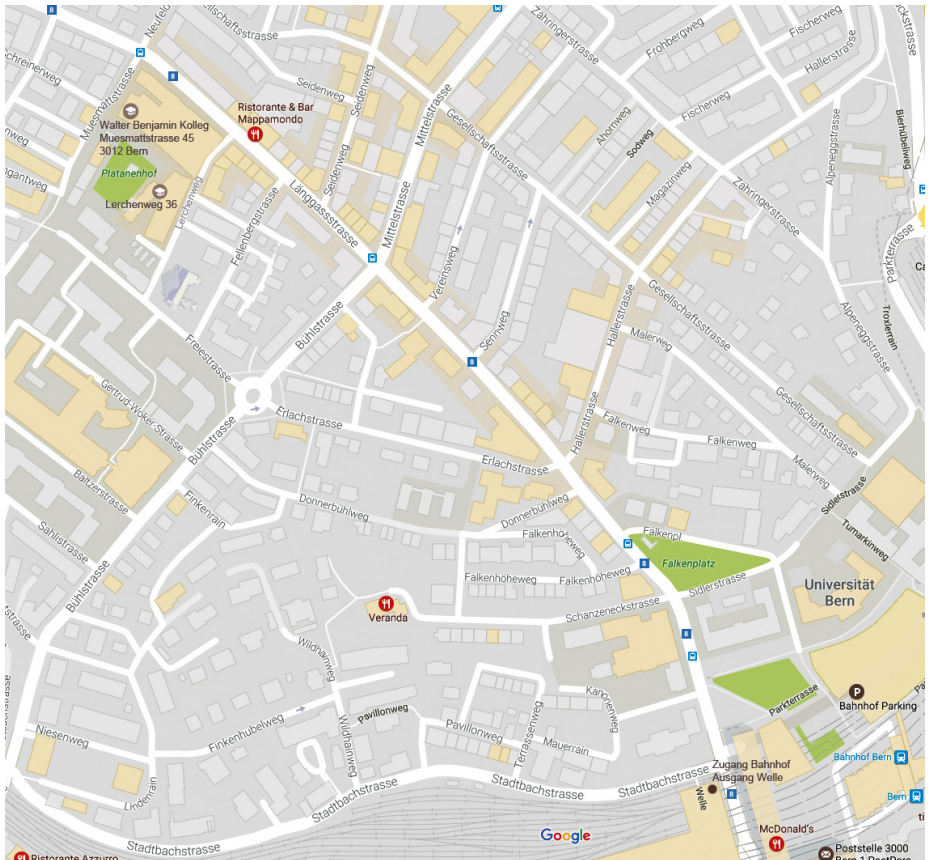
project will compare the information from written sources and physical examination of the objects to test whether more creative and radical solutions were introduced when artists remained assured that the financing depended to a limited extent on the success of their ventures. The project's ambition is to challenge the selective visibility and insistence on clearly identifiable, singular creator, and instead highlight artistic output of specific communities, often executed collaboratively.

Zuzanna Sarnecka

Zuzanna Sarnecka specialises in the material and visual culture of early modern Europe, with a particular focus on technical aspects of artmaking. After completing her first degree in the Department of History of Art at the University of Cambridge, she continued her studies at the Courtauld Institute of Art where she wrote her dissertation on fifteenth-century Umbrian wooden crucifixes. In 2013 she joined the ERC funded synergy project *Domestic Devotions: The Place of Piety in the Italian Renaissance Home 1400-1600* (University of Cambridge) to pursue her interests in the relationship between devotion and craftsmanship in the late fifteenth-century Italy. She actively participated in the planning of the 'Madonnas and Miracles' exhibition held in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK in 2017. Since 2014 she was a co-investigator in the project funded by the National Science Centre titled: *The Agency of Things New Perspectives on European Art of the Fourteenth-Sixteenth Centuries*. She has led a four-year research project (2019-2023) funded by the National Science Centre, Poland (OPUS 15 scheme) on the devotional terracotta sculpture in the Papal States 1450-1550. At Warsaw she initiated an interdisciplinary project titled *The Price of Failure: The Non-Destructive Analysis with XRF of Italian Renaissance Tin-Glazed Earthenware in Polish Collections* (September 2021-June 2023). In collaboration with scientists from institutions in Poland and abroad, she analysed the characteristics of glazes and the technical problems present in tin-glazed earthenware. She has published on the Della Robbia family and maiolica sculptures by anonymous artists in edited volumes by Brill, Routledge and Viella, and has articles in *Word & Image*, *Artibus et Historiae*, *Faenza* and *Religions*. Her first book titled *The Allure of Glazed Terracotta in Renaissance Italy* (Brepols-Harvey Miller Publishers 2021) focuses on the relationship between devotion and craftsmanship in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italian art.



Zuzanna Sarnecka



Walter Benjamin Kolleg

Interdisziplinäres Forschungs- und Nachwuchsnetzwerk

Universität Bern
Walter Benjamin Kolleg
Muesmattstrasse 45
CH-3012 Bern