

Summer School 2008

Moving Images & Media Rituals

Representing Rituals in New Media Technologies

28 July – 8 August 2008 * Heidelberg / Germany



Organised by the Ritual and Media Working Group
Collaborative Research Centre SFB 619 "Ritual Dynamics"
University of Heidelberg

Register by: 29 February 2008

RUPRECHT-KARLS-
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HEIDELBERG



DFG

 **SFB 619**
Ritualdynamik

Introduction

The SFB 619 Summer School course "Moving Images and Media Rituals" invites participants to engage with a variety of experts in the analysis of film, video and hypermedia. Participants will explore questions about the making and the representation of rituals in and through media technologies with film and video makers. During the Summer School participants will learn to reflect critically upon the creation and shaping of rituals in new media. They will learn the basics of film analysis, the backgrounds of film making and the making and analysis of rituals in the internet. International teachers will engage students in interdisciplinary learning of theories and practical methods for handling ritual and media. After this Summer School participants will be able to examine rituals of the worlds of film and hypermedia and learn to deal with the special requirements needed to study ritual through and in moving images. The Summer School particularly addresses students and scholars from the fields of Religious Studies, Cultural and Media Studies or Cultural Anthropology.

The Collaborative Research Centre SFB 619 "Ritual Dynamics" was set up in 2002 as an interdisciplinary centre to research the dynamics of ritual. It is the world's largest research centre dedicated solely to investigating this topic, with over 90 scientists and researchers working on nineteen subprojects. Our focus is on the (re)invention of rituals, as well as the transfer and change of rituals. New avenues have been opened up, such as research into intercultural ritual transfer, ritual agency, and the connections between rituals and new media. www.ritualdynamik.uni-hd.de

Program

Section I - Moving Images

Day 1

Ritual, Media, and Conflict in the Santa Fé Fiesta

Ron Grimes (Waterloo/Nijmegen) and Barry Stephenson (Waterloo)

Key questions to be addressed: How is shooting rituals different from video-documenting other human activities? How useful or troublesome is the camera in studying micro-units of ritual? How theory-driven can, or should, a film be? In what ways does ritual incite conflict? What are the difficulties in trying to "perform" peace?

Day 2

The Visual Toolbox

Ute Hüsken (Oslo) and Erik de Maaker (Leiden)

This session explores the role that video and photography can play in research on visually observable phenomena. How can visual field notes be used during the research process and for the presentation of research findings?

Day 3

Bel Fruit and Loin Cloth: The Initiation of Boys and Girls in Bhaktapur, Nepal (2007)

Niels Gutschow and Axel Michaels (Heidelberg), Maria Hemmleb and Christian Bau (Hamburg)

This day offers a thick description of the conceptualisation

and production of a documentary film by its producers. A presentation of the scope of producing films as documentations of rituals is followed by a film screening and exploration of the ritual site, Bhaktapur, and its people.

Day 4

Religion, Ritual and Experience: How to Film the Unseen

Marcus Banks (Oxford)

While the video camera is very good at capturing what a ritual event looks like, it is unclear how - if at all - the camera can capture "the look" of a ritual, that is, what marks ritual activity as a particular class of human social action. Further, does the camera offer any profound access to people's experience that does not rely on language?

Day 5

Challenging Video as Method to Document/Represent Ritual

Sarah Pink (Loughborough)

Serious anthropological research about rituals and performances relies on the methods and media used for the investigation in relation to local media practices. Diverse forms of (audio) visual work, including photography, audio-recorded interviews and hypermedia, are discussed and the roles of various media explored.

Details of Registration

The number of participants is limited to 16. **Applications to attend will be accepted until 29 February 2008.**

Attendance fee: 370 Euro. Please send a short CV and letter of interest to: info@ritualmedia.de

Participants will be required to arrange their own boarding and lodging, but we will be happy to assist in finding accommodation. An online reader will be available through our website: www.ritualmedia.de



Section I

Moving Images

The first section will place film and video material centre-stage. We will explore methods and theoretical concepts of ritual as they relate to film and video. By means of small working groups, lectures and plenary sessions, we will discuss issues of presentation and representation as well as conceptions of reality with filmmakers and anthropologists by means of small working groups, lectures and plenary sessions. We will learn the steps of documenting rituals from film-makers, as well as about the processes involved in recording, editing and post-production.

Section II

Virtual Worlds - Old Rituals in New Worlds?

Virtual worlds such as "Second Life" offer a rich space for constructing religions and rituals in a playful environment. But are the activities there mere play? Or do rituals in these contexts respond to other desires and purposes? To find answers to these questions we will apply approaches from Media and Communication Studies, Art History and the Social Sciences. Representatives from disciplines dealing with problems of new media and their usage will present their ideas and approaches to the internet and new media. Also taken into consideration are participants' viewpoints concerning the power of virtual worlds.

Day 6

Spirit and Mind: The Use of Film in the Documentation, Analysis and Explication of Meaning in Yolngu Ritual

Howard Morphy (Canberra)

This session will consider the ways in which film can be used in recording and analysing Yolngu ritual performance - what one learns about ritual from the process of filming it, and how knowledge of ritual influences the ways in which film can be used to explicate performance and convey the meaning and experience of ritual to outside audiences.

Day 7

Filming Rituals between Theory and Practice

Manfred Krüger (Göttingen)

Using examples from Germany, Sumatra, Borneo and Mexico, the cameraman will explain theoretical implications of his films and his methodology, addressing obstacles and risks in shooting ethnographic films.

Section II

Virtual Worlds - Old Rituals in New Worlds?

Day 8

Pop up Performance: How to Research Rituals in Virtual Worlds

Kerstin Radde and Simone Heidbrink (Heidelberg)

In the 1990s nobody expected people to be one day performing religious rituals online. However the so-called "Gobal Village" has become a reality even for religion. But how can we research religion online?

Day 9

Ludic Media Theory and Virtual Worlds

Julian Kücklich (Coleraine)

Virtual spaces are embedded in the context of a mediasphere that is characterised by increasingly ludic ways of interaction. In this session, we explore how an understanding of play as a register of technicality enables new ways of understanding virtual worlds, their players and particular modes of agency.

Day 10

Session I: From the Virtual Ark to St Pixels: Online Rituals in a Christian Context.

Simon Jenkins (London)

Simon Jenkins, the founder of "The Church of Fools" will talk about his experiences of turning Christian rituals into virtual reality.

Session II: A New Research Agenda: Representation of Islam and Islamic Rituals in Digital Games

Vit Sisler (Prague)

This session will discuss the ongoing process of cultural appropriation of video games and other new media in the Middle East and analyze the ways in which Islam and Muslim identity are articulated in it.

Social Program

A social program with several excursions, public discussions, films and videos is planned. For example we will visit the ZKM Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe to see the exhibition: "YOU_ser: The Century of the Consumer".

Visit the SFB 619 Summer School website: www.ritualmedia.de for further updates and information.



**Marcus Banks * Christian Bau * Ron Grimes *
Niels Gutschow * Simone Heidbrink * Maria
Hemmler * Ute Hüsken * Simon Jenkins * Manfred
Krüger * Julian Kücklich * Erik de Maaker * Axel
Michaels * Howard Morphy * Sarah Pink *
Kerstin Radde * Vít Sisler * Barry Stephenson**