



INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED  
STUDY IN THE HUMANITIES  
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UNIVERSITY ALLIANCE  
RUHR

## Kris Decker

### 1.5° Celsius. The science and culture of a climate target.

Kris Decker / Has a background in Science Studies / Conducts fieldwork in the borderlands of science and the arts / Currently running the project Academized Artists (funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation) at Zurich University of the Arts in Switzerland / Did a dissertation on the day-to-day work of climate scientists / While at KWI, will delve into materials from activism and the arts to study the public life of climate issues / Interested in ways of writing that cut across scholarly genres (but how to do that?) / Recently published: Machines under Pressure (Vexer, 2022).

# Tim Altenhof

## Respiratory Modernism



Tim Altenhof is an architect and architectural theorist. He studied at the Bauhaus University Weimar, the University of Applied Arts and the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. After three years of practical work, most recently in Zaha Hadid's office in Hamburg, he commenced his doctoral studies at Yale in 2012, where his dissertation was awarded the Theron Rockwell Field Prize in 2018. An excerpt of this work, which was published in English and Italian under the title "The House-As-Chimney: Erich Mendelsohn's Breathing Space at Luckenwalde", won the Bruno Zevi Prize 2018. Since fall 2020 he has been a research assistant at the University of Innsbruck.

## L. Sasha Gora

### Off the Menu



L. Sasha Gora is a cultural historian and writer with a focus on food history and contemporary art. In 2020 she received a PhD from Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich and the Rachel Carson Center on the subject of Indigenous restaurants in Canada. While pursuing her doctoral work she taught over a dozen courses at LMU Munich's Amerika-Institut, surveying food history, film studies, and the environmental humanities. She spent spring 2019 as a visiting scholar in the Department of Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley, and has given talks at Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Ocean Space, Venice, the Centre for Contemporary Art, Glasgow, and elsewhere.

Following a postdoctoral fellowship at the Center for the Humanities and Social Change at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Sasha returned to the Rachel Carson Center as its editorial director and as a lecturer. In September 2022 she will be a resident at Delfina Foundation in London as part of *The Politics of Food* programme. She is then excited to join the Kulturwissenschaftliche Institut in Essen in October 2022 and to further her current work on culinary reactions to climate change. Her research project "Off the Menu" zooms in on human relationships to seafood and studies restaurants as venues for cultural and environmental negotiation. As a KWI international fellow, she will work on her second book project about the culinary lives of codfish and their connections to environmental change.

# Alexandra Irimia

## Red Tape: De-/Ontologies of the Writing Clerk



Alexandra Irimia holds a PhD in Philology from the University of Bucharest, where she had previously studied Comparative Literature, French, and Political Science. In 2020, she defended her doctoral thesis on figural voids and empty signifiers in literature, cinema, and contemporary arts, at the Centre of Excellence in Image Studies, with support from the FIGURA-UQAM research center in Montreal. In 2017, she enrolled in a second doctoral program in Comparative Literature at Western University, in Canada, where she designed and taught a *Law and Literature* course, worked as a teaching assistant, and began research on bureaucratic fiction. Her project investigates representations of officialdom and the portrayal of clerks in literary and cinematic narratives on bureaucratic themes (1950-2000).

During her time in Essen, she plans to co-edit a special issue of the journal *Administory* (vol. 8) entitled *Bureaucratic Cultures and their Aesthetics*, while also working on the publication of her second PhD thesis. The provisional title for her book project is *Red Tape: (De)Ontologies of Writing and the Writing Subject in Late Twentieth-Century Bureaucratic Fiction*. More generally, her work revolves around formal paradoxes of representation, seeking to explore text-image relations with an emphasis on the topics of the figure, figurability, and their negative ontological regimes. Occasionally, she ventures into the troubled waters of translation.

# Sandra Janßen

## The totalitarian subject. On psychology, political theory and literature of the 1930s and 1940s

Sandra Janssen is a researcher in comparative literature and in the history of science. She is an Annemarie Schimmel Fellow at the University of Erfurt and has previously taught German and comparative literature at the Freie Universität Berlin, the University of Geneva and most recently as a Visiting Professor at the University of Vienna. Her research is concerned with the history of subjectivity as it is constituted by the convergence of different fields of knowledge. A particular focus lies on the interrelation of 19th and 20th century German and French literatures with historical psychology.



As Thyssen@KWI Fellow, Sandra Janssen will be finishing a book project that constellates psychology, political theory, and literature from the 1930s and 1940s around the figure of a ‘totalitarian subject.’ The idea the book will elaborate is that a ‘totalitarian’ subject is not simply defined by the political regime to which it conforms, but—more importantly—by notions of totality that prefigure and legitimize such forms of power. It studies contemporaneous psychology in order to identify the conceptions of subjectivity on which the totalitarian thinking of this period also relies. However, it is literature that renders this epistemic connection conspicuous, for in literary texts of that period, psychological and political subject models are closely interwoven. The significance of political totalitarianism can thus be understood in new ways by considering other fields of knowledge.



## Verena Kick

### Weimar Germany's Counter Publics – Workers, Soldiers, and Women in Photobooks of the Weimar Republic



Verena Kick is Assistant Professor of German at Georgetown University. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Washington, Seattle, in 2019. Her scholarship encompasses 20th century German modernism, film, and Digital Humanities.

As a KWI International Fellow, she will focus on her book manuscript *Weimar Germany's Counter Publics – Workers, Soldiers, and Women in Weimar Photobooks*. This project examines the intersection of German non-fiction writing and visual culture, specifically the montage of texts and images in photobooks as an approach to analyze the changing public sphere during the Weimar Republic.

Her study aims to show how the representation of workers, soldiers, and women in photobooks creates—compared to mass media—oppositional understandings of these groups, casting them as counter publics. This interpretation offers an alternative view of the public sphere at the time, and also demonstrates at least a possibility of the photobook for creating an effective consciousness to combat impending fascism.

Via the online publishing platform Scalar, Verena is also developing a digital addendum for her book project. This project curates her research in a primarily visual way and also demonstrates how photobooks can be curated online: <https://scalar.usc.edu/works/>

## Marissa Petrou

### Collecting Asia-Pacific: Museums, “Race,” and the Anthropological Sciences in Imperial Germany

Marissa Petrou is Assistant Professor of History, Thelma and Jamie Guilbeau Endowed Professor of History and Director of the Guilbeau Center for Public History at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Before arriving in Louisiana, Marissa was Faculty Fellow in Museum Studies at New York University. Marissa received her PhD from UCLA, with a focus on visual culture in the history of science, medicine, & technology. She has published on the history of German anthropology, gender, photography, scientific publication and land acknowledgment. She has also co-curated numerous museum and library exhibits on artists’ engagement with science, the history of gender, race, and sexuality in medicine, and the relationship between science and the public.



At KWI, Marissa will work on her book project, *Collecting Asia-Pacific: Museums, “Race,” and the Anthropological Sciences in Imperial Germany*. As European museums begin to address the harms they have and continue to cause descendant communities, this book examines the complex history behind the Dresden Museum for Zoology, Anthropology and Ethnology, which aimed to prevent such harms at its founding. This book seeks to support decolonizing work by considering how cultural resources were displayed, how and why they were acquired and how various stakeholders perceived these activities. In order to expand our understanding of the complex development of these sciences and their diverse participants, she emphasizes the importance of visual approaches to the human sciences and sciences of collection. Drawing on recent literature in Indigenous Studies, STS, Black Studies, and Jewish history, this book also considers how the anthropological project of mapping Blackness in Asia and Oceania overlapped with political and scientific debates about how to categorize German-Jews in the context of European colonialism. Research for this book draws on materials at state archives, libraries, and museums in Germany, Austria, England, the Philippines, Spain, and the United States.

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# KWI International Fellowship Programmes

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We are dedicated to pursuing our interdisciplinary agenda through international collaboration. The international fellowships will contribute to attracting new research questions, concepts, methods and theories in close connection with the KWI research programme.

Our KWI INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS are 6-month-scholarships at the INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY IN THE HUMANITIES (KWI) in Essen, which address excellent international researchers from the humanities, cultural studies, and the social sciences with a completed PhD plus up to 6 years of post-doctoral experience.

The THYSSEN@KWI FELLOWSHIP, financed by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation, is integrated into the fellowship programme and reaches out to excellent researchers of all nationalities with a completed PhD plus several years of post-doctoral experience.

To apply, various project formats are possible: Fellows might devote their time in Essen to finishing a book or a special issue, to finalizing a research proposal or setting up a research group. We also welcome plans to establish or substantiate collaborations with the universities of the Ruhr Alliance.

Located in the Ruhr Area, the KWI offers a space for independent and innovative research in the humanities and various opportunities to engage and include the public. Currently, research at KWI focusses on the following areas: literary and cultural sociology, cultural science studies, science communication and public humanities. Further projects are concerned with cultures of communication and political participation. An important contribution to our scholarly and political work comes from the Academy in Exile, offering research space to colleagues whose academic freedom is threatened.

## **Coordination**

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