

Pressemitteilung**Universität Heidelberg****Marietta Fuhrmann-Koch**

01.04.2021

<http://idw-online.de/de/news766191>

Forschungsprojekte, Kooperationen
Geschichte / Archäologie, Gesellschaft, Kulturwissenschaften, Meer / Klima, Umwelt / Ökologie
überregional

**UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG**
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386**Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Studies**

The cross-cultural phenomenon of predicting the end of the world, in particular in view of current global threats, is the focus of a new transdisciplinary research institution at Heidelberg University. A Käte Hamburger International Centre – the Centre for Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Studies (CAPAS) – has begun work with funding from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). To spotlight its topics, CAPAS will invite scholars from all over the world to spend time in Heidelberg doing research.

Press Release
Heidelberg, 1 April 2021

Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Studies
A new Käte Hamburger International Centre starts work at Heidelberg University

The cross-cultural phenomenon of predicting the end of the world, in particular in view of current global threats, is the focus of a new transdisciplinary research institution at Heidelberg University. A Käte Hamburger International Centre – the Centre for Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Studies (CAPAS) – has begun work with funding from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). To spotlight its topics, CAPAS will invite scholars from all over the world to spend time in Heidelberg doing research. The BMBF has allocated approx. nine million euros to finance the centre over an initial period of four years. CAPAS directors are Prof. Dr Robert Folger, representing Romance languages, and Prof. Dr Thomas Meier, an archaeologist.

Apocalypses are characterised by radical changes in the living conditions understood to be essential for fundamental reforms to our way of life. "In view of global challenges such as the coronavirus pandemic or climate change, apocalyptic expectations are booming at present. Yet prophesying the end of the world is a recurrent phenomenon, which surfaces in many and varied cultures and ages," says Prof. Folger. "The apocalypse is not just a graphic figure of speech, however, but also a fundamental experience in human history. As such it can be observed and described, whereas its cultural mould has to be explored by comparing cultures and through interpretation."

The Käte Hamburger International Centre at Heidelberg University will focus on how disasters and apocalyptic scenarios impact not only on societies but also on individuals and their immediate environment. "The goal is to describe past and present systemic upheavals or collapses on the basis of a transdisciplinary research approach and to delineate them from one another," explains Prof. Meier. "We want to analyse and question responses to apocalyptic scenarios and predictions for the aftermath of a disaster against the background of their respective historical and cultural contexts."

Starting in 2008, ten Käte Hamburger International Centres at universities have been established with BMBF funding, as part of the initiative "Free space for the humanities". In a new funding round, announced in 2019, finance is now also being allocated to transdisciplinary research projects that investigate an international comparative issue from the humanities in cooperation with the life, natural, technical or engineering sciences. CAPAS and another centre in Aachen

are the first Käte Hamburger International Centres with such a slant to be financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. After four years of funding the centre can enter two more funding rounds and, after a positive evaluation, be extended by another four years each time.

The Centre for Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Studies invites internationally known scholars, called fellows, to stay at Heidelberg University and work for up to a year on the theme of the research centre. The university hosts four visiting fellows in the 2021 summer semester, to be joined in the 2021/2022 winter semester by another six. In the light of current events, the first class of fellows will explore apocalyptic scenarios that have developed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia, Europe and Latin America. Furthermore, the fellows will analyse the respective visions of the post-apocalypse.

In the coming weeks, the researchers will – together with the team from CAPAS – enter into the life of the centre in weekly work sessions, discussion groups and presentations. In addition, there are plans for events with German and international cooperation partners and other cross-disciplinary centres at the university like the Heidelberg Centre for the Environment and the Heidelberg Center for Transcultural Studies or the Marsilius Kolleg, which serves as a bridge between the scholarly cultures.

Contact:
Heidelberg University
Communications and Marketing
Press Office, phone +49 6221 54-2311
presse@rektorat.uni-heidelberg.de

URL zur Pressemitteilung: <http://www.capas.uni-heidelberg.de/index.en.html>