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thoughts and research from global dis:connect

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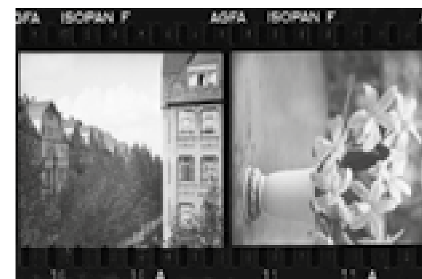

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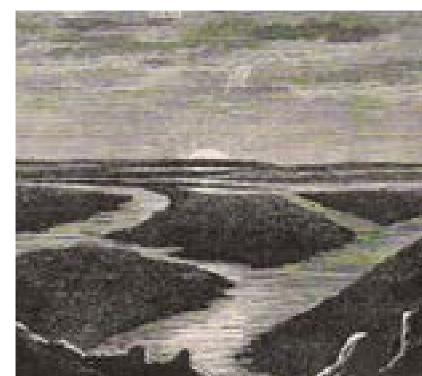

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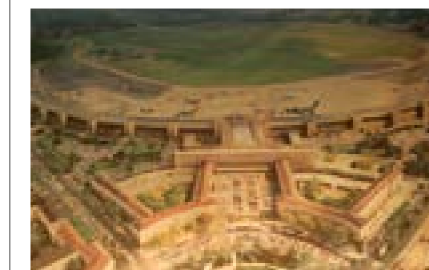

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editorial

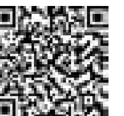
dear readers,
dear colleagues and friends,

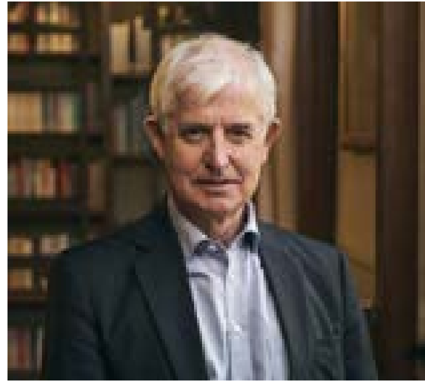
It gives us great pleasure to see this very first issue of ***static*** published – both in print and digitally. ***static*** is the bi-annual bulletin of the Käte Hamburger Research Centre ***global dis:connect***. It is a forum to present and share the work done at the Centre by fellows and resident staff while it is still in the making, while it grows and develops, before it is put in the moulds of scientific publishing in the narrower sense of the word and needs to fit these moulds.

Accordingly, what you find on the following pages is everything but static. On the contrary, the research on which all of the following contributions build is very much in motion. You will find ideas that are just about to flourish, projects that are very much works-in-progress, visions that need to be developed over the next few years. As such, ***static*** and its contributions stand *pars pro toto* for our newly founded Käte Hamburger Research Centre, which has only just begun to explore the interplay between global connectivity and disconnectivity and to rethink and reconfigure many assumptions we used to hold about globalization.

We are breaking new ground here, and ***static*** is one of the first outlets to share what we find. So, if this is all very dynamic and unfolding as we go along, why call our bulletin 'static'? Is there some counterintuitive twist by which we seek to draw attention to the role of disconnections in processes of globalisation? Maybe,

You can also find our new bulletin **static** online at www.globaldisconnect.org





but if so it has been a subconscious move. Rather, the term alludes to the static you always get when you try to tune an analogue radio or television receiver to a particular frequency, the so-called 'white noise' you get as a by-product when looking for a particular signal. And even when that signal has been found, a certain amount of static remains. It is easy to discard such static as noise that does not carry any information and interferes with the actual signal. This is what the dichotomy of signal vs. noise plays with.

In fact, static carries all sorts of information. It is the joint product of what remains of other signals sent on different frequencies, of electrical processes in the atmosphere and of the thermal interference produced by the receiver's circuits. If we learn to understand it, static, thus, tells us about other signals, about signal environments, about the inner workings of our instruments. Static draws our attention to the less obvious, to that which is often overlooked or discarded too early. ***static*** the bulletin takes up this noble cause and seeks to apply it to the study of process of globalisation.

static aims to gather new ways of thinking and contributions that challenge the established notion of globalisation as ever-increasing interconnectedness. With the concept of dis:connectivity, we assume there are ruptures in this interconnectedness, even de-globalisation. Therefore, we see connectivity and non-connectivity in a productive tension, as ongoing reciprocity and balancing – be it in the relationship between the local and the global, be it in the simultaneous interruption of human mobility and the intensification of digital exchanges, as we experienced in the years of the pandemic. Now the war in Ukraine, while having massive consequences for global trade flows, has brought the EU closer together.

With the publication of the first issue of ***static***, the BMBF-funded Käte Hamburger Research Centre ***global dis:connect*** looks back on 12 months of intensive development, which started work on 1 June 2021. We look forward with curiosity and anticipation to the coming years of the Research Centre, the fellows who will bring new research approaches under the umbrella of the Centre and hopefully return to their home institutions enriched. static will reflect the results of the Centre's work.

Come dis:connect with us!

Christopher Balme
Burcu Dogramaci
Roland Wenzlhuemer

the concept and instant-iations of dis:connec-tivity

Crisis and dis:connectivity

Roland Wenzlhuemer

Crises and globalisation

Etymologically speaking, crises are dramatic – perhaps even life-threatening – phenomena.[1] They are inflection points. And as such, they are supposed to be temporary. So far in this still-young twenty-first century, individual crises might seem temporary, but the state of crisis that plagues society more broadly seems all too permanent. For years now, we have been enduring a constant, deeply transformative state of emergency, consisting of overlapping economic and social crises.[2]

Think back. Not long after the horrific attacks of September 11th and the subsequent global war on terror, much of the world suffered a dire financial crisis. Just as the global economy gradually started to recover, public consciousness began to grasp the reality of climate change, whose socio-economic effects are becoming ever harder to ignore. As people slowly started engaging with the climate crisis, it was overshadowed in the mid-2010s – at least in Europe – by the 'refugee crisis' and the fears it evoked. While both of these issues remain with us, they have faded into the background, outshined by the ominous and mercurial COVID crisis.

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1 Reinhart Koselleck, 'Krise', in Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexicon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland, vol. 3, 8 vols (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972), 617–50.
2 Thomas Macho, 'Krisenzeiten: Zur Inflation eines Begriffs', Geschichte der Gegenwart (blog), 31 May 2020, https://geschichtedergegenwart.ch/krisenzeiten-zur-inflation-eines-begriffs.

Fig. 01
Image: Anna Shvets

For all their overlap and interrelations, these crises, of course, display important differences: they all move at their own paces and in their own temporalities; they all affect different regional epicentres, which can change over time; they all manifest themselves in our everyday lives in their own ways; they all engage particular collective and individual fears; and each one poses its own range of ethical dilemmas.

There is one thing, however, that all these crises have in common: *they are deeply embedded in processes of globalisation, past and present.*

Politically and religiously motivated terrorism, for example, is nourished by a complex global web of geopolitical ambitions and cultural antagonisms extending back at least to the days of triumphant European imperialism.[3]

In economics, the subprime-mortgage crisis in the USA in 2008 permeated global capital markets along countless reciprocal ties. A regional real-estate bubble rapidly induced a global banking crisis.

In ecology, human-induced climate change is inseparable from the history of industrialisation and consumerism. Rapid growth, interregional mobility and the global division of labour are what fuel it. Climate change pays no heed to human boundaries, national or otherwise. It is among the few literally global phenomena.

Another, surely, is COVID-19. In early 2020, the virus spread, well, *virulently* around the entire planet along the routes of global mobility networks.

Dense, interconnected, global networks are what all these crises share. They would be unthinkable without processes of worldwide exchange that have grown over the last 200 years or so. These crises make the scope and depth of global networks uniquely palpable.

Ripples of disconnection

Another common characteristic, however, is an often-overlooked aspect of globalisation: disruptive phenomena that *corrode* networks. Connection and *dis*connection, linkage and isolation, entanglement and disentanglement in constant oscillation. Each is unthinkable without the other.

Such co-relations have become undeniably tangible in the COVID crisis. In the early days of the pandemic, many borders were closed and tight regulations were imposed on interregional travel. Curfews and access restrictions became common, and large gatherings were outright forbidden. Schools have done their

Fig. 02
Image: Tomas Ryant

3 Sylvia Schraut, *Terrorismus und politische Gewalt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018); Carola Dietze, *Die Erfindung des Terrorismus in Europa, Russland und den USA 1858-1866* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2016).

Fig. 03
Image: The Internationalists

best with 'distance learning'. Cultural events have sought refuge in cyberspace. Quarantine rules curtailed the production and transportation sectors, which has hamstrung global supply chains. The permeation of global networks into daily life is what makes the COVID crisis so disruptive.

The interplay between entanglement and disentanglement is apparent beyond the COVID crisis. Other recent events, like the Brexit process and the *Ever Given,* that fateful ship that ran aground in the Suez Canal and interrupted a key global shipping thoroughfare, are of the same stripe.

Even the overwhelming global cataclysms I mentioned above display dynamics of entanglement and disentanglement on closer inspection. The Great Recession began when the US real-estate bubble popped. Thus, there is an immediate tension between immobile, local objects (ie, buildings) and their valuation in volatile, deeply interconnected financial markets. The interplay is even more pronounced when considering the cause of the crisis. Trust – a primal type of connection – evaporated, and its lack rippled throughout the dense network of capital flows.

The climate crisis, whose creeping, surreal progress unmistakably carries a disconnective element within it, is similar. Attempts to combat climate change have been thwarted principally by insufficient will and the ineffectuality of international cooperation. In the face of the inherently global character of climate change, parochial interests and structures have largely trumped global initiatives.

Global refugee migrations exemplify more than just human mobility. They are also characterised by prejudicial treatment, closed borders, long delays, strict asylum regimes and even brutal 'pushbacks'. Here, too, connective and disconnective aspects reciprocally constitute each other.

These crises are stories not only of global linkages; they also reveal disruptive, disconnective aspects of globalisation. It's the interplay between them that defines such processes. At ***global dis:connect,*** our focus is precisely this interplay, which we refer to as *dis:connectivity.* This concept enables new perspectives on past and current processes of global interlinkage, and it might even help us to better understand the crises that result.

Global crises touch everyone. Us too.

We certainly hope that dealing with global *dis:connectivity* on a scholarly level will help us to cope with all the challenges we face in trying to found an international research centre in the middle of the COVID pandemic. There is indeed a certain irony in the fact that the Centre's administration regularly confronts the interplay of connection and disconnection. Though we strive to make the Centre a locus of collaborative research and dialogue, we haven't been able to meet in recent months as much as we'd like. We also endeavour to foster conversations between our international fellows and our in-house researchers, but travel restrictions have forced us to delay some fellows' visits or to declare parts of their visits strictly 'remote'.

We are trying to engage with the broader public, which is no small trick when large gatherings are inadvisable or prohibited. We're trying to offer our fellows the best possible working conditions, which is not easy when the requisite articles and devices have been on order for months. And yet, we converse. We research. We share. And we organise. But we must also adapt. Even in the everyday life of the Centre, a new and fascinating interplay between global linkage and disruption manifests itself. So, *dis:connectivity* is something we're not only *researching* at the Centre; we're actively *experiencing* it.

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Past:present represent. Imaging dis:connected Mediterranean bodies

Hanni Geiger

Italy chooses the past headlined the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* newspaper in February 2013, shortly after the Milan Fashion Week.[1] It was referring to the colourful and pompous Dolce & Gabbana Spring/Summer Collection, significantly titled *Italianità:* the designers' homage to the 'old values' of the crisis-ridden European country on the Mediterranean.[2] The PR campaign celebrated the stereotype of *dolce vita* in various photographs and glorified tradition and its revival. *Buon cibo, café* and *vino,* luxurious craftmanship and materials of the highest quality, a southern Italian landscape flanked by well-dressed people in a cheerful mood against a sunny seaside backdrop – imagined, constructed and narrated from the nation's own perspective.

In one of the following campaigns, too, the timelessness of the 'Italian lifestyle' characterised the designs of both clothes and people. Under the title *Italia is Love* (2016), the designers gathered all conceivable set pieces thought to represent an Italian maritime *passata quotidianità,*[3] referring to a Eurocentrically Mediterranean image of everyday life that transposes a one-sided version of its past into the global present. The particular asymmetry of past and

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Her work focuses on the art of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, global design histories, the interdependencies of migration and artistic production as well as digital images and posthumanism.

1 Alfons Kaiser, 'Italien wählt Die Vergangenheit', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* 26 February 2013, https://www.faz.net/aktuell/stil/mode-design/mode/mailaender-modewoche-italien-waehlt-die-vergangenheit-12095449.html.
2 'Colourful Dolce & Gabbana Spring / Summer 2013 Ad Campaign', Global Fashion Report, 2013, https://globalfashionreport.com/colourful-dolce-gabbana-spring-summer-2013-ad-campaign-photos.
3 'Italia Is Love. CAMPAGNA PUBBLICITARIA ESTATE 2016', Italia is Love, 2016, https://world.dolcegabbana.com/it/discover/dolce-gabbana-estate-2016-italia-is-love-ispirazione-campagna-pubblicitaria.

Fig. 01
Dolce & Gabbana, Spring/Summer Advertising Campaign 2013. In: Dolce & Gabbana. 2013. „Spring/ Summer Advertising Campaign 2013.“ Maria Speaks Prada, January 16, 2013. © Dolce & Gabbana

present on the Mediterranean is evident in the distinctly staged and narrated embodiments and (image) practices from a solely Western gaze.

Against the backdrop of globalisation's multidimensionality and complexity, the images reveal marginalised bodies, relativise proximity and distance and disrupt a supposedly universal narrative, thus showing the Mediterranean from its socially, politically and economically dis:connective side.

Visible invisibilities

The highly controversial title of Dolce & Gabbana's Spring/ Summer Collection 2013 *Italianità,* that is 'Italianity' or 'being Italian' can be traced back to the pan-Italian movement in the nineteenth century and nationalist ideologies of the twentieth century.[4] These tendencies were associated with the forced Italianisation and the formation of a large Italian state, silencing voices on the east and south of the Mediterranean.[5] Under this colonial policy, the term stood for a unified identity comprehending the essence, nature and character of the country and its inhabitants[6] in their formative linguistic, cultural and political dominance in the region.

However, this repressive part of Italian history is largely hidden behind the images of Dolce & Gabbana's press campaign, which circumscribes this problematic term in marketing and everyday life. Since the 1950s *Italianità* has stood for a broadly applicable Mediterranean culture of ease, 'sea, sun and love', familiar since the tourism boom and the labour migrations from Italy to the European north.[7] So what the designers present to us is a red-and-white fishing boat on a Sicilian beach, with attractive women and men draped in front of it, models as well as amateurs from the area, who are indulging in sunbathing and serene togetherness. Amongst other model-stars, we recognise celebrities, such as Monica Bellucci – Italian acting icon and global epitome of the dark-haired, pale-skinned 'Mediterranean beauty'.[8] Fabricating a universally valid maritime imaginary, these sensual bodies in classic, tight-fitting dresses in vivid colours, patterns and ornamentation against a deep blue seascape recall the formation of a Mediterranean topos that was dominated by Italy's imperial politics in the 1930s[9] and the entertainment industry in the 1950s and 1960s. Design has always played a major role here. The industrialised states on the Mediterranean shaped their colonies in the region and around the globe by strategically disseminating their own brands, such as Fiat or Vespa, which featured in movies, billboards and ads.[10]

Even today, Dolce & Gabbana design the single valid Mediterranean universe based on a Eurocentric selection of bodies dressed up in Italy's glorified (design) past. To this day, design testifies to power and claims on territories and people, substantiating them with Western narratives. As a child of industrialisation, design follows capitalist and post-imperial principles, thus reflecting the region's dis:connectivity in its economic and social imbalances.

These and other visual representations of a unified Mediterranean under Western control go hand in hand with its theoretical constructions, which mostly draw on its past as a European model of civilisation that can still be felt today. Concepts of a romanticised *Méditerranée* or *Mediterraneitá* influenced by the imperial and, later, fascist regimes played leading roles as both

4 Gualtiero Boaglio, *Italianità. Eine Begriffsgeschichte* (Wien: Praesens Verlag, 2008).
5 Boaglio.
6 Boaglio.
7 'Italianità in Der Schweiz – Caffè, Vespa oder Bagnino: Sechs Schweizer Fotografen mit Italienischem Blut zeigen, was bei Ihnen Heimatgefühle Auslöst.', *Migros-Magazin* 32 (3 August 2015): 26-31.
8 'Monica Bellucci, Il Make up Dell'icona Di Bellezza Mediterranea', LetteraF, 30 September 2014, https://www.letteraf.com/monica-bellucci-make-dellicona-bellezza-mediterranea.
9 Vera S. Bader, 'Als die Moderne noch geholfen hat', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10 July 2017.
10 Anthony Downey, ed., *Dissonant Archives: Contemporary Visual Culture and Contested Narratives in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 242.

Fig. 02
Hannah Wallace Bowman, Migrant Boat off the Sicilian Coast, August 2020, Photograph, https://www.msf.org/five-things-know-about-search-and-rescue-crisis**.**

abstract ideas of colonial dominance and of unification strategies that also imposed themselves aesthetically.[11]

In its production, dissemination and narrativisation, the photo from Dolce & Gabbana's press campaign inevitably reveals what should remain hidden: the many layers of unacknowledged histories that have shaped and continue to shape the Occidental frame. The one-sidedness resulting from the Western gaze turned on itself must therefore be understood as the practice of hegemonic knowledge production that is always accompanied by the disconnective absence of other images and (body) narratives.

The ir:regular Mediterranean

The inevitability of apprehending the globalised Mediterranean with its bodies in anything but universal terms becomes evident in the social, political and economic dis:connectivity of the region and its people. The wars in south-eastern Europe in the 1990s, the Arab Spring, migrations from Africa and the so-

11 Andreas Eckl, 'Méditerranée? Mediterranistische Diskurse um Mittelmeerwelten und -räume aus forschungsgeschichtlicher Perspektive', in *New Horizons. Mediterranean Research in the 21st Century*, ed. Mihran Dabag et al., Mittelmeerstudien 10 (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2016), 109; Michelangelo Sabatino, 'The Politics of Mediterraneità in Italian Modernist Architecture', in *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean. Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identities*, ed. Jean-Francois Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino (London: Routledge, 2010), 41–63.

called 'Balkan route' travelled by refugees, which runs through countries along the Mediterranean, represent the errors, frictions, deviations and disorder of multiple Mediterranean realities. The press photographs of refugees off the same Italian coast where Dolce & Gabbana staged their campaign illustrate these dis:connectivities.

Although the photographs of Libyan migrants are subject to other practices and contexts than in design, they are shot from the same Eurocentric perspective, disseminated and narrativised through the media, threatening a Mediterranean attributed exclusively to Western nation-states. In contrast to the expensively outfitted and digitally altered white bodies of an economic elite from the global North, the news images of the unembellished dark bodies breaking out from the southern shores of the region represent a disruption and destabilisation of hegemonic beliefs as they diffuse throughout the internet. The bodies marked by the arduous flight merge into one undifferentiated mass of otherness without individual dignity. Uniformed in orange life jackets on a roaring dark sea, the bodies made alien threaten the geo-political, cultural, linguistic and religious borders that demarcate Europe. These bodies do not always reach the Northern beach staged in fashion advertising alive.

The disconnective side of globalisation finds expression here. The sea, naturally fluid and moving but which law renders frozen and static, becomes the dividing wall behind which the imperial past and its excluded masses lie buried.[12] With the immigration of the disconnected bodies marked as illegal, the ghosts of the colonial *mare nostrum* are awakened, against which only a politically practised selection of bodies seems effective.

Accordingly, Dolce & Gabbana's summer 2016 collection – ironically presented shortly after the first reports of migrant boats sinking off the Italian coast – celebrates *Italianità*, this time under the motto *amore*.[13] A love that, as the campaign reveals, is only granted to the privileged migrating bodies of the shopping and consumption-hungry '[...] foreign tourists, who have landed in their much-loved Italy [...]'.[14] Belonging coincides with the exclusion of uninvited guests and their bodies, bodies carrying not only the past, but the colonial constitution of the Mediterranean present.[15] These disturbing bodies are never to be declared problems of the

12 *Imaginaries of Europe. Rethinking Identity, Belonging and Sovereignty Europe: From Hope to Disaffection* (Barcelona, 2018), https://www.cccb.org/en/multimedia/videos/imaginaries-of-europe-rethinking-identity-belonging-and-sovereignty/229536.
13 Hannah Marriott, 'Dolce & Gabbana Shares the Amore in Milan with Jolly 50s Italy Collection', 27 September 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2015/sep/27/dolce-gabbana-shares-the-amore-in-milan-with-jolly-50s-italy-collection.
14 'Italia Is Love. CAMPAGNA PUBBLICITARIA ESTATE 2016'.
15 *Imaginaries of Europe. Rethinking Identity, Belonging and Sovereignty Europe: From Hope to Disaffection.*

'others' or as flaws of globalisation, but understood as an essential part of Western hegemonies. Iain Chambers aptly captures this, seeing in migration neither an external event, nor an overflow of otherness onto European shores nor even a crisis, but rather 'the building block of European modernity'.[16]

The exclusion of the unwanted dead and live bodies washed up on the European shores is rooted in a dis:connective globalisation based on unequal power relations – management of the Mediterranean solely from the northern shores.[17]

Chambers pleads for a critical gaze towards the Occident and demands confrontation with unacknowledged histories that have shaped and continue to shape the 'Western archives'.[18] Grasping the past in the present[19] enables narration of the dis:connective Mediterranean, referring to neglected actors, artefacts and their practices, from other perspectives and with reference to other critical theories. The Portuguese postcolonial writer Hélia Correia finds a fitting image for this comprehension of past in the present when she speaks of Europe as a lady wearing *haute couture*, whose expensive dresses hide the body of a dirty, scabby and sick Europe.[20] Mediterranean imperialism, veiled under precious Dolce & Gabbana clothes, is exposed by snapshots of migrants off the same coast. The vaunted 'old values' – the Occidental humanistic definitions of locality, home, national identity, tradition and belonging – become worthless.

The point to remember is the fundamental importance of visual and haptic artefacts for the formation of images and meanings, as seen in the prototypes of a simultaneously connected and disconnected Mediterranean (body). Instead of the monolithic dualism in the Western construction of the self and 'other', the absent, so-called Mediterranean 'rest' is to be recalled. Its cultural and creative diversity as well as its indefinability according to dominating concepts can be traced through design practices dis:connected to and from the West.

Instead of the Eurocentric production of aesthetics and narratives, it is necessary to create a new framework in which the hegemonically perceived defectiveness, the deviant and the ambiguous of (Mediterranean) societies becomes susceptible to research and 'world-building' beyond nations.

16 Iain Chambers, *Postcolonial Interruptions, Unauthorised Modernities* (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2017), 37–60.
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Lithospheric connectivity

Tom Menger

> *He saw in oil a weapon,*
> *and he heard groaning*
> *in the bowels of the Earth*
> *when the jack pumped up the oil (...)"*

From Varujan Vosganian's novel
Book of Whispers (2018 [2009])

What if global dis:connectivity stretches not only around the surface of our globe, but also into its crust? Let me present some initial thoughts on this idea from the perspective of global oil and gas extraction since the nineteenth century.

Since August 2021, I have been researching early colonial oil extraction (ca. 1880–1920) at ***global dis:connect***. Specifically, I am investigating the imperial infrastructures *in situ* that made such extraction possible and that bound commodities into global networks of extraction and consumption, creating new connections while simultaneously diverting or cutting others. In this piece, however, I want to chart a more experimental course and look, from a broader dis:connective as well as historical and contemporary angle, at oil and gas drilling as connecting and disconnecting the world above with its lithosphere – what one could tentatively call lithospheric connectivity. Obviously, this human foray into the earth did not only involve fossil fuels but all sorts of minerals. Here, however, I focus mainly on oil and gas extraction.

Humans have been digging into the earth for millennia – deep mines were already known in antiquity. In China, oil wells up to

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1 I thank Ben Kamis not only for his editing but especially also for giving me the thematic suggestion for this piece.
2 Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

240 metres deep existed already in 347 BCE. Nevertheless, fossil fuel extraction and the consequent incursions into the lithosphere grew dramatically from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards. This was 'the golden age of resource-based development', when the last yet-unincorporated territories were colonised and capitalist power pushed into these new, non-commodified spaces – a process Jason Moore has called the 'lifeblood' of capitalism.[3]

The urge to dig deeper was certainly unprecedented, as for instance in the oil boom of the second half of the nineteenth century. While it is little known, many of the areas that were to become centres of Western colonial oil extraction actually already had local extraction infrastructures. Some were quite elaborate, others more rudimentary. In British-occupied Burma, at the Yenangyaung fields, Western oilmen came upon an extensive hand-dug well industry, controlled by a hereditary monopoly of 24 men and women, named the *twinzayo*.[4] In the Mesopotamian oilfields (i.e. Iraq), European travellers noted how fissures where oil seeped from the rocks were leased out by the state and that lease-holders had artificially deepened these natural wells with, for instance, steps hewn out in the rock. At some places, wage labourers emptied the oil pits every four or five days; at others the oil was channeled through iron tubes into collection reservoirs.[5]

Generally, however, these wells did not reach very far into the lithosphere. In Burma, most wells were 46-76 metres deep; in Mesopotamia they were only a few metres deep.[6] Depth was not really necessary; often the shallow wells were already producing enough to cover local demand. Transportation obstacles also made it unprofitable to produce for further afar.

Producing for further afar, however, was exactly what the incoming Europeans wanted. Their ceaseless extension of horizontal, global lines of transport was what drove the vertical push deeper into the earth. When a German military commando unit, the first Westerners to drill in Mesopotamia during wartime in 1917-1918, arrived on site, they already had with them steam-powered drilling equipment able to reach a depth of 400 metres.[7] In Burma too, the depth of the existing wells was quickly overtaken by new wells drilled by industrial machinery. Interestingly, however, the

3 Jason W. Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital* (London: Verso, 2015), 19; Edward B. Barbier, *Scarcity and Frontiers: How Economies Have Developed Through Natural Resource Exploitation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), chap. 7.
4 Marilyn Longmuir, 'Twinzayo and Twinza: Burmese "oil Barons" and the British Administration', *Asian Studies Review 22,* no. 3 (1998): 339–56.
5 See, for instance: Walther Schweer, *Die türkisch-persischen Erdölvorkommen* (Hamburg: Friederichsen, 1919), 41–42.
6 Longmuir, 'Twinzayo and Twinza', 341; Schweer, *Die türkisch-persischen Erdölvorkommen,* 40–46.
7 Erich Reuss, Reisebericht über die Kommandierung zum Brennstoffkommando in Arabien von Jan. 1917-März 1919, Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen, Oberbergamt Bonn BR 0101, Nr. 1286, pp. 5-6, 14.

Fig. 01
This Bank of Burma banknote, first issued in 1987, shows a Burmese oil driller carrying a diving dress (Image: Nsmm45, Wikimedia)

twinzayo reacted by adopting the diving dress, which allowed their drillers to stay underground for longer and deepen their wells, thus remaining competitive for several decades.[8]

But how connected was humankind really with the subsoil? Relative to the enormity of the lithosphere, these wells remained limited in depth as well as extraction. The Germans in Mesopotamia, could not operate the machinery for their deep drills, first by a lack of personnel, then by the collapse of the front, which saw the German connection to the area cut (the region was taken over by the British Empire, whose engineers would only resume drilling there in 1927).[9]

Furthermore, drillers actually extracted very little of Original Oil In Place (OOIP), a technical term denoting the total amount of oil present in a basin. For a long time, drillers had only the vaguest estimates of how much of this OOIP they actually extracted, although they sensed that it was very little. In 1925, some 65 years after first industrial oil extraction in Pennsylvania, a German study surveyed the existing literature and concluded the rate of extraction could be anywhere between 4 and 20 per cent. Later research has shown this to be closer to 5-15 per cent (obviously, the exact amounts vary depending on the location). A French expert was cited who, with some justification, held that an oil well, for all the industrial machinery and the drilling towers, was nothing but a 'pin prick' into the earth. [10]

For most of this extraction, the drillers relied not on machinery but

8 Marilyn V. Longmuir, *Oil in Burma: The Extraction of 'Earth-Oil' to 1914* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2001), 158–59.
9 Reuss, Reisebericht, p. 31; Ferdinand Friedensburg, *Das Erdöl im Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1939), 48–49.
10 Gottfried Schneiders, 'Wieviel Erdöl ist in verlassenen Ölfeldern zurückgeblieben?', *Petroleum XXI,* no. 13 (n.d.): 866.

Fig. 02
An oil gusher in the Kirkuk district, Iraq, c. 1932 (Image: G. Eric and Edith Matson, Matson Photographic Collection, Library of Congress, Wikimedia)

on the forces of nature. Natural water or gas, reacting to pressure differences in underground basins, is generally what pushed the oil to the surface. Initially, this often occurred with great force, as we know from the famous images of blowouts or 'geysers'.

Interestingly, too much connectivity was actually a bad thing here. The more 'pin pricks' into the Earth, the more outlets to release pressure that would otherwise push the oil to the surface. However, as the article quoted above noted, human egotism generally led to an 'overdose' of such connectivity, as there were too many

rival actors at the same spot (at least initially).[11] As we now know, perforating the Earth in that way was also detrimental in that it released the natural gas (mostly methane) from the reservoir into the atmosphere. Such gas leakage remains an important contributor to climate change.

Over the course of the twentieth century, new drilling technology enabled the oil industry to penetrate ever deeper. In 1949, when records began, the average depth of oil wells was already 3635 feet (1108 metres). By the end of the 2010s, it sank to nearly 6000 feet (1828 metres, or 1,8 kilometres). Outliers are poorly reflected in these averages. The world's deepest well (measured by true vertical depth) in the Tiber Oil Field, in the American portion of the Gulf of Mexico, pierces 10.87 kilometres into the ground (though it is currently dormant). Worldwide, 'shallow' oil reserves are largely exhausted. The introduction of directional drilling in the 1970s has changed the idea of depth itself, as it entails drilling horizontally from a certain depth. The former 'pin pricks' thus become tentacles, extending our subterranean reach. Depth is no longer equivalent to distance. For example, the Sakhalin O-14 well in Russia, with a modest depth of a less than a kilometre belies an astonishing length of nearly fifteen kilometres.[12]

It should also be noted that the hunger for fossil fuels did not drive human infiltration into the lithosphere alone. Superpower rivalry was another motive. In 1970, the Soviet Union started drilling the Kola Superdeep Borehole (on the Kola Peninsula, near the Norwegian border), to reach the deepest artificial point on Earth. This was not ventured as a hunt for fuel, but as a scientific feat. In 1979, it became the deepest borehole in the world, surpassing the Bertha Rogers oil well in the United States. Despite several breakdowns and interruptions, the Soviets reached a depth of 12,262 metres in 1989. Symbolising the breakdown of the Soviet Union itself, the borehole could go no deeper, though drilling from other holes at the same shaft continued into the early 1990s till financial problems prompted its abandonment in 1994. The temperatures at that depth exceeded expectations, and the rock became plastic, precluding further drilling.[13]

11 Schneiders, 866; E. Tzimas et al., *Enhanced Oil Recovery Using Carbon Dioxide in the European Energy System* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the EU, 2005), 22.

12 'Average Depth of Crude Oil and Natural Gas Wells', U.S. Energy Information Administration, 1 October 2020, https://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/pet_crd_welldep_s1_a.htm; 'Longest Vertically and Directionally Drilled Oil and Natural Gas Wells Worldwide as of 2019', Statista, November 2019, https://www.statista.com/statistics/479685/global-oil-wells-by-depth/; 'How Far Do We Drill To Find Oil?', Petro Online, 5 November 2014, https://www.petro-online.com/news/fuel-for-thought/13/breaking-news/how-far-do-we-drill-to-find-oil/32357.

13 Christopher McFadden, 'The Kola Superdeep Borehole Is the Deepest Vertical Borehole in the World', Interesting Engineering, 29 March 2019, https://interestingengineering.com/the-real-journey-to-the-center-of-the-earth-the-kola-superdeep-borehole.

Technology has not only changed the depth of humanity's reach into the Earth, but also its intensity. Primary recovery – the initial phase of production – can extract some 5-15 per cent of OOIP. When the pressure starts to fall, as is natural in all producing oil reservoirs over time, yields decrease. Pumps can compensate for a while, but that is where primary recovery ends. Therefore, the oil industry has long been using secondary recovery: flooding water or gas into the reservoirs, thus restoring pressure. This allows for more extraction, though typically only to some 30-50 per cent.

Recent decades have seen the adoption of tertiary recovery, which can increase yields by an additional 5-15 per cent. These processes, which mostly involve the injection of further fluids into the reservoirs, impact the subsoil drastically. For heavy oil, these processes are mostly thermal, reducing viscosity through heat to ease extraction. This can involve introducing hot steam into the Earth under heavy pressure or simply burning part of the oil underground to release part of the rest. Other methods include injecting chemicals into the wells or using microbes (though the latter, apparently less damaging, is still very rare).[14]

Human efforts to extract the resources of the lithosphere reach their maximum when just over half of the OOIP has reached the surface. The natural properties of subterranean oil resist some of the oil industry's machinery, which leads some scientists to speak anthropomorphically of 'recalcitrant oil fields'.[15]

Moreover, reaching into the Earth also has unintended consequences. As Martin Meiske has noted for huge artificial canals, humankind cannot interfere with impunity in what took geological processes millions of years to create.[16] While the damage done by oil extraction above ground is well-known (e.g. pollution and human conflict), the effects underground can be at least as intense. For instance, in the Dutch province of Groningen, where natural gas has been extracted from below ground for decades, empty gas reservoirs have destabilised the soil, leading to increased seismic activity, with homes sinking and fracturing.[17]

14 Tzimas et al., *Enhanced Oil Recovery,* 21–22; Ann Muggeridge et al., 'Recovery Rates, Enhanced Oil Recovery and Technological Limits', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences 372,* no. 2006 (13 January 2014): 1-25, https://doi.org/10.1098/rsta.2012.0320. Also note that the sequence of primary to tertiary recovery has become increasingly obsolete, with tertiary techniques currently being used right from the beginning in a process now known simply as Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR).

15 Christina Nikolova and Tony Gutierrez, 'Use of Microorganisms in the Recovery of Oil from Recalcitrant Oil Reservoirs: Current State of Knowledge, Technological Advances and Future Perspectives', *Frontiers in Microbiology 10* (2020): 1–18.

16 Martin Meiske, *Die Geburt des Geoengineerings: Großbauprojekte in der Frühphase des Anthropozäns* (Göttingen: Wallstein-Verlag, 2021), 205–7.

17 Herman Damveld, *Gaswinning Groningen: een bewogen geschiedenis* (Bedum: Profiel, 2020).

Hydraulic fracturing ('fracking'), another aggressive mode of extraction, whereby rock formations containing gas or oil are 'cracked open' by injecting liquids at high-pressure, has led to the contamination of groundwater and triggered earthquakes in fracking areas in the United States and elsewhere.

However, will the anticipated 'end of oil', or fossil fuels more generally, disconnect us from the lithosphere at some point? Despite the currently breath-taking rise in fuel prices, pressure to decarbonise will eventually make reaching deep into the lithosphere for oil and gas unprofitable. In the long run, all such connections will be cut.[18] Will this mean a retreat of lithospheric connectivity?

First, abandoning and plugging oil wells have been a constant in the age of fossil fuels. Wells that fail to produce are abandoned. This points to a key aspect of dis:connectivity: connection and disconnection generally occur simultaneously, and they are mutually constitutive. On Sumatra, another of my case studies involving early oil extraction in a colonial setting, the Peureulak oil field in Aceh, was the field that effectively launched the Royal Dutch Shell oil company. However, by the time Shell had become one of the world's main oil companies, the Peureulak field was already exhausted and abandoned, leaving a huge area of derelict pumps, tubes and polluted soil (though drilling continued in other parts of the island).[19]

Currently, some 29 million wells have been abandoned globally, which brings us to the second point: abandoning a well does not disconnect it from our surface and atmosphere. Instead, many continue to leak gas or oil, sometimes for more than a century (and some might go on for another century). By one estimate, 2.5 million tonnes of methane might escape abandoned wells globally per year, with the annual damage to our climate equivalent to three weeks of current US oil consumption.[20]

Third, rather than cut connections, we will likely merely reverse their direction. While we have mostly been extracting hydrocarbons from the Earth, there are ambitious plans to refill oil and gas reservoirs with carbon dioxide sequestered from the atmosphere. Ironically, however, this is in part intended as a way to access the oil remaining in 'depleted' oilfields. As it is, injecting carbon dioxide into these reservoirs can modify some qualities of the oil still in place so that it is more easily released from the rock. This 'CO2-Enhanced Oil Recovery' is represented as a bridge to

18 'The Age of Fossil-Fuel Abundance Is Dead', *The Economist,* 4 October 2021, https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/the-age-of-fossil-fuel-abundance-is-dead/21805253.

19 Anton Stolwijk, *Atjeh: het verhaal van de bloedigste strijd uit de Nederlandse koloniale geschiedenis* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2016), 185-86.

20 Nichola Groom, 'Special Report: Millions of Abandoned Oil Wells Are Leaking Methane, a Climate Menace', Reuters, 16 June 2020, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-drilling-abandoned-specialreport-idUSKBN23N1NL.

Fig. 03
The Kola Superdeep Borehole, welded shut, August 2012 (Image: Rakot13, Wikimedia)

a carbon-free future – still extracting oil for consumption while simultaneously sequestering carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. According to one study CO2-EOR has the potential to sequester 140 billion tonnes of CO2 (for comparison: global annual emissions are now some 36 billion tonnes). In the Permian Basin in the United States and elsewhere, there is already an extensive pipeline network carrying carbon dioxide to oilfields.[21]

If subsoil sequestration of carbon dioxide does indeed take off globally, we might soon have a global network of such pipelines. One day, however, even the underground reservoirs will be full, and this network might fall idle like the preceding infrastructures of lithospheric connectivity, becoming terminals to nowhere, testimonies to the human urge to penetrate and capitalise on the ground beneath our feet.

Let us return, finally, to the Kola Superdeep Borehole. According to a picture on Wikipedia, the borehole appears to have been welded shut sometime after the project was halted.

While closed now, its ability to ignite popular fantasies is unbroken. In 2020, it starred in a Russian horror film, in which a mysterious mould contaminates researchers in a fictitious secret lab deep down the shaft, causing them to melt into one huge aggressive creature that hunts for the rescuers on their way down.[22] The real horror of lithospheric connectivity, however, might lay instead in its prolonged effects on our environment. The human 'pin pricks' into the Earth will prove of great consequence for all of us – and certainly also a subject worth exploring further from the perspective of a global lithospheric dis:connect.

21 Michael Godec et al., 'CO2 Storage in Depleted Oil Fields: The Worldwide Potential for Carbon Dioxide *Enhanced Oil Recovery', Energy Procedia 4* (2011): 2162–69.

22 Arseny Syuhin, *Superdeep [Kolskaya Sverhglubokaya],* motion picture, 2020.

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Tzimas, E., A. Georgakaki, C. Garcia-Cortes, and S.D. Peteves,. *Enhanced Oil*

Nomadic camera: photography, exile and dis:connectivity

Burcu Dogramaci

In 1939, 16-year-old Hans Günter Flieg took a final photo in his hometown of Chemnitz, before he and his family emigrated to Brazil due to anti-Semitic persecution. Upon his arrival in São Paulo, he captured the first photo of his exile home. Both pictures appear next to each other on a film strip. Here I focus on these photographs and bring together two concepts that are new to photography and exile research: the nomadic camera and dis:connectivity.

Flieg photographed with an Agfa roll film (Isopan F) suitable for 35mm cameras. He worked with Leica equipment that his parents had purchased in anticipation of his planned emigration to Brazil.[1] Flieg had been taking a photography course with Grete Kaplus at the Berlin Jewish Museum since March 1939. This enabled his family to justify the purchase of cameras for professional reasons and to prepare their son for a career as a photographer and a livelihood abroad.[2]

The film strip shows two black-and-white shots: on the left is a view from the window of a street with buildings in the *Gründerzeit* style. Multi-storey apartment buildings stand on a residential street densely planted with a row of trees. The view of the camera

1 Michael Nungesser, 'Chemnitz liegt bei São Paulo. Der Fotograf Hans Günter Flieg', eds. Ingrid Mössinger and Katharina Metz, 2008.
2 Agi Straus, Interview mit der Malerin Agi Straus, São Paulo, 15 April 2013, https://kuenste-im-exil.de/KIE/Content/DE/Objekte/flieg-interview.html?cms_x=4&catalog=1; Nungesser, 'Chemnitz Liegt Bei São Paulo. Der Fotograf Hans Günter Flieg'.

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Fig. 01
**Hans Günter Flieg,
Last photograph taken in Chemnitz and first photograph in São Paulo, 1939, credit: Hans Gunter Flieg / Instituto Moreira Salles Collection.**

– aimed from one of the upper floors of a building – leads past a residential building; on the left is a broad part with a cloudy sky.

Flieg was taking pictures from his parents' flat, which was located in the Kaßberg district of Chemnitz. Since the turn of the twentieth century, with the industrial boom in the city, the area was considered an upscale and exquisitely built residential district.[3] Flieg's photo was taken in August 1939. The next photo on the right is dated December 1939 and shows a bright vase of white orchids. Here, too, one of the subjects, the vase, is cropped on the right, standing on a table. Four months separate the two adjacent shots.

This film strip is often shown when Flieg's photographic work is published.[4] Flieg also spoke about this picture in an interview uploaded to the page of the digital exile museum *Künste im Exil* (Arts in Exile) of the Deutsches Exilarchiv (German Exile Archive) 1933–1945, which itself is a project of the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek (German National Library).[5] The fascination with this negative strip is due to the two photos and the narrow strip between them, which condense an emigration (hi)story. The narrow strip and the four months of time suspended in it both conceal and expose a difficult route that led from Chemnitz to Munich, over the Brenner Pass to Italy and from there by sea to São Paulo. Several thousand kilometres condense just as much on the narrow strip between two photographs as time accumulates on an in-between space.

3 Tilo Richter, ed., *Der Kassberg. Ein Chemnitzer Lese- und Bilderbuch* (Leipzig: Passage-Verlag, 1996).
4 Ingrid Mössinger and Katharina Metz, eds., *Hans Günter Flieg: Dokumentarfotografie aus Brasilien (1940–1970)* (Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2008), 48–49; Sylvia Asmus and Maren Eckl, eds., *...Mehr Vorwärts Als Rückwärts Schauen...* (Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2013).
5 Hans Günter Flieg, Interview des Deutschen Exilarchivs 1933–1945 mit Hans Günter Flieg: São Paulo, 18.04.2013 / Interview und Bild: Sylvia Asmus und Jochanan Shelliem, 18 April 2013.

Based on this (arguably enlarged) contact print of the film strip, I offer reflections in two directions. One is about the concept of the nomadic camera. The other is about the adaptation of the term *dis:connectivity* to photography and exile.

With *nomadic camera*, I refer to the camera and photography as the central medium to visualise cross-border changes of place. Included in the term *nomadic* are forms of forced or voluntary relocation, i.e. migration, flight, displacement, exile. Etymologically, 'nomadic' derives from the Latin *nomas*/Greek *nomás*. *Nomás* alludes to non-sedentary forms of existence that historically developed in the Old World dry belt – from West Africa, across the Arabian Peninsula to East Asia – of those who spend their lives wandering, adapting to living conditions with scarce resources spread over a wide area.[6] This archaic nomadism of migratory ethnic groups, which persists, has its revenant and related figures in post-industrial societies – in commuters, labour migrants, political refugees, in employees of globally oriented companies, students, global travellers, in artists who are globally present as visiting scholars and exhibitors.[7]

With these diverse connotations of nomadism in mind, I would like to refer to Caren Kaplan, who recognises 'continuities and discontinuities between terms such as "travel", "displacement" and "location" as well as between the particularized practices and identities of "exile", "tourist" and "nomad". All displacements are not the same'.[8] But precisely the often-one-dimensional reception and connotations of these different transitive forms of existence – migration as alienation, travel as experience, nomadism and vagabonding as (artistic) freedom – problematise perceptions of them as sharply delineated possibilities of existence. The point is to focus instead on the intersections that emerge from them and how they catalyse new thoughts and perceptions.

Nomads, migrants and travellers are united by change and movement, the potentially temporary instability of their existence, their experience of new spaces, societies and languages. Sometimes, as the history of emigration in the 1930s and 1940s shows, the transitions between tourism and exile were fluid. Examples include transalpine border crossings disguised as ski tours, and exhibition and reading tour by artists and writers

6 Alfred Hendricks, 'Menschen unterwegs. Mobilität als Erfolgsstrategie', in *Unterwegs. Nomaden früher und heute*, ed. Alfred Hendricks (Gütersloh: Linnemann, 2003), 8–11.
7 Birgit Haehnel, in *Regelwerk und Umgestaltung. Nomadistische Denkweisen in der Kunstwahrnehmung nach 1945* (Berlin: Reimer, 2007), 29; T. J. Demos, in *The Migrant Image: The Art and Politics of Documentary during Global Crisis* (Verona: Electa, 2017), 18–26.
8 Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 1996).

becoming exile because political circumstances no longer permitted their return.[9]

As a concept, the nomadic camera connotes a non-settled and nomadic 'meta-figure' or 'general metaphor'[10] and denotes a transitory state that proceeds from the technical apparatus, the camera, to include the act of photographing, the camera operator(s), the resulting photographs and their circulation as well as the objects photographed. With the accent on the camera, the research interest centres on the complex interconnections of photography, mobility and technology. It extends to touch on the photographic form and aesthetics. Photography can find different languages for forced and voluntary displacements, so the question of a specific pictorial aesthetic, the formal and compositional parameters of the photography of exile, migration and flight, arises.

Already in the early days of photography since its introduction in 1839, photographers travelled even with heavy-plate and large-format cameras. Throughout its existence, photography has served as a means of visualising displacements. In 1852, the French writer Victor Hugo went into exile on the Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey, where he composed autobiographical texts as well as drawings and photographs that pictorially recorded his escape. Hugo's portraits in the island's natural environment, taken in cooperation with his son Charles and the journalist Auguste Vaquerie, are perhaps the earliest exile photographs.[11] From Hugo's exile, widely branching lines extend to current migration, flight and displacement. The 150 years of photographic migration history – or migrant photographic history – is closely connected with technical innovations that can only be traced coarsely here.

Camera techniques like the plate camera and the daguerrotype or calotype favoured mainly professional photographers, as these techniques and transporting the large cameras were expensive and time-consuming. The introduction of the Kodak box camera in the late nineteenth century fuelled the market for amateur photography, which burgeoned globally with the miniature 35-mm cameras of the 1920s.[12]

9 Thomas Oellermann, 'Wenzel Jaksch und die Seliger-Gemeinde', Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 27 November 2021, https://www.fes.de/themenportal-geschichte-kultur-medien-netz/artikelseite/wenzel-jaksch.

10 Peter Gross, 'Der Nomade', in *Diven, Hacker, Spekulanten. Sozialfiguren der Gegenwart*, eds. Stephan Moebius and Markus Schroer (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010), 316–25.

11 Denis Canguilhem, 'En collaboration avec le soleil. Victor Hugo, photographies de l'exil' exh. cat., *Textes de F. Heilbrun, Q. Bajac, P. Néagu, N. Savy, S. Rouleau, F. Rodari*, (Paris: Musée d'Orsay et Maison de Victor Hugo, 1998) n.d., https://journals.openedition.org/etudesphotographiques//200.

12 Todd Gustavson, *Camera: A History of Photography from Daguerreotype to Digital* (New York: Sterling Publishing, 2009); Erich Stenger, *Die Geschichte der Kleinbildkamera bis zur Leica* (Frankfurt am Main, 1949).

Hans Günter Flieg's film strips, the Agfa Isopan F film and the Leica miniature camera indicate photography's unprecedented mobility in the 1920s and 1930s. Photography with film rolls was a democratic medium of images whose affordability and user-friendly technology made it broadly accessible. In addition, shops sprang up all over the world as service facilities where film had to be deposited for processing, with the negatives and prints to be collected later. Outsourcing the development process promoted the global use of photography by amateurs. Not only was the technology portable, but the photographic prints – the result of the technical process – were also available on the road.

Since the massive introduction of miniature cameras in the 1920s at the latest, photography became *the* technical and artistic medium of migration, exile and flight. Handheld cameras accompanied their owners along their migrations, leaving their homeland either voluntarily and, after 1933, often forcibly. Photographs taken on passages into exile tell of the outward routes and modes of transport.[13] Thus, images created in emigration or reflecting migration phenomena themselves have inherently nomadic qualities.

For me, photography is part of a history of migration and mobility. Flieg's negative strip highlights this in an unusual way, as the movement of the photographer, his camera and the film manifests itself through the photographs in Chemnitz on the left, the narrow strip in the middle and the shot in São Paulo on the right. The localisation in a specific environment as the starting point of the flight is clearly recognisable on the left in the Chemnitz cityscape. São Paulo as the terminus of the escape, meanwhile, is marked by the vase with the white orchids – in Brazil there are about 3,000 species from the Orchidaceae family.[14] The passage itself, as already explained, remains hidden in the dark strip.

The negative strip also offers access to, or an adaptation of, the concept of dis:connectivity in the context of global flight movements and their mediatisation in photography. Dis:connectivity overcomes a binary approach and has already been applied in, for example, sociological media theory, to capture digital (dis)connectivity, media consumption and media abstinence.[15] Dis:connectivity is a new approach to global history, which we at *global dis:connect* have already used productively and which focuses neither on interconnectedness nor on deglobalisation exclusively. Rather, as Roland Wenzlhuemer writes, it is about a 'tension between processes of entanglement

13 Burcu Dogramaci, *Fotografieren und Forschen: Wissenschaftliche Expeditionen* (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 2013).

14 'Orchideen S.O.S.', 20 December 2021, https://brasilienportal.ch/wissen/brasilien-report/kurz-reportagen/orchideen-sos.

15 Pepita Hesselberth, 'Discourses on Disconnectivity and the Right to Disconnect', *New Media & Society* 20, no. 5 (2018): 1994–2010.

and disentanglement',[16] which means that global connections always contain interruptions, detours and voids, be they transport routes, communication channels, escape routes or capital flows. For exile research, the concept of dis:connectivity can illuminate both the actors (persons) and actants (objects). That is precisely the purpose behind examining Flieg's photographs, which are connected to each other as successive images on a negative strip. Yet, there is an interstice, a gap between them.

Theoretically, two images on 35-mm film could be separated by only a few moments, as it was possible to take up to 36 images in succession with the Leica camera. Flieg, however, took the photographs and put the camera aside, not using it while in transit. Therefore, no photograph exists of this passage into exile, at least not on this film and not with this camera. It can be assumed that he did not want to draw attention to himself, at least towards the beginning of his journey, which led to Italy over the Brenner Pass. On the ship – I sadly don't know the exact route – no photographs were taken with the Leica either. Absence, the blank space marked in black on the strip, thus stands for a journey that was not visually documented. Absence, as Ulrike Lehmann writes, refers to a former presence and what has now disappeared: 'The absent presupposes the present. '[17]

But the space in-between also evidences the dis:connective relationship between home and abroad, between the origin and the terminus of the journey that was to separate Flieg almost permanently from the city of Chemnitz and from Germany. He only returned on the occasion of his first solo exhibition in Germany at the Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz in 2008, almost 70 years after he had emigrated.[18]

The film strip can also be understood as a timeline in which the direction runs from left to right, corresponding to the numbering of the images from 10 (Chemnitz) to 11 (São Paulo). Timelines are culturally bound. Where Latin script predominates, they run from left to right (i.e. as one reads), and where Arabic prevails, they are ordered from right to left (again according to the direction of reading). In everyday life, time is perceived as a trajectory that always runs irreversibly in one direction towards a final state.[19] This negative strip, however, also allows for another interpretation, namely time as something that runs from exile in two directions

16 Roland Wenzlhuemer, 'Dis:Konnektivität und Krise', (blog) 12 November 2020, https://www.blog.cas.uni-muenchen.de/topics/global-worlds/dis-konnektivitaet-und-krise.

17 Ulrike Lehmann, 'Ästhetik der Absenz. Ihre Rituale des Verbergens und der Verweigerung. Eine Kunstgeschichtliche Betrachtung', in *Ästhetik der Absenz. Bilder zwischen Anwesenheit und Abwesenheit*, eds. Ulrike Lehmann and Peter Weibel (München/Berlin: Klinckhardt & Biermann, 1994), 42–74.

18 Hans Günter Flieg, in ***Hans Günter Flieg: Dokumentarfotografie aus Brasilien** (1940–1970)*, ed. Ingrid Mössinger (Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2008), 8.

19 Erhard Keppler, ***Zeitliches. Vom Umgang mit der Zeit seit der Antike. Eine** Kulturgeschichte des Zeitbegriffs* (Katlenburg-Lindau: Copernicus, 2007).

separated by the dividing space. There is a time before exile and a time of exile or post-exile. These times are not characterised by succession, but by the difference and divergence of experiences and of cultural and linguistic spaces.

Time and space – the latter as a variable often used for flight, exile and migration – form an important connection. One could equally speak of dis:connective times and dis:connective spaces. Incidentally, Hans Günter Flieg found the film strip with the two photos from Chemnitz and São Paulo among his early photos only many decades later, when he was preparing a retrospective of his works for the Museu da Imagem de do Som in São Paulo in 1981. Through this find, he was able to recall the time of his emigration with temporal distance, thus creating connectivity.

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Mars and the urge to connect around 1900

Anna Nübling

What do you think this drawing depicts?

It might seem a strange question. Isn't the answer obvious? We see a cloudy sky. The viewer's gaze is drawn to the horizon where the sun is either rising or setting. The mood is calm and peaceful. In the foreground, we see a marshland streaked with channels, though seemingly untouched and natural. Something is peeking into the immediate foreground. It could be rocks or a wooden fence, imparting the impression of looking down on the lonely landscape from a hill.

But the motif is very different from what it appears to be. It is *no* peaceful marshland. Rather, it's Marsland: a depiction of the surface of Mars. And it is by no means as untouched and unspectacular as it may appear.

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Fig. 01
Taken from the book titled *Les Terres du Ciel*, published in 1884 by the French astronomer *Camille Flammarion.*

Theories about connected life on Mars around 1900

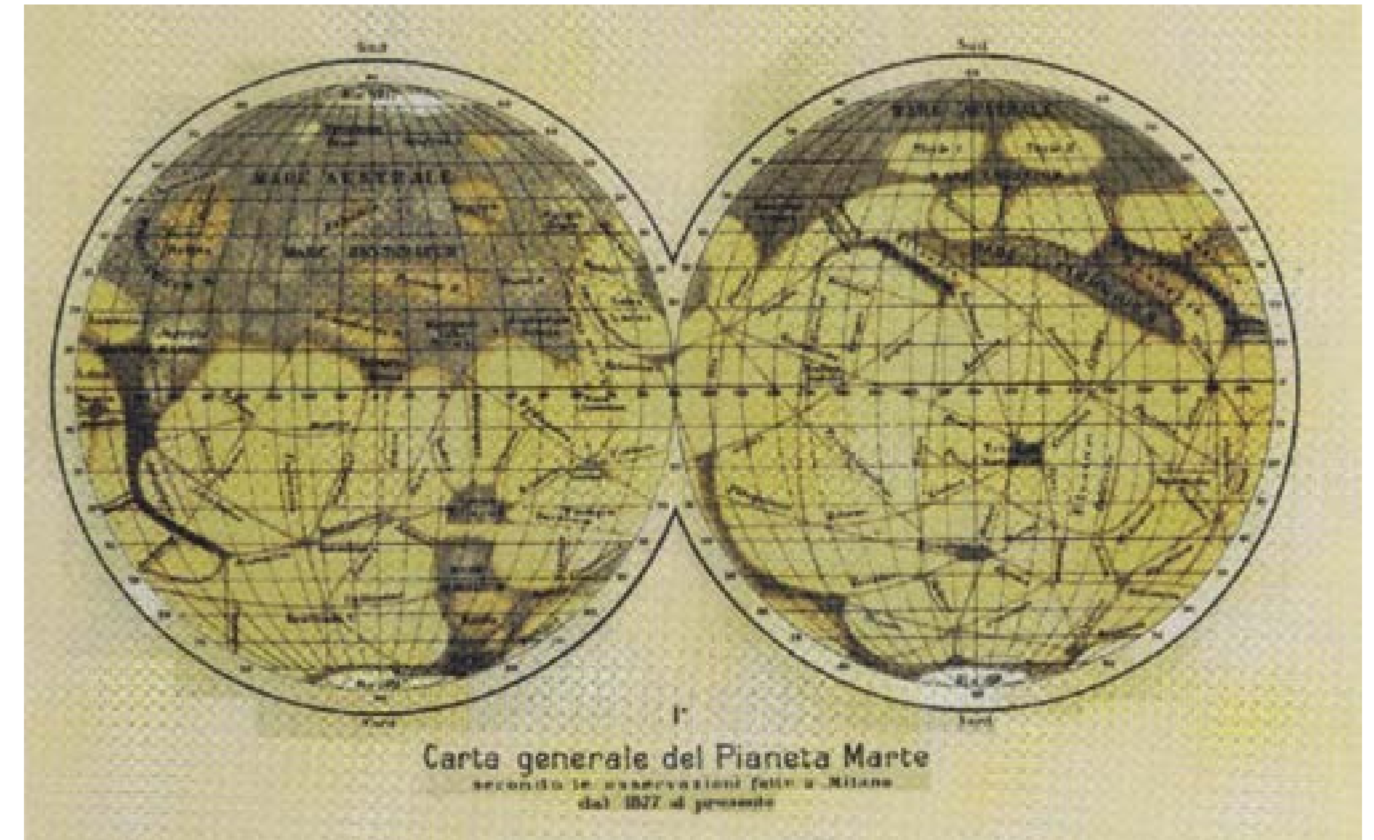
The drawing is taken from a book titled *Les Terres du Ciel*, published in 1884 by the French astronomer Camille Flammarion.[1]

In this publication, Flammarion argued (as in many other books he authored[2]) that Earth was not the only inhabited planet. Life on other planets, he was convinced, was highly probable. Whether or not life exists elsewhere is an old debate,[3] but as for Mars, there seemed to be proof, since in 1877 the astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli claimed to have seen channels on the surface.

Other astronomers, like Flammarion in France or Percival Lowell in the USA, reaffirmed this observation and argued that these channels must be artificial, interpreting them as huge canals created by Martian creatures.[4] Mars seemed especially suitable for life, as it appeared geographically and chemically very similar to Earth.[5] Lowell in particular propounded the thesis that Martians were building vast canals, as ever more seemed to be appearing over time. Referring to Lowell, the *New York Times* from 27 August 1911 headlined: *Martians Build Two Immense Canals in Two Years. Vast Engineering Works Accomplished in an Incredibly Short Time by Our Planetary Neighbors*.[6] Lowell, according to this newspaper article, had detected canals of which there had been no trace two years before. No natural reason for their existence, such as 'seasonal changes' on Mars, could explain these new canals. They must have been built! Their geometric arrangement encouraged this interpretation – 'of most orderly self-restraint' and 'wonderfully clear cut', as the author of the *Times* article quoted Lowell.[7] Therefore, they must have been the result of engineering.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, this theory found considerable resonance in popular culture, as is well known. It inspired works of literature and film such as H.G. Wells's *War of the Worlds* and fuelled an imaginary of Mars that remains vivid today.

1 Camille Flammarion, *Les terres du ciel* (Paris, 1884), 65.
2 Flammarion published his first book, *La pluralité des mondes habités* in 1862 at the age of twenty. Especially for Mars, see also Camille Flammarion, *La planète Mars et ses conditions d'habitabilité* (Paris, 1892).
3 For the history of the idea of extra-terrestrial life, see, for example, Michael Crowe, *The Extraterrestrial Life Debate 1750-1900. The Idea of a Plurality of Worlds from Kant to Lowell* (Cambridge, 1986).
4 Helga Abret and Lucian Boia, *Das Jahrhundert der Marsianer. Der Planet Mars in der Science Fiction bis zur Landung der Viking-Sonden 1976. Ein Science-Fiction Sachbuch* (München, 1984), 44. Lowell published his ideas about Mars in his books *Mars* (Boston et al., 1895), *Mars and Its Canals* (New York, 1906) and *Mars as the Abode of Life* (New York, 1908).
5 Flammarion, *La planète Mars et ses conditions d'habitabilité*, 589.
6 Mary Proctor, 'Martians Build Two Immense Canals in Two Years', *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 27 August, 1911.
7 Ibid.



This theory about life on Mars featured prominently in the discussion around 1900 about whether the new wireless communication technology could be used to communicate with extra-terrestrial beings – a discussion electrified by pioneers of that technology, like Nikola Tesla and Guglielmo Marconi, as well as the keen interest of the press. Already in 1892, Flammarion was convinced that the prospect of communicating with extra-terrestrials was 'not at all absurd'.[8] In fact, Tesla published an article in 1901 claiming that he had actually received extra-terrestrial signals with a wireless device. They must have been signs of intelligent life, as they gave a 'clear suggestion of number and order'. Tesla also prophesied that 'with the novel means [...] signals can be transmitted to a planet such as Mars',[9] rendering interplanetary conversations thinkable. According to the press, Marconi, too, revealed in 1920 that he believed some of the signals he had received during his experiments 'originated in the space beyond our planet' and had been 'sent by the inhabitants of other planets to the inhabitants of earth'. He even explicitly referred to the inhabitants of Mars when he stated that he 'would not be surprised if they should find a means of communication with this planet.' As 'our own planet is a storehouse of wonders', nothing seemed impossible.[10]

8 Crowe, *The Extraterrestrial Life Debate 1750-1900*, 395.
9 Nikola Tesla, 'Talking with the Planets', *Collier's Weekly*, 9 February, 1901: 5–6.
10 'Hello Earth! Hello! Marconi Believes He Is Receiving Signals from the Planets', *The Tomahawk*, 18 March, 1920. One of his recent biographers, however, clearly understates Marconi's belief in extra-terrestrials: Marc Raboy, *Marconi: The Man Who Networked the World* (Oxford, 2016), 471.

Fig. 02
La Vita Sul Pianeta Marte by Schiaparelli, G. V. (Giovanni Virginio), 1835-1910 (Image: https://archive.org).

Fig. 03
A Depiction of the alleged System of Canals on Mars. Title of Cosmopolitan Magazine XLIV, 4 (March 1908). (Image: https://www.loc.gov/item/cosmos000114)

Connectivity as a feature of progress

The story of the nineteenth-century fascination with Mars has been told many times.[11] Of course, as far as we know there were and are no real connections at all, neither canals on Mars nor signals from Martians. But around the turn of the twentieth century, people started to imagine them, and this is no less interesting.

The whole story about Martians building infrastructure and communicating is about them being connected to each other and even to the inhabitants of other worlds. Obviously, this tells us less about Mars than about the significance and valuation of connections and connectivity as they were perceived on Earth at that time. Imagining extra-terrestrial beings is, therefore, not about imagining the other, as is often argued in scholarship,[12] but about imagining oneself.[13]

Here begins historians' interest in Martian canals, at least those historians seeking to offer a more nuanced and less normative history of the role connections have played in making of the modern world. They offer an unusual point of departure for a critical history of the euphoria induced by connectivity and its implications.

First, the obvious: discussions about canals on Mars and communicating Martians reflect recent experiences on Earth. Martian canals would have been unthinkable without the impressive technological developments of the nineteenth century. Flammarion, for instance, explicitly mentioned alpine tunnels, the Suez Canal (opened in 1869), the Panama Canal (opened in 1914), and, more generally, railways, telegraphy, electricity, photography and the telephone.[14] Around 1900, speculation about communicating with Mars became a fanciful extrapolation on the future use of the new wireless technology.

More abstractly, however, visions of infrastructure-building and communicating Martians reveal a lot about late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century assumptions about the significance of connectedness for the idea of progress. Tesla took for granted that Mars was best suited for communication with Earth because 'its intelligent races [...] are far superior than us.'[15] The planet's beneficial climate, but especially its age, supported that widespread conviction.[16] Flammarion, for example, found it '*naturel*' and '*logique*' that the greater age of '*humanité*' on Mars made it '*plus perfectionnée*' than that on Earth.[17] Evolution, according to Flammarion, occurred on all inhabited worlds the very same way. A 'long-period comet passing in sight of the Earth from time to time', he envisioned, 'would have seen modifications of existence in each of its transits, in accordance with a slow evolution [...] progressing incessantly, for if Life is the goal of nature, Progress is the supreme law.' And this law of evolutionary progress, he was convinced, was 'the same for all worlds'.[18]

11 Most comprehensively, Mars has been studied as a topic of literature and film. See, for example, Justus Fetscher and Robert Stockhammer, eds., *Marsmenschen: Wie die Außerirdischen gesucht und erfunden wurden* (Leipzig, 1997).

12 As, for example, it is argued in John D. Peters, *Speaking into the Air. A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago/London, 2000), 230.
13 I agree with Roland Barthes, who put it thus: 'Der Mars ist [...] bloß eine erträumte Erde'. And more boldly: 'die Unfähigkeit, sich das Andere vorzustellen, ist einer der durchgängigsten Züge jener kleinbürgerlichen Mythologie [des 'Mythos des Selben'].' Roland Barthes, *Mythen des Alltags.* trans. Horst Brühmann (Berlin, 2010), 54, 55.
14 Flammarion, *La planète Mars et ses conditions d'habitabilité*, 586.
15 Crowe, *The Extraterrestrial Life Debate 1750-1900*, 395.
16 Beyond those mentioned, see, for the typical argument, Elias Colbert, *Star-Studies. What We Know of the Universe Outside the Earth* (Chicago, 1871), 78.
17 Flammarion, *La planète Mars et ses conditions d'habitabilité*, 586–87.
18 Camille Flammarion, *Astronomy for Amateurs, New York 1904 (First Published in French in 1894)* (New York, 1904), 331.

For observers on Earth, Martians' ability to build huge canals and to communicate with wireless was the ultimate proof that evolution had led Martians to a higher stage of development. The famous inventor Thomas Edison, for example, in 1920 equated technologically assisted communication with advancement, stating that: 'If we are to accept [...] that these signals are being sent out by inhabitants of other planets, we must at once accept with it the theory of their advanced development'.[19] And as for the canals, the writer H.G. Wells made use of the typical argument in an 1908 article in *Cosmopolitan Magazine* about *Things that live on Mars*. Referring again to the correlation between age and advancement, he speculated that 'Martians are probably far more intellectual than men and more scientific'. He attributed this alleged Martian advancement to the fact that they were, according to him, 'creatures of sufficient energy and engineering science', who were able 'to make canals beside which our greatest human achievements pale into insignificance'.[20]

Outer space and global history

Discussions about life on Mars around 1900 are, therefore, more than mere fanciful speculation. Reading them as reflections about the familiar rather than the other, they reveal deep-reaching assumptions about the nature of connectedness and its normative implications. They indicate that connectivity had become an important marker of progress. Both a state of being connected and the ability to build connective technology became signs of the evolutionary advancement of a particular place, territory or even an entire planet.

Global historians should take this as a reminder that connectivity often had and has normative implications as an indicator of advancement in a progressive teleology. Those without connections or broken connections were perceived as laggards in the scheme of evolution – be they in Africa or on Mercury.

The drawing that opened this essay, we may conclude, is not a romantic scene, but an important sign of a cosmological theory of progress by means of connectivity where technological infrastructure is the most important factor (and evidence). It is a vision that, in cosmological terms, extends beyond Mars and in which outer space is potentially full of communicating empires. Such assumptions suffuse not only science fiction, but were also formative when the Search for Extra-terrestrial Intelligence became a state-funded scientific enterprise in the 1960s in the USA and elsewhere – but that's another story.

19 'Hello Earth! Hello! Marconi Believes He Is Receiving Signals from the Planets'.
20 H.G. Wells, 'The Things That Live on Mars', *Cosmopolitan Magazine XLIV, no. 4 (March 1908): 342.*

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dis: connec- ted objects – finds and findings: the first of a series

French painting and the Nineteenth Century with a Postscript by *Alfred Flechtheim*

Burcu Dogramaci

I acquired the book *French Painting And The Nineteenth Century,* published in London in September 1937, from an online antiquarian bookshop a few months ago. The background to this is an ongoing inquiry into artistic exile in London after 1933 conducted in the course of a research project I have been leading since 2017.[1] I was interested in the volume because it contained the last text by the gallery owner Alfred Flechtheim, who, as a German Jew facing persecution at home, sought refuge in London. This text has received little attention, yet it relates how intensively Flechtheim tried to re-establish his livelihood in the British capital. Perhaps even more striking is how it documents his momentous work for the recognition of nineteenth-century French art.

French Painting And The Nineteenth Century is also a dis:connective object: it is connected with and results from Flechtheim's life in exile, but it also points to the fissures of exile and thus to an existence marked by voids and upheavals. At the same time, the book recalls an incomplete memory, one that is also related to exile. For Flechtheim's disenfranchisement and persecution, the financial decline and destruction of his successful galleries, as well as his emigration, banished his work to oblivion decades. Only with the major exhibition and publication *Alfred Flechtheim. Sammler. Kunsthändler* in the Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf in 1987 did Flechtheim return to art history. A major provenance research project in 2014, which involved 15 museums,

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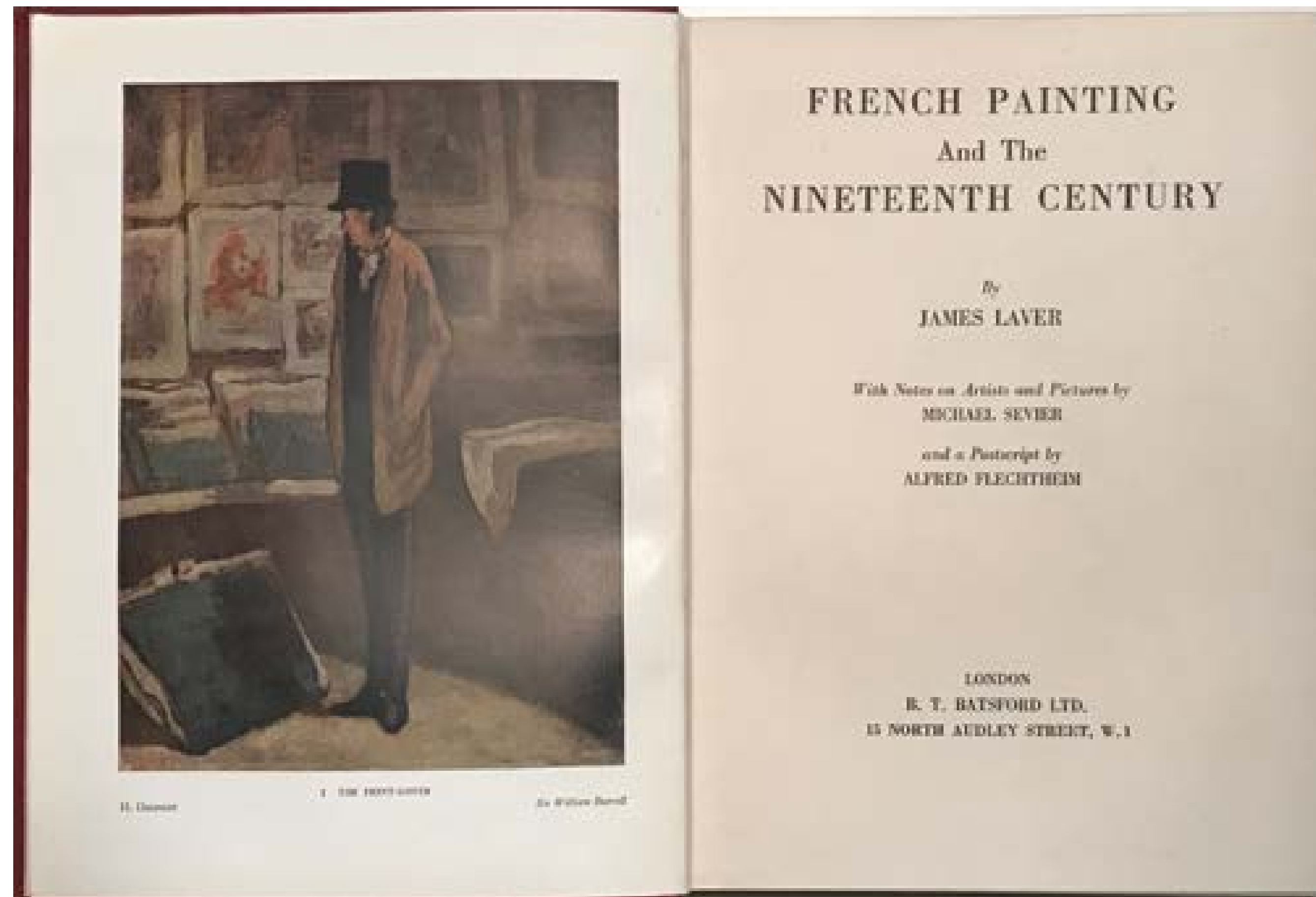
1 Specifically, the ERC Consolidator Grant research project ‘Relocating Modernism: Global Metropolises, Modern Art and Exile (METROMOD)’.



FRENCH PAINTING
And The
NINETEENTH CENTURY

By
JAMES LAVER

With Notes on Artists and Pictures by
MICHAEL SEVIER

and a Postscript by
ALFRED FLECHTHEIM

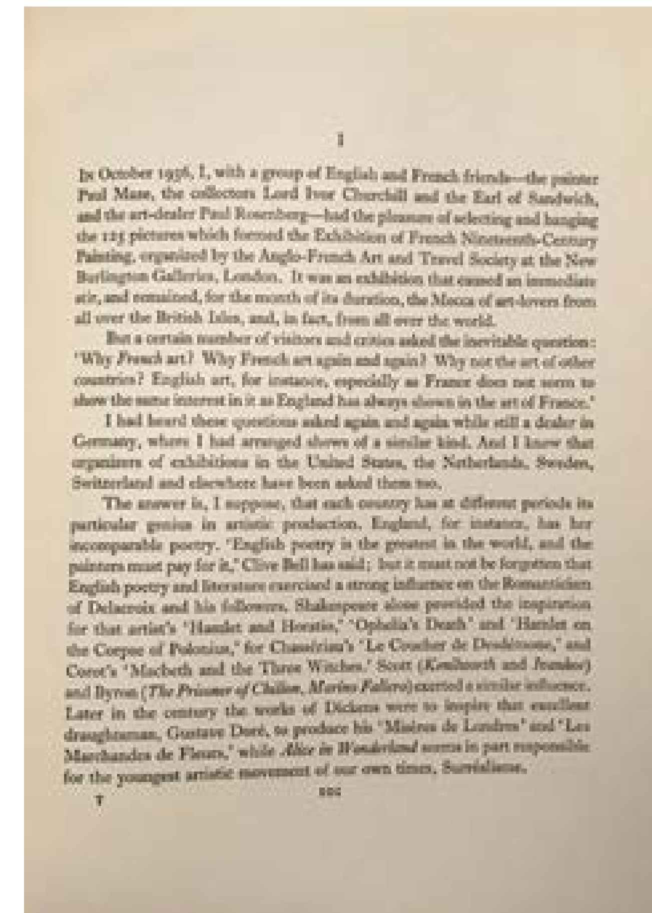
LONDON
B. T. BATSFORD LTD.
15 NORTH AUDLEY STREET, W. 1

Fig. 01
James Laver, French Painting And The Nineteenth Century. B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1937, with Alfred Flechtheim's "Postscript", pp. 101–114

followed the links between items in the collection and the gallerist Alfred Flechtheim.[2]

Flechtheim was a successful gallerist, with art spaces in Berlin and Düsseldorf, as well as the publisher of *Der Querschnitt* magazine. Flechtheim exhibited the most important modern artists of his time, including Rudolf Belling, George Grosz, Oskar Kokoschka, Georg Kolbe, Pablo Picasso, Renée Sintenis and many more. When the National Socialists seized power, Alfred Flechtheim and his company, which was already struggling in the Great Depression, became the target of racist attacks in which he was targeted as a Jew, a cultural Bolshevist and an outstanding patron of the artistic avant-garde.[3] In 1937, the *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) exhibition in Munich not only defamed many of the artists whom Flechtheim represented but also attacked the gallery owner himself in texts displayed throughout the exhibition.[4]

2 Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, 'Alfred Flechtheim. Kunsthaendler der Avantgarde', *Alfred Flechtheim. Kunsthaendler der Avantgarde*, 29 March 2022, http://alfredflechtheim.com.
3 Cordula Frowein, 'Alfred Flechtheim im Exil in England', in *Alfred Flechtheim. Sammler. Kunsthändler.* Verleger (Duesseldorf: Kunstmuseum Duesseldorf, 1987), 59.
4 Ottfried Dascher, "Es ist was Wahnsinniges mit der Kunst". *Alfred Flechtheim. Sammler, Kunsthändler, Verleger,* Quellenstudie zur Kunst 6 (Waedenswil: Nimbus. Kunst und Buecher AG, 2011), 394.



1

In October 1936, I, with a group of English and French friends—the painter Paul Maze, the collectors Lord Ivor Churchill and the Earl of Sandwich, and the art-dealer Paul Rosenberg—had the pleasure of selecting and hanging the 125 pictures which formed the Exhibition of French Nineteenth-Century Painting, organized by the Anglo-French Art and Travel Society at the New Burlington Galleries, London. It was an exhibition that caused an immediate stir, and remained, for the month of its duration, the Mecca of art-lovers from all over the British Isles, and, in fact, from all over the world.

But a certain number of visitors and critics asked the inevitable question: 'Why *French* art? Why French art again and again? Why not the art of other countries? English art, for instance, especially as France does not seem to show the same interest in it as England has always shown in the art of France.'

I had heard these questions asked again and again while still a dealer in Germany, where I had arranged shows of a similar kind. And I know that organizers of exhibitions in the United States, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and elsewhere have been asked them too.

The answer is, I suppose, that each country has at different periods its particular genius in artistic production. England, for instance, has her incomparable poetry. 'English poetry is the greatest in the world, and the painters must pay for it,' Clive Bell has said; but it must not be forgotten that English poetry and literature exercised a strong influence on the Romanticism of Delacroix and his followers. Shakespeare alone provided the inspiration for that artist's 'Hamlet and Horatio,' 'Ophelia's Death' and 'Hamlet on the Corpse of Polonius,' for Chassériau's 'Le Coucher de Desdémone,' and Corot's 'Macbeth and the Three Witches.' Scott (*Kenilworth* and *Ivanhoe*) and Byron (*The Prisoner of Chillon, Marino Faliero*) exercised a similar influence. Later in the century the works of Dickens were to inspire that excellent draughtsman, Gustave Doré, to produce his 'Misères de Londres' and 'Les Marchandes de Fleurs,' while *Alice in Wonderland* seems in part responsible for the youngest artistic movement of our own times, Surrealism.

Flechtheim had been living abroad since 1933 and worked for the Mayor Gallery at 18 Cork Street in London. Later, he was also the official representative of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler's Paris gallery. Flechtheim's aim was to introduce French and German modernism to the London art market and to raise its profile. *Paintings by Paul Klee* opened in January 1934, and an exhibition on George Grosz followed in June the same year.[5] Although Flechtheim greatly influenced these and other exhibitions at the Mayor Gallery and provided loans, his name remained largely unmentioned.[6] Flechtheim also worked with the Agnew Gallery and was responsible for its new focus on French Impressionism.[7] Other collaborations included the Alex Reid & Lefevre Gallery and The Leicester Galleries. However, his contribution to the acceptance of continental modernism barely registered with the public. In London, Flechtheim – unlike in Düsseldorf and Berlin – could not conduct his business under his gallery name.

In October 1936, Flechtheim organised the *Exhibition of Nineteenth Century French Painting* at the New Burlington Galleries, which brought together work by Manet, van Gogh and Cézanne.

5 Frowein, 'Alfred Flechtheim im Exil in England', 60.
6 Dascher, *"Es ist was Wahnsinniges mit der Kunst". Alfred Flechtheim. Sammler, Kunsthändler, Verleger*, 331.
7 Frowein, 'Alfred Flechtheim im Exil in England', 61.

Fig. 02
First page of Alfred Flechtheim's "Postscript" (p. 101) in James Laver's French Painting And The Nineteenth Century. B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1937

Alfred Flechtheim died in 1937. His body was cremated at Golders Green Crematory in London. Posthumously, the final text he authored appeared in James Laver's *French Painting and The Nineteenth Century*.[8] The book is dedicated to Flechtheim: 'In Memory of ALFRED FLECHTHEIM who died 9th March 1937 "Marchand de Tableaux Créateur".' The book brings together many of the paintings shown at the *Exhibition of Nineteenth Century French Painting*. Flechtheim himself selected many of the images and edited the texts. In his postscript, he describes how he organised the exhibition at the New Burlington Galleries and why he always championed French art. His text formulates a credo that can be read as a reflection of his situation as an exiled art dealer and as a pacifist statement on the political situation:

'Art need be none the worse for being national or provincial, but really great art soars above racial frontiers and belongs to the world. [...] Such an art, to borrow J.B. Manson's words, 'can be understood with few exceptions by the whole world. It affords a common meeting ground, and transcends all those considerations of imperialism and politics which are the cause of international strife and ill will.'[9]

From the book *French Painting And The Nineteenth Century,* further connections lead, for example, to the exhibition *20th Century German Art,* which also took place in 1938 at the New Burlington Galleries in London and was organised in reaction to the National Socialist *Entartete Kunst* exhibition. Another connection points to the photographer Gerty Simon, for whom Flechtheim curated a solo exhibition at the Camera Club. This exhibition *Camera Portraits* featured 58 portraits. The exhibition also included a portrait of Flechtheim. Simon photographed Flechtheim around 1935, during the period of his professional re-emergence in London, which brought him into contact with leading galleries in the city.

The portrait continues a traditional convention. As early as the 1920s, Flechtheim was portrayed in severe profile by Hugo Erfurth and Frieda Riess. Flechtheim's striking features, with his distinctive nose and hair combed back severely from his face, were similarly emphasised in Rudolf Belling's *Portrait Alfred Flechtheim* (1927). Gerty Simon's photograph shows the art dealer in the approved side view. The face is brightly lit and stands out against the dark background. The picture is tightly cropped and focused entirely on the head. The dark circles around the eyes and the clouded eyelids give the subject a melancholy expression.

8 Alfred Flechtheim, 'Postscript', in *French Painting and the Nineteenth Century,* ed. James Laver (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1937), 101–14.
9 Flechtheim, 114.

Simon's photograph of Flechtheim and the book *French Painting And The Nineteenth Century* are important sources for reconstructing the gallery owner's activities and professional networks in London. *French Painting And The Nineteenth Century* provides insights into the artistic taste, aesthetic preferences and persuasions of the gallerist: 'The final choice of the illustrations, and much of the editorial work on the book were undertaken by the late Alfred Flechtheim, whose enthusiasm was a stimulus to all concerned in its production'. Flechtheim selected what was available to him from English and other private collectors and museums; in this respect, one can speak of an immediate reaction to the available opportunities or of a canon in the sign of exile.

Fig. 03
Gerty Simon, Portrait of Alfred Flechtheim, London, c. 1935 (The Bernard Simon Estate, Wiener Holocaust Library Collections)

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book review

Abdulrazak Gurnah and the afterlives of German colonialism in East Africa

Tom Menger

Gurnah's Nobel Prize invites us to ponder Germany's colonial past between the Scramble for Africa and the First World War in what is now Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda.

When Abdulrazak Gurnah was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in October 2021, the jury honoured 'his uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism'. With East Africa being central to much of Gurnah's work, German colonialism is a regular presence in his novels, more precisely the colony of German East Africa, the biggest German colony of all, which comprised modern Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda. Although the history of this territory has been thoroughly studied, it still very much stands in the shadow of contemporary public debates on the German genocide perpetrated against the Herero and the Nama, as well as the debate on the continuities between that genocide and the Holocaust.

German East Africa is especially prominent in two of Gurnah's novels: the early *Paradise* (1994) and the recent *Afterlives* (2020). They invoke several themes. The first, perhaps unsurprisingly, is colonial violence. Though such violence is not always in the foreground of Gurnah's books, it is always present. When Gurnah's characters refer to the Mdachi, the Germans and their African soldiers, the askari, they often use terms like merciless, viciousness and ferocity. German colonial rule in East Africa began with violence, when Hermann von Wissmann waged war on the coastal populations from 1889 to 1890, after these had resisted the attempt of the German East Africa Company to run the colony as a private

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This text has appeared previously in the Frankfurter Allgemeine (German) and on Africa Is a Country.

Fig. 01
German colonial volunteer mounted patrol, 1914. Image via Bundesarchiv, Bild 105-DOA3114, credit Walther Dobbertin CC-BY-SA 3.0 de (Image: Wikimedia)

enterprise. The hanging in 1889 of one of the revolt's leaders, Al Bushiri, which the Germans orchestrated as a grand spectacle, recurs as an incisive event in Afterlives.

As recent research has made apparent, European perpetrators of colonial violence employed such 'spectacles' of brutal violence as they believed these would send a message to what, in British colonial discourse, was frequently referred to as 'the native mind'. However, the colonial masters seldom stopped to consider what constituted this so-called 'native mind', which they perceived to be monolithic and unchanging. This theme is also evident with Gurnah. While German violence frequently indeed shocks the local population, it remains equally incomprehensible. *Paradise* relates for instance how the Germans 'hanged some people for reasons no one understood'. At times, however, Gurnah's references to such German 'spectacle' of violence also reveal some irony. The over-the-top braggadocio of an askari in *Afterlives*, who boasts that everyone should fear the 'merciless angry bastards' of the *Schutztruppe* colonial force and that its German officers are 'high-handed experts in terror', is unable to make much of an impression on Pascal, an African belonging to a local mission.

Once the Germans had subjugated the coast in 1890, they turned their attention to wresting control of the Arab-dominated caravan trade that ranged from the sea to the Congo. The end of this caravan trade serves as the backdrop for *Paradise*: 'There will be no more journeys now the European dogs are everywhere,' one experienced caravan guide bemoans at some point. But this was only the beginning of German conquest. German rule continued to penetrate inland territories until the turn of the twentieth century. The wars that ensued were characterised by especially destructive violence. Indiscriminate targeting of fields, harvests and villages was part of the colonial wars' standard repertoire (not only that of the Germans) to starve the evasive enemies into submission. Weaving in German epithets, Gurnah explains through an askari character: 'That was the way the schutztruppe worked. At the slightest sign of resistance, the schwein were crushed and their livestock slaughtered and villages burned'.

The most devastating episode in this mode of warfare was the Maji Maji War of 1905-1907, when several ethnicities simultaneously revolted against the forced labour and punitive taxation of colonial rule. The war provides the initial setting for Afterlives, even if the East African coast was largely unaffected by fighting and the events thus only appear in the background. Still, Gurnah is unambiguous about the gruesomeness of the war: 'the Germans have killed so many that the country is littered with skulls and bones and the earth is soggy with blood'. Research estimates that the war cost up to 300,000 lives, principally due to the starvation that resulted from the scorched-earth tactics.

When the First World War reached the shores of East Africa, Europeans for the first time battled other Europeans in this region. As Gurnah emphasises, though, the armies that faced off in this theatre were mostly composed of Africans and Indians, who constituted the rank-and-file of colonial forces on both sides. On the German side, the commander Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, who saw himself outnumbered by British, Belgian and Portuguese forces, pursued a guerrilla-like fighting retreat, which he maintained until the war's end. This campaign earned him renown in Germany for decades thereafter. However, the post-war glorification of the commander masked the brutal reality of the retreat, whereby Lettow-Vorbeck's troops ruthlessly confiscated the stores of the local population to feed themselves, and then proceeded to burn everything in their wake to stall their enemies. The result–once again–was desperate hunger. Moreover, tens of thousands of African civilians were conscripted as porters and died of exhaustion. Local populations that resisted faced severe reprisals, as in *Afterlives*, where a corporal executes a village elder with a bullet to the head. The trauma induced by the horrific German retreat is a recurring theme in the book. Current research suggests that several hundred thousand lives were lost in East Africa during the First World War, and many hundreds of thousands more after the Spanish Flu descended on an already emaciated and devastated population.

Reading these novels as but a literary treatment of colonial violence, however, would not do them justice. They also provide a rich view into the lives of colonised people. Gurnah, who himself was born under British colonial rule on the island of Zanzibar,

pays particular attention to the lives of the coastal population and its African, Indian and Arab influences. In this cosmopolitan milieu, Islam, as religion and worldview, and Swahili, the lingua franca, were most often the connective elements. Precisely this worldliness has recently brought this region to the attention of global history, as it shows globalisation as not driven exclusively by Western actors. A dense net of connections across the Indian Ocean, the East African coast, the Horn of Africa, Madagascar, the Comoros, the Arabian Peninsula, and the west coast of India prevailed here centuries before European colonisation. Traders in Zanzibar could activate networks to take out loans in India, and Islamic scholars moved freely between the various poles in this cosmos.

With great sensitivity and sometimes a fairy-tale atmosphere, Gurnah explores this world of caravans and coastal cities, warts and all. Gurnah's characters live their lives in spite of colonialism. They grow up, gather experience, enjoy wealth or suffer poverty, and fall in love. Sometimes the colonial masters are relegated to the background. Thus, these novels tell stories of resilience in which the colonised are not merely victims.

Toward the end of *Afterlives*, Gurnah engages with the question of continuities between German colonialism and Nazism, though in his very own way. It turns out that Ilyas, an askari whose whereabouts after 1918 long remain obscure in the book, relocated to Germany in the 1920s. There he found work as a singer, performing at propaganda events with a revisionist-colonial bent. Due to an affair with a white woman, he was interned in a concentration camp in 1938, where he died in 1942. As unbelievable as it may sound, similar life stories of actual former askari in Germany are recorded. Many Germans of African descent spent the war in concentration camps, but some remained in Germany after the war. They represent a different kind of continuity – that of an enduring black community in Germany.

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Eröffnungsfeier/ Opening ceremony Käte Hamburger Kolleg

global dis: connect

Programm/Programme:

- **Vortrag/Lecture: Monica Juneja (Heidelberg):** *Awkward, unstable, creative: Dis:connection as world-making*
- **Empfang/Reception**

12 Mai/May 2022

18:00 (Einlass/Doors open: 17:30)

Veranstaltungsort/Venue
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Kaulbachstraße 15
80539 Munich

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conference reports

Imperial margins take centre stage

A conference report
by Mikko Toivanen & Ben Kamis

Together with the Munich Centre for Global History, ***global dis:connect*** recently had the privilege of hosting a stimulating workshop titled *Re-examining Empires from the Margins: Towards a New Imperial History of Europe*, organised by the inimitable Bernhard Schär and Mikko Toivanen.

The event was held on 22-23 October 2021, and – thanks to the pandemic – some of the internationally renowned participants were attending remotely. The purpose was to explore the history of imperial entanglements involving those beyond the typical cast of European imperial powers. In other words, what did Nordic imperialism look like? What were the imperial strategies and practices of Central and Eastern Europe?

Bernhard and Mikko opened the conference themselves, remarking how research into imperial histories of 'marginal' European powers has been gaining momentum and how this tack can expand and improve our understandings of atypical European colonial history. However, they also noted that much existing research on the subject has focused on individual case studies to the neglect of the underlying global networks and structures. They also added the important caveat that, despite its relative neglect, this research must be wary of recentring Europe in histories of global imperialism and colonisation.

The conference's first panel dove right in, tackling political and diplomatic engagements with empire from three different perspectives. First, Arne Gellrich discussed the participation of

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Ben Kamis
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Fig. 01
The first assembly of the League of Nations
(Image: The National Library of Norway)

Sweden and Norway in the League of Nations in the interwar years. Gellrich argued that these neutral countries were able to influence colonial policy and promote their governments' social democratic ideals thanks to the League's structure, but they ultimately could not overcome the discrimination of colonialism.

Focusing on the same two countries in his talk, Aryo Makko described their efforts to profit from colonial trade through proactive diplomacy around the turn of the twentieth century. These efforts largely rested on a transnational network of citizens of third-party states.

Third, Elise Mazurié examined the international feminist congress held in Algeria in 1932, and how the Swiss delegation pursued a policy of 'maternalist imperialism'. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the event stopped short of meaningfully criticising French imperialism.

The second panel opted to investigate the creativity involved in transimperial occupations. Andrew Mackillop described how mercenaries, as a professional group, enabled Switzerland to participate in the activities of the largest European imperial powers, following their navies from its landlocked European redoubt out into the oceans of Asia. Despina Magkanari's work touched a little closer to home, as she examined how Julius Klaproth, an 18th-century German orientalist, navigated academia in imperial Russia with the help of professional networks of scholars. Andreja Mesarič brought us back to the familiar historical turf of missionaries, describing how Slovenian Catholic proselytisers in nineteenth-century Sudan influenced ideas in Slovenia and the broader Austro-Hungarian Empire about race and colonisation. She also analysed these figures' recent revival in modern Slovenian discourse.

John Hennessy concluded the panel with a more general, conceptual contribution. He argued for the analytical utility of occupational groups rather than nationalities as an organisational principle.

The workshop went meta in the third session, which featured a transnational group of scholars discussing transimperial academic networks in history. Katherine Arnold opened the session by relating how German naturalists in British Southern Africa were unavoidably implicated in the physical and environmental violence of colonisation.

Naturally, representations always say as much about the representers as they do about the represented, as the next three papers in the panel showed. Corinne Geering illustrated precisely this intuition with museum collections in Vienna, Moscow, Warsaw and Prague and how they informed perceptions of European cultures by displaying artefacts from outside Europe. Similarly, Szabolcs Laszló examined the special case of Hungary and how Hungarian orientalists presented Hungarians' ostensibly Asian roots in a way that diverged from the broader orientalist movement. Continuing the primordialist theme, Kristín Loftsdóttir reflected on busts made in Iceland by a nineteenth-century French expedition and how they were used as indicators of Iceland's rank in the contemporary racial hierarchy.

The fourth panel also revisited familiar territory for global historians: travellers. But the participants did so in novel ways. Evaluating over 100 travel authors, Tomasz Ewertowski devised four categories of empathic solidarity displayed by Polish and Serbian travellers in colonial contexts. By contrast, Anna Karakatsouli focused on a single Greek explorer – Panayiotis Potagos – who found an idiosyncratic niche in the writings of ancient Greek geographers and historians, preferring their representations to the imperial politics of his own time.

Of course, some colonial actors are not only disinterested in imperial politics, but unapologetic. Valentina Kezić described the case of Carl Lehrman, a Croatian explorer who served both under Henry Morton Stanley as well as the Belgian administration in the Congo. According to Kezić, Lehrman remained staunchly and simultaneously loyal to his Croatian home and the Belgian colonial

system that he served. And Janne Lahti showed how historical actors could practice imperialism in their own backyards. Specifically, Finnish travellers to the Petsamo region on the Arctic Sea in the twentieth century would often reproduce discursive tropes from other colonial contexts, especially with regard to the indigenous Sámis.

The fifth panel examined intra-European cases. The first contribution by Lucile Dreidemy and Eric Burton focused on the Paneuropean Union, an initiative launched by Austria in the 1920s. Contrary to the popular view that this union was an instance of proto-European integration, Dreidemy and Burton discuss its aims of imperial management in Africa and possibly even to become the new face of the Habsburg Empire. Returning to the Finnish context, Rinna Kullaa demonstrated that forced labour migration under Russian rule in the nineteenth century was sadly a two-way street: Central Asian labourers were used to build tram tracks in Helsinki, while Finns were sent to colonise Siberia. Sarah Schlachetzki closed the panel with a paper on Prussian architecture in Poland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, arguing that standardised settlement farms display colonial aims and serve imperial purposes just as representational architecture is known to do.

The workshop's final session featured three invited discussants, who each commended the quality of the research presented while also reminding the participants not to ignore those at the margins of their margins. Gunlög Fur recalled that margins are always drawn by someone, and women and non-European actors are often left on the outside. Zoltán Ginelli greeted the attention to Central and Eastern Europe, but he warned the authors not to neglect those beyond Europe, nor those who were marginalised within Europe under post-war communist rule. Closing the workshop, Felicia Gottmann cast her gaze upon the papers' temporal margins, suggesting that comparison with early modern empires can inform and enrich analyses of their modern successors.

Re-examining empires from the Margins was an important event for ***global dis:connect***. It showed that we can hold stimulating, fruitful discussions with international participants even under difficult pandemic conditions. It was also one of the first events we had the privilege to host. As such, it evidenced the confidence the workshop's illustrious participants have in a yet-young institution. We can only hope that they have profited from the experience as much as we have.

Approaching dis:connections

A conference report by Anna Nübling

Scholars have recently turned to aspects of disconnectivity for a better understanding of globalisation. ***global dis:connect***, the latest Käte Hamburger Research Centre, has been established to further explore these aspects and especially the dynamics between processes of connectivity and disconnectivity in globalisation. To emphasise this relationship, we speak of *dis:connectivity*.

But what does this term really mean, and how can the concept nourish globalisation research and, with it, a better understanding of the present? One opportunity to discuss this question occurred on 2 December 2021 when ***global dis:connect*** hosted a self-consciously exploratory workshop on infrastructures with participants from its own ranks as well as from the German Historical Institute in Washington DC.

When we think about globalisation, we imagine Earth as a space where people, commodities and ideas are on the move. Such mobility would be impossible without transportation and communications infrastructures. Globality clearly consists of material connections between spatially remote elements as well as the ideas and perceptions our forebears had and we continue to have about them. Since the nineteenth century, experts, politicians and corporations have extended global infrastructures to achieve greater speed, freedom and prosperity. Being connected has long carried a predominantly positive connotation.

Networks, which have penetrated the lexicon of everyday life and the conceptual toolkit of historiography, are one example of

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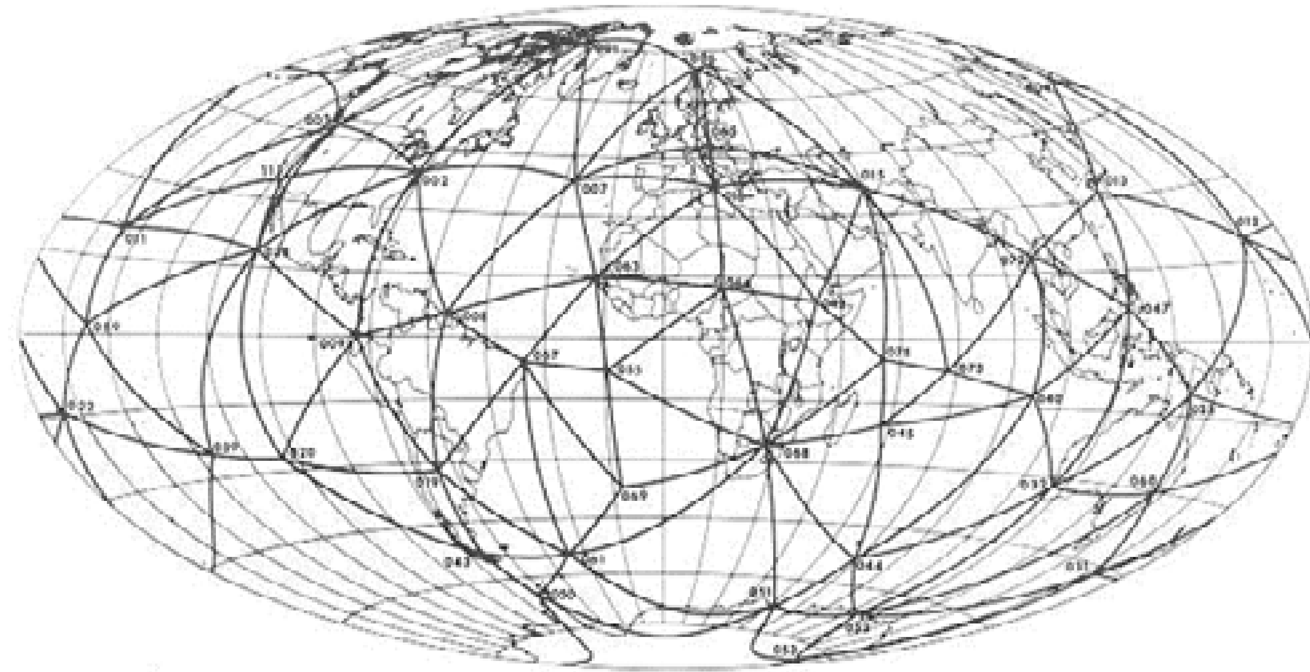


Fig. 01
Networks can trump geography. (Image: Schmid via Drewes & Ádám)

connectivity's good reputation. But as Christoph Streb stressed while looking at the *Begriffsgeschichte* of the term *network* until the eighteenth century, its connotation was negative. It invoked notions of closed (and therefore rather suspicious) circles or of being trapped in a net. This changed in the nineteenth century when the idea of infrastructure came into play. *Network* became closely connected to positive notions of movement and the flowing that it was thought to enable. This notion survived into the twentieth century when network increasingly came to refer to interpersonal connections, much as we use the word today.

Tom Menger discussed this positive (Western) notion of infrastructure-based connectedness on a different level. Using the examples of the pioneering colonial oil infrastructure in British Burma (1880s) and German military units in the Ottoman vilayet of Mosul (1917), he showed that what Western observers perceived as proof of civilisation and their own technical prowess was more of a joint venture. The Western fantasy of bringing civilisation to the uncivilised was just that: a fantasy. How those infrastructures actually worked refutes this illusion. They did not run with modern Western technology alone, but with the help of local means and knowledge.

Indeed, each contribution problematised the Western view of infrastructure by taking a closer look at concrete circumstances. In contrast to predominant historical and contemporary narratives, they all drew attention to the failures as well as the successes. Infrastructure, the contributors argued, always disables and excludes just as it enables and includes. All agreed that infrastructure planning and building was densely entangled with dynamics of exclusion, as when modes of transportation and their spatial manifestations could become sites of exclusion and boundary-drawing.

Fig. 02
Tempelhof – named after a temple but built like a fortress. (Image: Walt Jabsco)

Carolin Liebisch-Gümüs's presentation on migration and immobility at the airport is a stellar illustration. She told of the Jewish Grünwald family, who fled from Nazi Germany by airplane in the 1930s, to show the interplay between mobility-enabling infrastructures and restrictive mobility regimes. Because the required transit visa was denied, the family first went to Italy by train. From there they flew to London by plane, which at that time had to stopover in Germany. There, mother and daughter were taken from the plane and mistreated by Germans. On the one hand, this case shows how aviation is very fundamentally bound to Earth in the form of national control. On the other hand, the plane became a means of protection and humanitarianism: the pilot refused to leave the airport without the Jewish family members.

Nevertheless, Liebisch-Gümüs stressed that the drive to control and restrict the kinds of mobility that airports and aviation enable has a long history. In this example the airport figures as a national border post and a global place that is entangled in international relations at the same time. The airport serves as a fulcrum to explore uneven mobilities, which are regulated by viapolitics, which denotes the power to determine what forms of mobility are desirable and especially who may use them and go where. These differences are clearly depicted in the airport's topography, which strictly separates the welcome from the outcasts.

Examining the Pan-American Railway, an important infrastructure project that – though never realised – fueled discussions for decades, Mario Peters confirmed this observation. Here, too, the

question of desired and undesired connections was crucial. As elsewhere, the mobility of goods was usually welcomed, while the mobility of people was perceived as much more problematic. Moreover, uneven power relations and the fear of connectivity that could result might also have prevented the project's fruition. Though Peters argued that this explanation might be too simplistic and those involved in the project were often divided along other lines, the planning commissions often were seen as divided between expansionist North Americans and South Americans wary of US imperialism.

Infrastructure's potential use as a means of control was even more plainly stressed by Andreas Greiner. He showed that colonial powers in the 1930s saw aviation as a 'tool of empire', as a means of linkage and control in the face of mounting disintegration. Small wonder that the expansion of a network of flight connections followed imperial axes and relied on transimperial interactions.

Greiner emphasised that those networks had material as well as immaterial aspects. While juridification and cooperation was organised through international organisations, aviation was very much anchored on the (local) ground. For example, transcontinental flights had to stop repeatedly, and the locals who performed maintenance and repair on the ground helped to create and preserve important knowledge and served as cultural brokers. These actors influenced globalisation very concretely by, for example, shaping global routes that integrated new aerial connections into their own mobility networks. But just as aviation enabled inclusion by connecting previously inaccessible spaces, it could exclude, as when previously connected regions were excised from the network.

Boris Belge provided another example of this sort of dis:connection. He observed that the history of the Port of Odessa defies common narratives of globalisation: when globalisation gained momentum in the second half of the nineteenth century, a discourse of crisis emerged that eventually contributed to the port city's decline. Ironically in this case, the opening of one transportation infrastructure – the Suez Canal in 1869 – dis:connected another. The new canal warped Odessa's trade routes as some trade flows dropped markedly. But new ones, like the tea trade, also blossomed.

With ballast, one of the backbones of global shipping in the nineteenth century, Paul Blickle showed that dismantling infrastructure could go hand in hand with more flexible connections. In an important shift in the second half of that century, the long-favoured sand, stone and iron ballast were replaced by sea water. This move also marked a change from a shoreline-ballasting infrastructure towards individual installations on ships. Blickle further pointed out what might count as a particular case of dis:connection: despite widespread demand for ballast, it never developed into a commodity.

The language of flows, networks, connections and the historical baggage this language carries often hide uneven power relations that were established or maintained through infrastructure. Networks, again, provide a clear demonstration. The common image of 'flat' networks suggests equality. Accordingly, in historiography network is often used to tell stories of equality or participation. Hierarchies and power relations fade into the background. But our exploration of concrete infrastructure projects with an eye to dis:connection suggests that such relations may be obscure, but they do not disappear. All case studies presented made this point very plainly. The contributions demand greater attention to how infrastructures reflect uneven power relations, ignore specific people and places, and replace existing infrastructure systems.

But just as infrastructures can be tools of power, they can also be tools of resistance, subversion and appropriation by marginalised actors. Many of the participants agreed on the importance of (local) agency. While Belge remarked that actual people are often absent in the classical economic histories of Odessa's rise and decline, Menger recalled how oil infrastructures relate to human mobility and how the global oil-based connections cut other, pre-existing connections. Liebisch stressed that, as much as airports are sites of migration control, they are also sites of individualised resistance against such control.

Fig. 03
It would hardly be the final challenge the Port of Odessa would face. (Image: Wikimedia**)**

current fellows

Christina Brauner

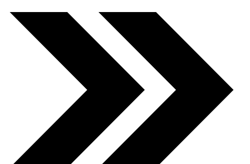
Christina Brauner's research on cross-cultural diplomacy in West Africa, (dis)entanglement, translation, narratives of misunderstanding, and the history of religion has exposed her to the distinct academic cultures in Münster, Bielefeld, Berlin, London, Princeton, and her current academic home in Tubingen. Her work in global history is informed by a strong interest in theory and historical methodology, with a particular focus on the inescapable concepts of time and temporality.
At ***global dis:connect***, Christina is investigating markets in the border region of the Lower Rhine, where competition and borders both constituted markets as social institutions and dis:connected the subjects involved.

Ayşe Güngör

Ayşe Güngör is an art historian with a background in art theory, anthropology and curatorial practices. Her research examines the confluence of art and anthropology in the practices of contemporary artists from Turkey, broadening the frame via narratives of global art and cultural exchange and eco-art practices. She investigates theoretical debates on artistic representation and institutional frameworks.
At ***global:disconnect***, she is investigating the global art discourses embedded in institutionalised contemporary art through the representation of Istanbul in Germany through several exhibitions since 2000. By examining this complex relationship of global interconnectedness, her research seeks to identify gaps and limitations in the globalisation processes of contemporary art from Turkey.

Fabienne Liptay

Fabienne Liptay is a professor of film studies at the University of Zurich. In her current research, she is particularly interested in moving-image practises that critically engage with the exclusions and inclusions in the institutional frames of global arts and media. Her research project *Exhibiting Film: Challenges of Format*, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, examines how formats have contributed to the establishment of global infrastructures of film exhibition, and it addresses what they have disabled and displaced.
At ***global dis:connect***, Fabienne is investigating artistic and non-artistic uses of formats that challenge notions of connectivity. The focus is on contexts, in which formats based on interoperability not only facilitate processes of global networking, but also produce disconnections that are politically and socially effective.



Enis Maci

Enis Maci is one of Europe's most striking polyartists. She is the author of the essay collection *Eiscafé Europa* and a series of plays. Most recently, the collaboration "Ein faszinierender Plan" (Spector 2021) and the play "WUNDER" (Suhrkamp 2021) were published. In 2022, the play "Kamilo Beach", co-written with Pascal Richmann, premiered at the Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz. This will be followed by the world premiere of LORBEER at Schauspiel Stuttgart. Her work has received several awards, most recently the Max Frisch Förderpreis. This year Enis is a fellow of ***global dis:connect*** and also a fellow of the Villa Aurora in Los Angeles.

Martin Rempe

Martin Rempe studies modern German, European and African history, particularly the social history of cultural work as well as the history of colonialism, decolonisation and development. Transnational and global perspectives are at the heart of his research. Martin's career path has led him through stints in Berlin, Strasbourg, Heidelberg, Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Freiburg, Paris and Konstanz.
At ***global dis:connect***, he is examining the role and significance of the military in civic musical life during the long nineteenth century from a global perspective. From the French Revolution to the First World War, military music shaped how music has come to be consumed, produced, appreciated and practised worldwide. Indeed, it has profoundly marked how we continue to valorise culture, and it propagated European music formations in distant geographies. Combining processes of rupture and continuity, displacement and integration, dis:connectivity is a key concept in grasping how military music has helped to (trans)form our world.

Ann-Sophie Schoepfel

Ann-Sophie Schoepfel's intellectual background covers History, Art History, Anthropology, International Relations, International Law, and Legal History along with stops in Paris, Heidelberg, Tokyo, Hanoi and Harvard. Her research on the colonialist implications of war-crimes trials in Asia as well as on Vietnamese migration in the context of the Cold War has earned her numerous awards and academic honours.
Sophie's current research at ***global dis:connect*** centres Afro-Asian voices – jurists, writers, and anticolonial revolutionaries – from across the French former colonial empire, as they struggled to reimagine state sovereignty and international law in the Cold War crucible.

Sujit Sivasundaram

Sujit has taken a circuitous path to his current post as Professor of World History and Director of the Centre of South Asian Studies in Cambridge. Bouncing between the Asia-Pacific region and Europe, he has left his mark on imperial history, oceanic history, cultural history, and the history of science.
During his fellowship with us in Munich, Sujit will be focusing on the long history of Colombo in global history. In particular, he is interested in the challenges of building a city such as this, at the centre of the Indian Ocean, in a marshy terrain, and the modes of labour, community formation and aesthetic representation that arose from such an environmental challenge. He will be developing his perspective on connection as an unstable practice, especially when tied to capitalism and empire, because of its potential to segment and divide places and people. He is also interested in the art and visual practice surrounding this city and what it tells us of how globalisation is visualised and propagandised.

Sabine Sörgel

Sabine Sörgel combines her passion for travel and dance with sophisticated, philosophically informed theories derived from critical theory, philosophy, sociology, and theatre. Through sojourns in Mainz, Aberystwyth, London, and Jamaica, Sabine has published on performance, post-colonial politics, global culture, and the social power implicated in various gazes. While visiting ***global dis:connect***, Sabine is researching how public performances over the last decade have invoked images of race, identity, rights, history and memory.

Callie Wilkinson

Callie Wilkinson studies the dramatic expansion of the British Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and its sociocultural impact at home and abroad. In previous research projects conducted at Cambridge and the University of Warwick, she has examined how the idea of indirect rule was contested within the British East India Company as well as the contemporary debates on the extent to which information about the Company should be disseminated to the public.
At ***global:disconnect***, Callie is investigating how Company soldiers' testimony affected broader discourses about the Company's military operations in an age before professional war correspondents.

calls

Oceans disconnect

Where & when:
Munich, 21–22 November 2022

Host:
Käte Hamburger Research Centre ***global dis:connect***, LMU Munich

Organisers:
David Armitage (Harvard),
Sujit Sivasundaram (Cambridge),
Roland Wenzlhuemer (Munich)

'Oceans connect' was the motto of the first wave of oceanic history in the 1990s. Journal issues bore the title, as did a germinal research group. The slogan reflected the explicit ambition of its practitioners to go beyond the nation-state but also encoded the implicit teleological logic of globalisation at the time: that the world was becoming one, that barriers and borders were melting into air, and that the fluidity of 'liquid modernity' began with, and upon, the ocean as a matrix of integrative processes. Accordingly, over the past three decades, the rapidly expanding historical literature on oceans and seas has traditionally been framed around the geographical units of the world's water bodies; it has been directed towards tracking long-distance connections, so as to problematise the political and specialist organisation of historical knowledge around 'nation', 'area' and 'civilisation'.
Yet the promise of the first, boosterish phase of oceanic history has lately ebbed. Globalisation now looks more reversible and halting. And transnational historians more generally are examining disconnection rather than connection as a dynamic in world history. Along these lines, new work in oceanic history is insisting on particularity, friction, interruption, materiality and resistance. There is growing attention to the critical foundations of connection, where people, things, ideas and legal systems could demonstrate instability, violence and invisibility at the very nodes of globalisation. And historians are increasingly focusing on the chokepoints on the world's oceans: straits and narrows, gulfs and bays; pirates' nests and contested waters; natural disaster and commercial risk; closed seas and maritime limits, among other topics. This conference, hosted by the new Käte Hamburger Research Centre, with its innovative focus on dis:connection, and by two leading scholars of the Indian, Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, will interrogate the underside of connection and the dynamics of disconnection in oceanic history.

Possible topics include but are not limited to the following:

- International law and the sea
- Risk, warfare and blockade
- Migration, refugees and the sea
- Trade, piracy, smuggling and the sea
- The environmental emergency and the sea
- Quarantine, disease and the sea
- Resistance and anti-colonialism at sea
- Islands, straits and maritime chokepoints

The workshop specifically focuses on the modern period, but contributions from other periods of observation are welcome. We especially welcome submissions from early-career researchers.

Modalities

Proposals should include a provisional paper title, a short CV of the author, and an abstract of not more than 300 words. Please send these documents in one PDF file to gdc@lrz.uni-muenchen.de by 15 May 2022. For active participants, economy travel costs and accommodation for the duration of the workshop will be covered by the Centre. The workshop is planned as an on-site event but there will be the opportunity to join virtually, if need arises.

Colonial violence

On 8 and 9 December, global dis:connect will host a workshop to look at "Colonial violence beyond the borders of empires: dis/connections, transfers, and mobilities, ca. 1850–1954". The workshop is funded by global dis:connect and the University of Cologne.

The workshop will address different aspects of transimperial connections concerning colonial violence. On a conceptual level, we need considerations on their specific nature, while, on an empirical level, case studies will assist in approaching the different dimensions in which these entanglements manifested themselves on the ground. Finally, contributions will also complicate the notion of connectivity itself. One of our hypotheses is that colonial violence presents a more complex field of connectivity than we might find in other transimperial histories. We also invite contributions analysing points of disconnection, of absences, detours, misunderstandings, distortions, or creative/hybrid appropriations. We are interested in whether and how transimperial histories can change our view of the different theories of nationally specific colonial cultures of violence, such as the notion of a 'minimum force' British colonial warfare, a supposed German 'colonial Sonderweg', or the myth of Italians as 'brava gente', as benevolent colonisers.

To view the full abstract and call, please visit:
https://bit.ly/3wletf4

global dis:connect fellowships

The fellowship programme is a key component of the Käte Hamburger Research Centre ***global dis:connect***, and we welcome applications for future fellowship periods.

Participation in and contribution to the Centre

During your time as a fellow at ***global dis:connect***, you are usually released from your teaching and administrative duties at your home institution to concentrate on your research. You are expected to actively participate in the events of the Centre, such as the regular lunchtime colloquia or the interdisciplinary working groups of the fellows, which play a central role in the dialogue at the Centre. You are also expected to communicate your research results on one of our publication platforms. Furthermore, there is the opportunity to organise an international workshop on your research topic during your stay or to organise events in cooperation with our partner institutions in the city of Munich. LMU Munich is one of the leading universities in Europe with a history extending back over five centuries. It stands for excellent academic education and outstanding research. The Centre is centrally located in Munich and is very easy to reach by public transport. It maintains an extensive network with art and cultural institutions as well as academic institutions in Munich, Germany and the world.
As a fellow at the Centre, you will benefit from many opportunities for interdisciplinary and international exchange, both with the in-house research staff as well as with the other fellows from academia and the arts.

The Centre explores the interdependent, complex relationship between global interconnectedness, lack of interconnectedness and disentanglement in historical and contemporary globalisation processes from international and transdisciplinary perspectives. Scholars from the humanities and social sciences, especially from the fields of history, theatre studies and art history, are invited to apply. The work of the fellows should have a clear connection to the general goals of ***global dis:connect*** and deal with at least one of the annual foci. These are:

- 2022/23: interruptions (closed)
- 2023/24: absences (closed)
- 2024/25: detours

To find out more about the aims of the Centre and the content of the foci, please visit the website at www.globaldisconnect.org.

Duration and conditions

Fellowships can be awarded for a period of 6-12 months, which can be divided into two phases. Please indicate the desired time of your stay in your application, which will inform the time and duration of your particular fellowship.

Once we have reached agreement, the Centre will either cover the costs for a teaching substitute at fellows' home institutions or pay a stipend. In addition, the costs for the return journey (economy) to Munich will be reimbursed. A fully equipped workplace is provided.

Application modalities

Applications are open to post-doctoral researchers who have already distinguished themselves with outstanding work on the thematic focus of the Centre.

In addition to the usual application documents (cover letter, curriculum vitae, list of publications), we ask you to enclose an exposé (approx. 5 pages) with your application, in which you present your research project in a clear and focused manner and elaborate on its relation to the Käte Hamburger Research Centre ***global dis:connect***. Interdisciplinary connectivity and a link to current (also socio-political) debates are advantageous. The exposé should also include a short work plan for the time of your stay.

Contact and further information

For further information on the Centre please consult our website at www.globaldisconnect.org or contact the directors:

Christopher Balme (theatre studies, balme@lmu.de),
Burcu Dogramaci (art history, burcu.dogramaci@lmu.de)
Roland Wenzlhuemer (history, roland.wenzlhuemer@lmu.de).

calendar

15 june 22, workshop dis:connected objects

In the process of globalisation, which develops not only as a form of intensifying networks and a compression of geographical connection but equally as a site of missing or missed connections and disentanglement, objects play an ambivalent role. On the one hand, they are viewed as symbols and metaphors for a world seemingly shrinking in size (such as the computer and technologies connected with it that facilitate connections worldwide). On the other, they can stand for the severe breaks, absences, detours and interruptions that are intrinsically linked to processes of globalisation, migration and exile (such as beloved family photographs that are brought into exile but also lost, dispersed or destroyed on the migration routes).
Building on and expanding research on the provenance and restitution of objects, which has discussed ethical and legal issues connected to objects that were (illegally) transferred and sold under conditions of political dominance and exploitation, we would like to focus on the objects themselves. How are they dealt with in the context of museums? How do they reflect, change, challenge and deconstruct our understanding of globalisation?
Organised by: Änne Söll, Burcu Dogramaci and Hanni Geiger
Speakers: Hannah Baader, Friedrich von Bose, Burcu Dogramaci, Hanni Geiger, Petra Löffler, Nadia von Maltzahn and Änne Söll
Hosted by ***global dis:connect***.

23–26 june 22, workshop infrastructures of musical globalisation, 1850–2000

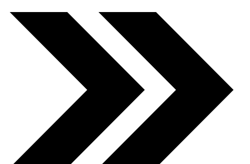
Organised by Martin Rempe and Friedemann Pestel, hosted by ***global dis:connect***.

4 july 22, reading and discussion with timo feldhaus

Author and journalist Timo Feldhaus will present his book, part fiction, part non-fiction, on the eruption of the Tambora volcano (Sumbawa, current-day Indonesia) in 1815. The eruption was the most powerful volcanic eruption in recorded history, and it induced powerful climatological, social and artistic repercussions that affected the entire planet for years. Together with an environmental historian, Feldhaus will discuss the event as a moment of global rupture that simultaneously demonstrates the connections between weather, climate and artistic production.
Discussant: Dr. Urs Büttner (Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf)
Moderators: Hanni Geiger and Burcu Dogramaci
Hosted by ***global dis:connect***.

3–5 aug 22, summer school: postcolonial interruptions?

From 3 to 5 August ***global dis:connect*** will hold its first annual interdisciplinary summer school, organised by Nikolai Brandes and Anna Nübling. This year, we will focus on Postcolonial interruptions? Decolonisation and global dis:connectivity and explore how dynamics of decolonisation reordered processes of globalisation. We will ask how geopolitical alliances, economic networks, and cultural as well as epistemological bonds were questioned and interrupted permanently or temporarily and at the same time existing connections were reshaped, and new ones appeared. The Centre invites scholars and artists in early stages of their careers to discuss related projects with experts. The courses will foster dialogue between various scholarly approaches and artistic research.



lunchtime colloquium

summer semester 2022

26 April:
Semester Kick-off

3 Mai:
Rustom Bharucha (New Delhi)
Thinking through the Pandemic: A photographic Perspective from India

17 Mai:
global dis:connect on tour
Objects, Exile, Feminism - A stroll to and through the Monacensia Literature Archive

24 Mai:
Internal Workshop part 1
global dis:connect and the Politics of Give and Take
(Susanne Schütte-Steinig (Installation & Film), Sabine Sörgel (Dramaturgy)

31 Mai:
Internal Workshop part 2
global dis:connect and the Politics of Give and Take

14 June:
Ayse Güngör (Berlin)
Istanbul on Display: The Disengagements in the Globalisation of Art in the Context of Exhibiting Istanbul in Germany

21 June:
Paul Blickle (Munich)
Ballast: A Global Connection in the Maritime World of the Nineteenth Century?

28 June:
Fabienne Liptay (Zurich)
On Dis:connectivity in some Works by Stan Douglas

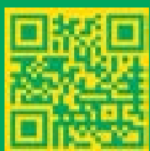
5 July:
Enis Maci (artist in residence)
Everything is connected: Biotope & Conspiracy

12 July:
Martin Rempe (Constance)
Forgotten Force: Musical Life and the Military in Global Perspective

19 July:
Anna Nübling (Munich)
Dis:connecting Space and Time: the Search for Extra-terrestrials and its Global Imaginary

26 July:
Tom Menger (Munich)
Fuelling Globalisation? Complicating the Infrastructural History of Early Imperial Oil Extraction (1880-1920)

The colloquium takes place Tuesdays, 12-13.30 pm at the Käte Hamburger research centre global dis:connect, Maria-Theresia-Straße 21, 81675 München.



LMU gd:c global dis :connect

8–10 sep 22, conference roads to exclusion at ghi washington

In September 2022, the international conference "Roads to Exclusion: Socio-Spatial Dynamics of Mobility Infrastructures since 1800" will take place at the GHI Washington. It aims to explore the (intended or unintended) dynamics of inclusion and exclusion entailed in mobility infrastructures, ranging from the nineteenth century to the present. The event is jointly organized by the German Historical Institute Washington within the framework of its research area "Histories of Mobilities and Migration" and ***global dis:connect***. The conference will take place from September 9–10, 2022, with a kick-off event on the evening of September 8 and will be hosted by the German Historical Institute in Washington D.C.

21–21 oct 22, annual conference dis:connectivity in processes of globalisation

The Centre will hold its first annual conference on the topic of *dis:connectivity in processes of globalisation: theories, methodologies, explorations*. We will focus on exploring new theories, methodologies and case studies that can help us to approach the phenomenon of global dis:connectivity. The conference will reflect the Centre's thoroughly interdisciplinary approach, bringing together scholars from a range of approaches in the humanities and the arts whose work relates to the study of globalisation. Thematic panels will zoom in on the three main foci of our research on dis:connectivity: interruptions, detours and absences. The evening programme will feature a conversation with an artist and a film screening.
Organisers: Hanni Geiger and Tom Menger

8–9 dec. 22 workshop: colonial violence

global dis:connect is hosting a workshop to look at colonial violence beyond the borders of empires: dis/connections, transfers, and mobilities, ca. 1850–1954. Tom Menger, Dominique Biehl, Markus Wurzer and Ulrike Lindner are organising the conference with funding generously provided by ***global dis:connect*** and the University of Cologne.
The workshop will address various aspects of transimperial connections concerning colonial violence. We will examine these aspects in concrete case studies as well as in their theoretical dimensions.
The aim of the workshop is to explore the potential of transimperial approaches to the history of colonial violence, to question narratives of nationally specific colonial cultures of violence, as well as to theorise and conceptualise transimperial connections and disconnections themselves.

static: thoughts and research from global dis:connect

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