



Rutgers University Graduate Students Conference in German Studies

Stimmen:Voices

March 3rd-4th, 2022

Contemporary German culture is shaped by multicultural and multilingual voices. Often, a narrative performs lingual and cultural migration, a linguistic border-crossing. Novels, plays, and poems by artists publishing in German, such as Anna Baar, Ewelina Benbenek, Rasha Habbal, Esther Kinsky, Saša Stanišić, Ulijana Wolf, or Olivia Wenzel and many others incorporate multiple voices that are not bound to or restricted by the limitations of one language. Instead, their texts include words, phrases, and idioms in Slavic, Italian, French, Arabic, and English, thus multiplying the level of voices that speak through the text to the reader. Some of these expressions are translated, while others remain in a language other than German – functioning as a stumbling stone or a peculiarity that depends on the readers’ own multilingual or multicultural experience – that can elicit various responses, thereby emphasizing the plurality and interculturality that shape contemporary reality.

Taking authors publishing in German and issues of translation as our starting point, this conference aims to offer a platform for multilingual voices in a variety of contemporary German art forms. Furthermore, we are interested in a broader consideration of the inclusion of multiple voices in the arts that may go beyond the written word, such as music, photography and film, performance art or graphic novels. We want to engage in a discussion about inclusion or exclusion of voices. For instance, how do contemporary arts in German speaking countries incorporate voices in a language other than German? What tendencies towards multilinguality and diversity are recognizable in contemporary German art forms? Is there an intersection between linguistic form and visual/auditory content? How do speechlessness and incomprehension impact a reader’s or an audience’s perception of the narrative presented? To what extent can voices migrate and what is lost in translation?

We encourage applications from numerous disciplines, including but not limited to: Cinema Studies, Environmental Studies, Gender Studies, Language and Literature Studies, Linguistics, Media Studies, Music, Performance Studies, etc.

Possible paper topics include:

- linguistic border-crossings
- fluidity of gender and genre (through the use of multiple voices)
- migration of texts and narratives through space and time
- calling into question of the terms “mother tongue” and “fatherland”
- feelings/narratives of displacement and (im-)possibilities of translation
- self-writing in the context of migration
- the role of linguistic and cultural heritage



- auditory, linguistic, and visual plurality of multilingual voices in contemporary German film, literature, music, and in the arts

This conference takes place from March 3rd–4th, 2022. Please submit abstracts (250–300 words) for a 20-minute in-person presentation along with a brief biographical statement to elisabeth.oberlerchner@rutgers.edu & nicole.uberreich@rutgers.edu by 01/16/2022. Selected participants will be notified by 01/30/2022.