



## Abstracts

### Prof. Etienne François

#### [The Artists, the Writers and the Historians](#)

In the first part of my paper I would like to deal with the proactive role and function of artists and writers by showing with the help of some paintings, novels and movies how they formulated immediately after the Second World War questions about and interpretations of the past, the present and the future of Europe, which were very different and sometime opposite to the dominant narratives of the Cold War, questions and interpretations that the historians and the others social scientists discovered only many decades later. In the second part I will explain how working together with curators of museums – especially with those of the German Historical Museum – but also with art historians and historians of the literature deeply transformed my perception and comprehension of European history and why I am now convinced that historians should much more learn from art historians, from historians of literature and from curators of museums.

### Dr. Gorch Pieken

#### [Identity Crises – Gender Images of the Military in Transition](#)

The Museum of Military History is currently working on an exhibition project under the working title of 'Gender and Violence'. Identity, the human body, power and sexuality are important points of reference in the relationship between the sexes and their relation to violence and war. The most important question will be: Is war masculine and peace feminine?

Looking at the battlefields of history, we can see only men, and in prisons, men traditionally constitute a great majority. Does this mean that men are the natural born warriors and killers, who get lost in the byways of history? Or are they simply playing their part in that congenial, labour-sharing power couple, who fought their way to the top of the evolutionary tree? How much do women influence the construction of manliness by their partnership selection, education and politics?

Surveys of foreign deployments of the German armed forces, or of Germany's ability to defend itself, do not show significant differences between the perceptions of men and

women. Society, as a whole, seems to approve of the idea of having its own army in a militant world.

For a very long time, women could become combatants only by cross-dressing. Only since 2001 have all military careers in the *Bundeswehr* been open to women. Yet women face increasing criticism by their male comrades. More than a third of the men [36 percent] stated in 2014 that the combat strength of the armed forces would be significantly reduced by the involvement of women. Almost six out of ten male soldiers are of the opinion that the general condition of the *Bundeswehr* has started to deteriorate since women became integrated into it. [ZMSBw report from 1/2014]

Do the results of these surveys document verifiable deficiencies or a 'clash of identities'? Or do they simply express the struggle between the sexes over a traditionally masculine domain? In the Second World War, the British General Staff noted that women showed a greater tolerance of suffering than men, and when it comes to the various wars of liberation, or the activities of terrorists for that matter, women appear to be just as fit for action, and every bit as dangerous, as men.

### **Dr. Martina Baleva**

#### **Imperial Crises. Visual Clashes in the Age of Decline**

One of the greatest imperial crises of the nineteenth century, which shook the Ottoman Empire to the core, was caused by the so-called 'Turkish Atrocities', of 1876. The historical incident, to which this refers, represented the highpoint in the Great Oriental Crisis and served as the trigger for the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-78, at the end of which the parts of Europe that had previously belonged to the Ottomans were now subjected to a new political order, characterised by the formation of nation states. Thanks to the countless images that appeared in Western paintings and the press, the 'Turkish Atrocities' turned into one of the most powerful media events of the 19th century and precipitated a pan-European political crisis. Comparable images of the massacres of Muslim civilians by Russian soldiers, in the so-called 'Atrocités Russes' the following year, have not been known about until recently. The discovery of a series of photographs of these 'Russian Atrocities' a few years ago has thrown new light on the visual history of the Oriental Crisis and makes it clear that this conflict can also be interpreted in visual terms. My lecture concentrates on characteristic images, whose significance, in the declining years of the imperial age, is played out on many different visual and semantic levels.

### **Dr. Eleonora Rivalta**

#### **Human-made Natural Disasters**

Natural disasters, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis and floods, can cause dramatic crises in human societies. They have long been the object of attention from the scientific community, in terms both of curiosity-driven research [how do earthquakes work?] and of protection from hazard. We are able to forecast certain types of disaster, such as floods, relatively well, whereas the current state of knowledge does not permit us to

forecast earthquakes with any degree of certainty. Sometimes we encounter cascade events, as when an earthquake causes a tsunami, and sometimes conjoined events, which are two or more types of natural hazard, occurring by coincidence in the same area close in time, as when a flood affects an area that has just been hit by an earthquake. These combinations of events are particularly damaging for society, because advanced forecasting techniques for them have not yet been fully developed, and the possible interaction of disasters is not often taken into account, at the planning stage for infrastructure of any kind. In this presentation, I will introduce the principal characteristics of the main natural hazards, and explain how they are monitored and forecast. I will then focus on emblematic examples of earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions that have affected, or might affect, society in a critical way. Interdisciplinary studies are needed to address the needs of society before, during and after natural disasters.

### **Lukas Foerster**

#### **Crises of Images. Images of Crises: Harun Farocki's 'Serious Games'**

In his creative work, Harun Farocki has always searched for new ways of thinking about, and thereby critiquing, images - not only by writing about them, but, first and foremost, by producing other images, or counter-images, in a variety of media, such as cinema, television, and installation. While at first Farocki had been primarily concerned with photographic representation, his later work often centres on the application of electronic and digital imaging techniques, which render the very notion of representation problematic. In his installation piece, *Serious Games*, one of his final works before his death last year, he confronted a special type of digital image: video game-like CGI representations of Iraqi battlegrounds, commissioned by the US Army to prepare soldiers for combat. Before ever leaving American soil, the soldiers are confronted with an immersive presentation of the kinds of situation they may expect to confront, except that the imagery in question is abstracted to the point, where, for example, the sun does not throw any shadows. Farocki asks how one can make sense of the relationship between these sterile, pixellated desertscapes, peopled by anonymous, bloodless avatars and the very real, and messy, political and social crisis these images simultaneously depict and negate? On another level, his piece raises an even harder question: How can art respond to this latest appropriation of imaging practices by the military apparatus?

### **Pierre-Yves Desaiwe**

#### **Art in the Times of Cyber Warfare**

When the internet became accessible for a wide audience in the mid 1990's, many artists, most of them already working with the media, immediately perceived the digital network as a new field to explore. The first experiments were made, using the new concepts of hypertext protocol, creating works that focused on the capacities of the internet to link several layers of information, mixing text and multimedia. But quite soon, artists started to act as digital activists, as new issues linked to privacy, security and surveillance began to surface.

The internet, once perceived as a new land of freedom – not surprisingly, most of the first net artists came from the former Eastern bloc – is now under a close surveillance, even in democratic countries. This talk will focus on a generation of artists who were born in a world that was already connected, and who question these issues through network art pieces.

### **Prof. Moshe Zuckermann**

#### *The Ideology of the Occupation: Oppressive Aggression and Self-Victimisation in Israel*

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is marked, first and foremost, by the occupation of the Palestinian territories since the 1967 war. Though the role of the oppressor and the oppressed in this conflict is quite obvious, the perception of it on the Israeli side has been ideologised in a way that the relationship between the real offenders and victims seems to be reversed - the Palestinians being framed as aggressive terrorists, while the settlers in the occupied territories perceive themselves to be victims. During the withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, the latter even used images of Holocaust victims and scenes, in order to express their own self-victimising perception of their desolate situation. The roots of this and other ideological patterns in Zionism will be explained and discussed, as well as illustrated by numerous photos taken during several events on the West Bank, and in Gaza.

### **Ulrike Schmiegelt-Rietig**

#### *The Theatre of War. Second Act, Timeout. [Boris Mikhailov's Majdan Series, Kiev, December 2013]*

Act One. On 21 November 2013, Ukraine's President, Viktor Janukovich, announced that Ukraine would not sign the European Union's Association Agreement. The Ukrainian public answered with protests, demanding the country's closer European integration. Protesters were dispersed violently by the police, and this brought even more people onto the streets, until a total of between 500,000 and one million people gathered in Kiev for the demonstration on 8 December. During these troubled days Boris Mikhailov went to Kiev, to show solidarity with his 'Euromaidan' compatriots. As a photographer, he set about documenting the events, protest, resistance, and fierce violence. He arranged a small selection of these images, as an installation for the controversial *Manifesta 10* exhibition, in St. Petersburg, in 2014. It was his artistic statement on the events from December onwards.

Act Two. The title of the installation has an air of dark foreboding. When the installation was put on display in summer 2014, the intermission was already over. In the next Act, Ukraine moved towards war. Mikhailov portrayed the protesters' aims, through reference to some canonical images of class conflict. He showed how the meaning of some of the familiar iconography could be changed at the very moment when the struggle set out against a different opponent.

Postscriptum. When Mikhailov put his installation on display, the world had to confront yet further acts of a similar nature. And the final curtain has not yet fallen!