

Fellows



Michael Jeismann

Stadt Wien/IFK_Fellow

Duration of fellowship

01. October 2020 bis 31. January 2021

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PROJECT TITLE

Shifts between Center and Periphery in Western Societies: The Loose Ends of the World

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Humboldt-Forum in Berlin will one day be understood as a paradigm for the way Western societies are designing a new image of themselves at the beginning of the 21st century. This new image re-centers relations by transforming the margins of societies into brilliant mirrors. What was once marginalized at the societal periphery now has become the center of political reflection. It seems that center and periphery have traded places—but only in political reflections as a kind of auto-immunization process in view of an increasingly complex world with shifting centers and twists of common sense.

Restitution, e.g., is a key word in present discussions about restorative justice for formerly colonized people. However, could this restitution also be a rejection, leaving peoples and states with the remains of their past, which represent a doubtful inspiration for present and future, showing a common horizon neither for Western societies nor for the former colonies themselves? The empty space of universalism is filled by the idea of the particular. As ethnology has become an important reference in this process, we will take a closer look at the *Weltmuseum* in Vienna and examine both its self-representation as well as its reception.

CV

Michael Jeismann is an historian, journalist, and author. He studied at the Universities of Münster and Bielefeld and received his Ph.D. under Reinhart Koselleck in 1991 on the origins of enmity between modern nation-states, using the examples of France and Germany from 1792 until 1918. He then joined the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* as an editor, where his articles focused, e.g., on debates in reunified Germany about the memory and remembrance of the Holocaust and its representation in public spaces. In 2002 he completed his *Habilitation* at the University of Basel. Before leaving the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* to join the Goethe-Institut as the head of communication, he held a scholarship, granted by Berthold Beitz and the Krupp Foundation, which allowed him to write a world history of intercultural couples from antiquity to the present. From 2012 until 2017 he was the director of the Goethe-Institut Senegal in Dakar. Today he is an independent scholar.

Publications

Die Freiheit der Liebe. Paare zwischen zwei Kulturen, München 2019; *Auf Wiedersehen Gestern. Die deutsche Vergangenheit und die Politik von morgen*, Stuttgart, München 2001; gem. mit Reinhart Koselleck (Hg.), *Der politische Totenkult. Kriegerdenkmäler in der Moderne*, München 1994; *Das Vaterland der Feinde. Studien zum nationalen Feindbegriff und Selbstverständnis in Deutschland und Frankreich 1792–1918*, Stuttgart 1992. (Franz.: *La Patrie de l'Ennemi – La notion d'ennemi national et la représentation de la nation en Allemagne et en France de 1792 à 1918*, Paris 1998)