

**Organization:**

Dr. Katharina Boehm (Universität Regensburg) is Assistant Professor of English literature and was elected a member of the Young Scholars' Programme of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities in 2014.

[www.badw.de/de/akademie/jungeskolleg](http://www.badw.de/de/akademie/jungeskolleg)

**Registration:**

Attendance is free but please register via email: [katharina.boehm@ur.de](mailto:katharina.boehm@ur.de) by 10 February 2016.

**Conference Venue:****Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities**

Alfons-Goppel-Straße 11 (Residenz)  
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Phone +49 89 23031-0 • [www.badw.de](http://www.badw.de)

**Directions**

U3/U6, U4/U5 Odeonsplatz • Tram 19 Nationaltheater  
no car park available

## Present Pasts: Historical Consciousness and the Experience of Modernity

Workshop

Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Young Scholars' Programme  
of the Bavarian Academy of  
Sciences and Humanities



Bayerische  
Akademie der Wissenschaften

## Present Pasts: Historical Consciousness and the Experience of Modernity

This workshop will explore instances in which verbal, visual and performative works compress the distance between their own cultural moment and a particular configuration of the (recent or distant) past. Beginning with the early modern emergence of a sophisticated, differentiated sense of historical periods, writers and other cultural producers have experimented with mixing elements of different periods. Textual and material artefacts that (self-reflexively) imitate past styles can upset concepts of the linear, chronological progress of time and produce a heightened temporal self-awareness. Cultural forms of reenactment as well as various kinds of bodily and oral performances – on the theatrical stage, in the courthouse, in the political arena, etc. – can make the past fleetingly present. Capable of evoking both the historical past and the past of concrete earlier performances, these practices invite us to consider the role of the body, voice and sensorium in providing experiential access to an earlier moment in time.

Across the centuries, texts and performances that engage with the construction of historical distance and proximity and with the effects of anachronism and temporal blending have served a dizzying variety of political, cultural and artistic ends. However, the premise of this workshop is that they tend to share a fundamental concern with the idea and experience of modernity. Historically contingent ideas about what it means to be modern come under pressure whenever the past erupts in the present in literary and cultural artefacts. Representations of encounters between past and present raise the issue of how different forms of historical consciousness can bolster – or interrogate – a sense of modernity, as well as how the mediation and remediation of the past gives rise to debates about modern aesthetic and cultural practices.

## Programme

- 9.00** Welcome and Introduction
- 9.15** *The Spectacle of Speech and the Presence of the Past: Late-Victorian Popular Lecturing and Mass Print Culture*  
Anne-Julia Zwierlein, Universität Regensburg
- 10.15** Coffee Break
- 10.30** *Empiricism, Antiquarian Fieldwork and the (In)Visibilization of the Past in the Early Eighteenth Century*  
Katharina Boehm, Universität Regensburg
- 11.30** *Decline and Fall: Rome, London, Babylon*  
Christoph Heyl, Universität Duisburg-Essen
- 12.30** Lunch
- 13.30** *Monsters and Monuments: Figurations of the Past in Nineteenth-Century Science Writing*  
Virginia Richter, Universität Bern
- 14.30** *Transgressions of Time: The Presence of the Past in Nineteenth-Century Psychopathology and the Late-Victorian Gothic*  
Stephan Karschay, Universität Hamburg
- 15.30** Coffee Break
- 16.00** *“But all is changed”: Historical Consciousness in W.B. Yeats’ Late Poems*  
Ralf Haekel, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen
- 17.00** *Making Present an “Invisible Past”: Visuality, Present Pasts and Multiple Modernities in Teju Cole’s Fiction*  
Birgit Neumann,  
Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf
- 18.00** Workshop ends