

Ecstatic Bodies in the 19th and 20th Centuries

In various historical contexts, sports, religious rituals and experience(s), sexual activity, drug use etc. were regarded as ecstatic and emotional practices and exercised for their intoxicating and/or ecstatic effects on the body. Discourses and concepts of ecstasy, intoxication and/or excess – aspects combined in the German term “Rausch” – exploded, expanded and multiplied during the 19th and 20th centuries. At the same time, new forms of ecstasy, new forms of seeing, using and feeling bodies, materialized in ever more ways – in images and knowledge of bodies, in experiences of and engagements with bodies, in practices of bodily care as well as concerns for bodily health, fitness and wellness. Frequently, the body politics of ecstasy had a remarkable impact on modern societies. Therefore, we need to more seriously consider the role that ecstatic bodies played in the processes and practices of (re-)assembling the social and (re-)producing the self.

Our workshop seeks to provide a space for researchers on the history of the body who usually work within the constraints of their own field and its specific subject matters, lines of inquiry and traditions. We aim at analyzing and discussing multiple and different kinds of “Rausch” (sexual ecstasy, drug highs, mystical experiences and trances, euphoric dancing, violence and blood lust, speed etc.) in a comparative and entangled perspective. We focus on everyday practices and common discourses of ecstasy in the “long” 20th century, i.e. the period from the late 19th until today. Social distinctions such as class, gender, “ethnic” or “racial” differences, age or dis/ability structure those discourses and practices to this day. That is why we strongly encourage everybody to engage with the power relations that shape our ways of speaking about and “doing” ecstasy. Of special interest are papers dealing with the role of ecstasy in the history of the body and emotions (as a perspective and research area). We are also looking forward to contributions with genealogical or praxeological approaches that investigate situations and constellations where ecstatic experiences failed to occur or were deemed unappealing and unsuccessful.

Potential Topics are, among others:

- Politics of Ecstasy
- Ecstasy and Religion
- Music, dance, and ecstasy
- Sport, speed, and ecstasy
- Drugs, intoxication, and ecstasy
- Sexuality and orgasm
- Media and the production of knowledge about ecstasy and intoxication
- Visual representations of ecstasy/intoxication
- Ecstasy/intoxication, things, and technology

We welcome papers in German or English language.

Please send a one-page abstract and a short biographical sketch to Florian Schleking (F.Schleking@uni-koeln.de) and Kristoff Kerl (Kristoff.Kerl@uni-koeln.de) by June 5, 2017.

The workshop will take place at the University of Cologne on July 29, 2017.

The organizers will cover the costs for one-night accommodation in Cologne and a part of the travel costs. The workshop is open to the public and participation is free of charge.

Selected papers presented at the workshop will be published in an issue of *Body Politics. Zeitschrift für Körpergeschichte*.