We are all astronauts (Heidelberg, 22.–25. Oct 15)

Universität Heidelberg, ZEGK-Institut für Europäische Kunstgeschichte, Oct 22–25, 2015
Registration deadline: Oct 18, 2015

Katharina Lau

WE ARE ALL ASTRONAUTS: The Image of the Space Traveller in Arts and Media*

“We are all astronauts“, the American architect and thinker Richard Buckminster Fuller wrote in his 1968 book “Operating Manual For Spaceship Earth“ where he compared Earth to a spaceship, provided only with exhaustible resources while flying through space. The phrase is certainly a hint, which position the phenomenon of the astro- and the cosmonaut had in the public conscience from the second half of the 20th century on. But the wording also seems to have played a significant role itself in shaping the space-exploring human as a symbol and an image of humankind in general. This international and interdisciplinary conference will analyse the changes the image of the space explorer and -traveller has undergone since then (and, which direction with new forms such as the Chinese “Taikonaut” it might further take) by focusing on the arts and the media as decisive switch points for such conceptions: history, literature-, media-, music-, film and comic studies, history of art and science – all can here provide important contributions for the understanding of these changes as well as of the motivations behind them.

Programme
THURSDAY, 22. OCTOBER 2015, 6 p.m.,
Heidelberg University, Alte Aula (Great Hall), Grabengasse 1

Opening Lecture
Welcome address of the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, Gerrit Kloss

Vivian Sobchack (Los Angeles):
„Rocket Man,“ or Lost in Space: On Movie Astronauts and the Myth of American Exceptionalism

VENUE: INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY,
LECTURE HALL II, HAUPTSTR. 47-51

FRIDAY, 23. OCTOBER 2015

9:00 Henry Keazor (Heidelberg)
Introduction

9:45 Colleen Boyle (Melbourne)
Through the Eyes of the Astronaut: Mediator of the Human Imagination

11:00 Umberto Rossi (Rome)
All We Mad Starmen: The Astronaut as a Psychopath

12:30 Ansgar Oswald (Berlin)
Hero of Progress, Environmentalist and Advertising Character: The Image of the Space Traveller in the Mirror of Society, Architecture and Product Marketing (In German)

3:00 Monica Rüthers (Hamburg)
The Character of the Cosmonaut in Soviet Popular Culture

4:15 Martin Butler (Oldenburg)
Remembering the Future: Astronaut Memories and the 'Retroification' of Science Fiction in (Surf) Rock Music

5:45 Jörg Hartmann (Karlsruhe)
"Off structure!" A Metaphorology of Astro-Nautic Accidents – the Examples of the Space Movie "Gravity"

SATURDAY, 24. OCTOBER 2015

9:00 Matthew H. Hersch (Cambrigde, Mass.)
Redemptive Space: Duty, Death, and theAstronaut-Soldier, 1949–1969

10:15 Michael Iwoleit (Wuppertal)
The Dead Astronaut. The Subgenre of Critical Space Flight Stories in the Science Fiction of the 1960s and 1970s

11:45 Alexander Geppert (Shanghai / New York)
The Invention of the "Taikonaut": Images of Chinese Space Travellers before and after Yang Liwei

2:00 Marc Blancher (Tübingen)
"Let's discover Space!" Tintin and Other Characters of French-Belgian Comics as Astronauts

3:45 Bettyann Kevles (Yale)
Artistic Performance in 0 Gravity

5:00 FILM
Dana Ranga, Story – I am a Space Person (Germany 2003)

SUNDAY, 25. OCTOBER 2015

10:00 Nils Daniel Peiler (Frankfurt am Main)
"But as to whether or not he has feelings is something I don't think anyone can truthfully answer". The Image of the Astronaut in Stanley Kubrick's '2001: A Space Odyssey'

11:15 Thomas Hensel (Pforzheim)
Astronaut and Avatar: The Outer Space as a Space of Experimentation in the Computer Game

1:15 Marc Bonner (Köln)
"Climb the penrose stairs to merge with the infinite". The Astronaut as the Posthumanistic Rev-

erse of Itself

2:30 Closing Remarks

4:00 Closure

*With the friendly support of the DFG (German Research Council)

The event is free of charge. For organisational reasons we however ask to, please, register in advance via e-mail to k.lau@zegk.uni-heidelberg.de or via mail to

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