

Mountains dis:connect (Salzburg, 20–21 Jun 24)

Salzburg University / Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf, Jun 20–21, 2024

Deadline: Sep 15, 2023

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The History Department of Salzburg University, the Institute of Art History of the HHU Düsseldorf and the Käte Hamburger Research Centre global dis:connect at LMU Munich invite paper proposals for the international workshop Mountains dis:connect to take place in Salzburg on 20-21 June 2024.

Recently, mountains and mountain ranges have started to attract more attention from global historians. Other fields, such as the history of science and the environmental humanities, have been interested in mountainous regions and high altitudes for a while. From the perspective of art and cultural history, mountains have not only been an important subject of visual practices, from landscape painting to (travel) photography, they have also been understood as sites that can be highly charged with national, cultural and religious symbolism.

Inspired by these neighbouring fields, global history is currently discovering mountains as sites where global entanglements manifest themselves and emphasise how deeply embedded local and regional processes are in global webs of connections and (potentially conflicting) interests. Mountains are important environmental and meteorological factors, but their significance runs still deeper. In our climate crisis, they are also increasingly imagined as retreats from the heat of the plains – a role that they once played for white imperialists in colonial times. Mountains are pivotal sites of tourism. They contain vast quantities of natural resources from water to rare earths. And they can be of global strategic importance.

Global history and its neighbouring fields did not immediately grasp the global significance of mountains. High altitudes have not played a particularly prominent role in the study of global history. The field's focus rested firmly on sites and structures whose role in global connectivity was instantly recognisable – ships, oceans and waterways; on railways and the tracks that composed them; and on global information networks with their wires, cables and radio transmitters. Mountains and mountainous regions were often considered obstacles that had to be negotiated, crossed or circumvented, as natural borders, as impassable territory, as hide-outs and retreats, as watersheds and rain shadows. In short, mountains and high altitudes were long regarded as disruptive elements in an otherwise globalising world until global historians started to emphasise their globally connective qualities.

This workshop seeks to integrate the connective and the disruptive perspectives on the role of mountains in globalisation. It identifies mountains as sites where connecting and disconnecting processes intersect, and where they create a powerful tension with regards to regional changes. With its innovative focus on dis:connection, the workshop will interrogate the underside of connection and the dynamics of disconnection in mountain history.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- mountains as (semipermeable) borders
- mountains and tourism
- mountains and global infrastructures
- mountains as sites of conflicting interests
- mountains as global places of longing
- images and visual practices related to the global dimensions of mountains.

The workshop specifically focuses on the modern period from around 1800, but contributions from other periods are welcome. We especially welcome submissions from early-career researchers.

Particulars

Proposals should include a provisional title, a short CV and an abstract of not more than 300 words.

Please send these documents in one PDF file to gdc@lrz.uni-muenchen.de by 15 September 2023.

Economy travel costs and accommodation for the duration of the workshop will be covered for active participants, pending financial commitments by our funding bodies.

The workshop is planned as an on-site event.

Reference:

CFP: Mountains dis:connect (Salzburg, 20-21 Jun 24). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 2, 2023 (accessed Jul 14, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/39415>>.