

Being an animal when humans hunt (Alfter/online, 19–21 Mar 26)

Alanus University, Alfter / ZOOM, Mar 19–21, 2026

Maurice Saß

6th Workshop of the DFG-Network Cultural History of the Hunt
in cooperation with the Institute for African Studies and Egyptology (University of Cologne).

Being an animal when humans hunt. Challenging the lethal difference.

Hunting can be understood as an activity performed by human subjects aiming for the death of animal subjects defined as 'prey', thereby creating a lethal hierarchy whose symbolic quality is transferable to a variety of social and symbolical spheres. This specific perspective on hunting has been prevalent in areas such as literary studies, cultural studies and historical disciplines for the last decade. Foregrounding the hierarchical implications of hunting has proven to be useful when it comes to the critical deconstruction of classist, sexist, racist and other forms of discrimination brought forth, upheld and legitimized by hunting and (scholarly, artistic, literary etc.) hunting discourses.

Despite the importance of this perspective, its implied universalism has a problematic quality as it masks a certain provinciality. Furthermore, its tendency to conceive of hunting as a primarily human affair and to describe animals merely as passive victims without any agency whatsoever is (involuntarily) steeped in speciesism and ignores the complicated and (in Hegelian terms) dialectical nature of hunting. The aim of the workshop is to focus hunting via the lens of animal agency, maybe even perspective, and to illustrate the diversity of constellations in which hunting is and has been described as an experience shared by humans and animals and based on mutual if not necessarily reciprocal dependencies. We therefore welcome papers that examine local artefacts, practices and narratives of hunting, that address the moments of dialogue, interaction, shared situationality between species, that understand humans as part of an animal community, and that conceive of hunting as a physical and cognitive immersion in the more-than-human interconnectedness of an ecosystem. At the same time, it is important to approach the plurality of animal perspectives in the sense of an animated history, and to differentiate both the hunted animals (e.g. according to their defensiveness, their 'charisma' or their privileged perception as individuals or collectives) and the hunting companion species (e.g. according to their function in tracking, chasing, killing, camouflaging, attracting or transporting) – and not to forget the 'third' animals that indirectly benefit from hunting, suffer or adapt in other ways. It should become clear which methodological approaches are suitable for opening up ways of understanding hunting that do more justice to the agency of animals who, even as lethal victims, are always also active subjects. We are also especially interested in exploring global as well as glocal, comparative, postcolonial and marginalized perspectives on hunting practices and are eager to discover variety as well as

unexpected similarities.

THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2026

(Alanus Werkhaus, Johannishof, 53347 Alfter, Semi 3)

13.30-14.15

Arrival

14.15-14.45

Laura Beck (University of Hannover), Maurice Saß (Alanus University) & Thomas Widlok (University of Cologne):

Welcome & Introduction

14.45-15.30

Ute Dieckmann (University of Cologne):

Hunting as worlding: animal agency, ontology, and socio-ecological relations

15.30-16.00

Coffee Break

16.00-16.45

Lilietta Nyasha Njovana (University of Cape Town) & Matthew Wannenburg (Stellenbosch University):

An exploration of !xam hunting ethics and cosmology in the Bleek and Lloyd Archive

16.45-17.30

Mario Krämer (University of Cologne):

Hunting and ecological sustainable forestry: some notes on the ambivalences of multispecies encounters

17.30-18.15

Tanja Theißen-Braun (Independent Scholar):

Predator complex: the humanimal situationality of hunting

19.00

Dinner

FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2026

(Alanus Werkhaus, Johannishof, 53347 Alfter, Semi 3)

09.00-09.45

Ruth Sargent Noyes (Estonian Academy of Arts, Tallinn – via zoom):

The art of trapping and the making of early modern Europe

09:45-10.30

Amina Grunewald (HU Berlin):

Considering the beaver: colonial violence in contemporary indigenous artworks

10.30-11.00

Coffee Break

11.00-11.45

Franz Krause (University of Cologne):

Whaling as sharing

11.45-12.30

Ruth Bryant (Utrecht University)

Spoils of whaling: commodifying nature in seventeenth-century Dutch arctic genre scenes

12.30-14.00

Lunch Break

14.00-14.45

Qiongying Cai (Yunnan University, Kunming, China – via zoom)

Symbiosis in practice and text: Multispecies agency in Naxi falconry

14.45-15.30

Catherine Girard (St. Francis Xavier University, Canada – via zoom)

Eye to eye

15.30-16.00

Coffee Break

16.00-16.45

Harshada Anand Kavade (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India – via zoom)

The hunted hunter: inversion and animal agency in Grimm's fairy tales

16.45-17.30

Adetola Elizabeth Umoh (University of Hradec Kralove, Czech – via zoom) & Samuel Uwem (Autonomous University of Barcelona – via zoom)

Sensory immersion, hunting artefacts and extensions: Narratives from Nigeria hunting transaction

18.00

Dinner

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2026

(Alanus Werkhaus, Johannishof, 53347 Alfter, Semi 3)

09.00-9.45

Narciss M. Sohrabi (Paris-Nanterre University):

The heroic hunt in stone and tile: animal agency and ideologies of power in Iranian architectural ornament

9.45-10.30

Itay Sapir (Université du Québec à Montréal)

The instant of animal death: Rubens' hunting scenes as clashes of temporalities

10.30-11.00

Coffee Break

ArtHist.net

11.00-11.45

Joeri Verbesselt (KU Leuven)

Relational trophy hunting pictures

11.45-12.30

Final discussion

Für die Anmeldung zur Online-Teilnahme bitte E-Mail an: laura.beck@germanistik.uni-hannover.de

Für die Anmeldung zur Teilnahme in Alfter bitte E-Mail an: maurice.sass@alanus.edu

Reference:

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(accessed Apr 2, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/51941>>.