

Participatory Memory, Collective Imaginations (Cologne, 2 Jul 26)

DFG Research Impulse 115 "Cultural Memory in Crisis", TH Köln, Ubierring 40, 50678
Cologne, Jul 02, 2026

kisd.de/termine/kisdconference-2-july-2026/

Carolin Höfler, TH Köln

Participatory Memory, Collective Imaginations: Connecting Institutions and Communities.

The symposium contributes to ongoing debates on gender, ethnicity and social class in relation to cultural conceptions and artistic representations of the past. It does so by examining the involvement of co-researchers from art and cultural institutions, as well as civil society initiatives – including those from marginalised communities. Participatory approaches in art and cultural studies have gained increasing prominence in recent years. These approaches foster forms of knowledge production, developed collaboratively within broader social contexts, rather than being defined exclusively within the framework of institutionalised research. However, studies of cultural memory often fail to integrate participatory methods that ensure cultural and social actors are actively involved in shaping project design, research questions, and analysis. The symposium aims to advance participatory memory studies that approach cultural memory in an artistically, socially, and inclusively engaged manner. It addresses the general challenges and opportunities of participatory methods in transdisciplinary research, and shares the experiences of memory researchers who have employed these approaches. The event also seeks to initiate new collaborations with other researchers.

THUESDAY, 2 July 2026

09:00–09:15

CAROLIN HÖFLER & ALEXANDER VAN WICKEREN

Welcome & Introduction

I. CHANCES & CHALLENGES

09:15–10:15

JONATHAN NGEH, University of Cologne

Doing Research With, Not On: Ethics of Knowledge Co-Production (Keynote lecture)

10:15–10:30 Coffee break

II. EXPLORING EXPERIENCES

10:30–11:00 RED CHIDGEY, King's College London
Activist Collaboration: Exploring Methods for Equitable Memory Work

11:00–11:30 FELIX FUHG, eCommemoration Körber-Stiftung
The Past as a Participatory Medium: Rethinking Memory Culture in the Post-Digital Age

11:30–12:00 SANDRA VACCA, ICOM International Committee for Collecting
Co-Making Memory? Participatory Research and the Postmigrant Museum

12:00–13:00 Lunch break

III. SPACES OF MEMORY

Co-Research with BEBERO LEHMANN, DOMiD – Documentation Centre and Museum of Migration in Germany

13:00–13:20 DANIEL LOHMANN, TH Köln
Whose Cultural Heritage? The Power Station on the Zanders Site in Bergisch Gladbach as a Reflection of Architecture, Industrial History and Migration

13:20–13:40 YVONNE LOBER & CAROLIN HÖFLER, TH Köln
Boundaryma(r)king: Mediating (Im)material Memory Along the Inter-Entity Boundary Line, Bosnia and Herzegovina

13:40–14:10 Comment and discussion

14:10–14:25 Coffee break

IV. ALTERNATIVE PRACTICES

Co-Research with FABIOLA ARELLANO CRUZ, Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum Köln

14:25–14:45 SIMON MEIENBERG, TH Köln; SANDRA KURFÜRST, University of Cologne; SEVI BAYRAKTAR, Cologne University of Music and Dance & WAN ISSA, Kurdish cultural researcher
Moving Memories: Embodied Acts of Collective Remembering through Dance and Theater

14:45–15:05 MARC PFAFF, Berlin University of the Arts/Technical University Berlin & JONNY-BIX BONGERS, curator and researcher, Berlin
Imagining Alternative Archives

15:05–15:35 Comment and discussion

15:35–16:15 Final Discussion
with Wrap-Up by GLENDA OBERMULLER, Theodor Wonja Michael Bibliothek, and SIMON MEIENBERG, TH Köln

Concept and Organisation

Alexander van Wickeren and Carolin Höfler (DFG Research Impulse 115 "Cultural Memory in Crisis", TH Köln)

ArtHist.net

For further information: <https://kisd.de/termine/kisdconference-2-july-2026/>

To attend, please register here: alexander.van_wickeren@th-koeln.de

Reference:

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