

PRESS RELEASE

Essen, 31.10.2023

Conference on Critical Engagement with the History of Sinti and Roma Memory, Representation, and Reparations

9 November 2023, 9:00 – 16:00 (CET)

Online (Zoom) & Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities Essen (KWI)

Goethestraße 31, 45128 Essen

Through a triadic exploration, the conference seeks to break down barriers that have excluded the "Gypsy" experience from academia due to the pervasive power of anti-Gypsyism. As a transhistorical, transnational, and intergenerational phenomenon it denies the rights and dignity of Sinti and Roma, erases their history and memories, and suppresses their demands for recognition and justice. The central argument is that Sinti and Roma knowledge production, scholarship, and self-representation remain unrecognized and excluded, reflecting the broader power dynamics that shape historical narratives.

The conference will address three dimensions: Romani historiography, challenging misrepresentations, and discussing reparation. It seeks to bridge temporal gaps, bring forth neglected voices, and enrich our understanding of history. Additionally, it aims to challenge perpetuating harmful narratives, highlight the richness of Sinti and Roma cultures, and examine how mainstream media has shaped perceptions. Finally, the concept of reparation will emerge as a critical discourse at the conference. Beyond the matter of financial compensation, the conversation will acknowledge the historical legacies of Sinti and Roma as victims, especially during the Holocaust, and the harrowing experiences of slavery forced upon them. In an era when inclusivity and equity are paramount, bringing about change in Roma studies is imperative. This transformative journey involves a rigorous process of decolonization and recognition that entails reassessing "Gypsy" identity politics, the contours of memory, and the dynamics of representation.

OPENING REMARKS

Julika Griem, KWI

Kader Konuk, Academy in Exile, TU Dortmund Faculty of Cultural Studies

PRESS CONTACT

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SPEAKERS (selection)

Frank Reuter, Forschungsstelle Antiziganismus, Universität Heidelberg

Ann Ostendorf, Gonzaga University, Washington, US

Andre Raatzsch, Head of Documentation Department at the Documentation and Cultural Center for German Sinti and Roma, Heidelberg

Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture

Iulius Rostas, National University of Political Studies and Administration, Bucharest

Isaac Blake, Romani Cultural and Arts Company (RCAC), Cardiff

Ismael Cortes, Researcher & Former Member of the Spanish Congress of Deputies

Jan Selling, Department of Critical Romani Studies, Södertörn University, Sweden

Margareta Matache, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health & Harvard University

Marius Turda, Professor, Oxford Brookes University (among others)

PARTICIPATION

Participation in the conference requires registration. Those interested in attending (in person or online) are kindly requested to send an email to Dezso Mate (deszo.mate@kwi-nrw.de) by 6 November 2023.

ORGANISATION

Organised by the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) and the Academy in Exile.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Event on the KWI website](#)

Find the full conference program attached to this e-mail.

We would appreciate the circulation of this press release.

About the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI):

The Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) Essen, Germany, is an interdisciplinary research centre following the tradition of international Institutes for Advanced Study. In its role as an inter-university institution connecting the Ruhr-University Bochum, the Technological University Dortmund and the University of Duisburg-Essen, the institute works together with researchers and scientists from its neighbouring universities as well as other partners from the federal state NRW and places in- and outside of Germany. Within the Ruhr area, the KWI is a place to share and discuss the questions and results of ambitious research with interested parties from the city and the greater region. Currently, work at the KWI focusses on the following areas: "cultural studies of science and science policy making", "sociology of literature and culture", "science communication", "visual literacy" and a "teaching lab". Projects in the established research field "culture of communication", as well as individual projects, will be continued.

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