

THE NEW
INSTITUTE

ANNUAL REPORT

Academic Year 2023/2024





DIRECTORS', FOREWORD

At THE NEW INSTITUTE we gather thinkers across disciplines and sectors to engage the challenges of our time. Our mission is to nourish transformation through interdisciplinary and trans-sectoral collaboration. Our residential fellowship program hosts up to 30 fellows in Hamburg, Germany. In addition, we organize events and workshops and collaborate with other institutions. The Institute is committed to incubating new ideas, expanding the influence of work already done, and making a tangible difference through its work.

Since 2022, we have framed our activities in terms of the global discourse on a *New Enlightenment*. The goal has been to identify strategies for re-coupling sectors (for instance, economics and ethics) that are systematically uncoupled. In the first instance, this requires the creation of distinctive research formats. It is not enough to apply diagnostic insights from academia to so-called “practice”; these sectors must be participants from the beginning in order to adequately reshape the problem space within which academic work proceeds. In this way, we intend to generate innovative, realistic ideas for positive social change.

In 2023–2024 we implemented a new model of collaborative research. Through open calls we identified program chairs who applied to lead concrete projects within at least one of our three research areas:

- The Human Condition in the 21st Century
- The Future of Democracy
- Socio-Economic Transformation

The idea behind these research areas is to connect approaches towards positive socio-economic transformation and democratic practice in light of contemporary knowledge of the human condition provided by the humanities and social sciences. It is this philosophical level that explores the complex meanings of being human that are all too often missing in concrete proposals for social change.

We selected program chairs in a competitive process through which they had a chance to engage with each other in co-designing an ideal academic year. This enabled content integration across the work done at the Institute.

Together with our program chairs, we published fellowship calls that allowed us to search for three to five fellows per program whose work contributed to the overall aims, questions, and formats laid out by each program chair.

This led to the creation of five programs:

- **Depolarizing Public Debates**
(chaired by Prof. Dr. Michael Brüggemann)
- **Reclaiming Common Wealth**
(chaired by Prof. Dr. Isabel Feichtner)
- **Black Feminism and the Polycrisis**
(chaired by Minna Salami)
- **Governing the Planetary Commons**
(chaired by Prof. Dr. Dr. Louis Kotzé)
- **Conceptions of Human Flourishing**
(chaired by Prof. Dr. Andrej Zwitter)

You can read more about each program below in the report.

It is worth emphasizing here that the conceptual arc in 2023–2024 focused on how we can address the crises of the universal by finding novel conceptions of the commons, for instance, by looking at commoning practices. We focused on diverse conditions of human flourishing, how we can draw on the

Each program, and the work of each fellow, contributed to remapping the landscape of how we can achieve common ground, shift solution spaces, critique the very concept of humanity, and reimagine it in concrete contexts.

intersectional methods of Black feminism to deal with the polycrisis, how to depolarize public debates, and how to democratically govern the planetary commons.

We are proud to report more than 50 academic publications by our fellows and academic staff as well as more than 100 public appearances at conferences, talks, panels, and in interviews and on podcasts. We hosted and co-hosted a total of 86 events, both on site and at external locations, as well as online. For a selection of our publications and events, please see sections 2 and 3.

In addition to the collaborative programs, we continue to host individual fellows who work across programs. In the academic year 2023–2024, the Institute invited 15 fellows to work both within and across our research areas, while they pursue their individual publications and other projects. Thanks to the commitment and creativity of our community of fellows, in 2023–2024 a vibrant institutional life unfolded through weekly meetings, lunch talks, workshops, and a series of events in addition to our weekly format where both our fellows and invited external guests presented their work.

In addition to our primary output – the work of our fellows – THE NEW INSTITUTE published the first issue of THE NEW, a series that continues our discussion paper format (see section 5).

In 2023–2024, we continued working with our partners DIE ZEIT and the Bundeskanzler-Helmut-Schmidt-Stiftung to award the Helmut-Schmidt-Zukunftspreis (Helmut Schmidt Future Prize) to a person whose work promotes democracy and the common good. In 2024, we awarded the third Helmut-Schmidt-Zukunftspreis to Meredith Whittaker, president of the Signal Foundation. The prize was presented at a public ceremony on May 15, 2024 at Hamburg's Thalia Theater.

In 2023–2024, THE NEW INSTITUTE formed its board of trustees. Together with chairman Erck Rickmers, our trustees Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Sabine Kunst (Joachim Herz Foundation) and Prof. Dr. Burkhard Schwenker (Former Chairman and CEO of Roland Berger) shape the Institute's mission. Our international advisory board also started its work in 2023–2024, with members Prof. David Kennedy (Director of the Institute for Global Law and Policy at Harvard Law School), Prof. Dr. Rahel Jaeggi (Director of the Centre for Social Critique at Humboldt University Berlin), and Daniel Kehlmann (novelist and playwright).

As always, we are particularly grateful to Erck Rickmers, founder of THE NEW INSTITUTE and the chairman of the board of trustees, for his generous financial and intellectual support of the Institute. Thanks to his close cooperation we were able to further develop the trans-sectoral dimension of our endeavor and to steer our research activities towards concrete visions for positive social change.

We hope you enjoy reading this report, which will inform you about the fellows, their work and output, and the activities of the Institute.

Prof. Dr. Markus Gabriel and Dr. Anna Katsman



ERCK RICKMERS

Founder of THE NEW INSTITUTE and Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Erck Rickmers is the founder of THE NEW INSTITUTE. From 2010 to 2012, the entrepreneur and investor served in the parliament of the state of Hamburg. In 2014, driven by concern about the future of the planet, he developed the idea of giving the humanities a bigger role in shaping societal change. For this reason, he acquired the Warburg Ensemble, a group of 19th-century townhouses, which opened in 2022 as THE NEW INSTITUTE, where up to 35 fellows live and work collaboratively.



SABINE KUNST

Chairwoman of the Board of the Joachim Herz Foundation

Sabine Kunst is a German engineering scientist, professor, and former minister. She holds doctorates in both water management and political science. From 1991 to 2007, she held the chair for Biological Process Engineering at the University of Hannover. Beyond her academic pursuits, Sabine Kunst has actively engaged in science policy and has held key leadership roles at several academic institutions. Between 2005 and 2007, she served as the Director of International Affairs and as Vice President for Teaching, Studies, and Continuing Education at the University of Hannover. She was president of the University of Potsdam from 2007 to 2010 and president of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) from 2010 to 2011. She then moved into politics, serving as the Minister for Science, Research, and Culture in the state of Brandenburg from 2011 to 2016. From 2016 to the end of 2021, she was president of Humboldt University in Berlin. Since 2022, Sabine Kunst has been Chairwoman of the Board of the Hamburg-based Joachim Herz Foundation.

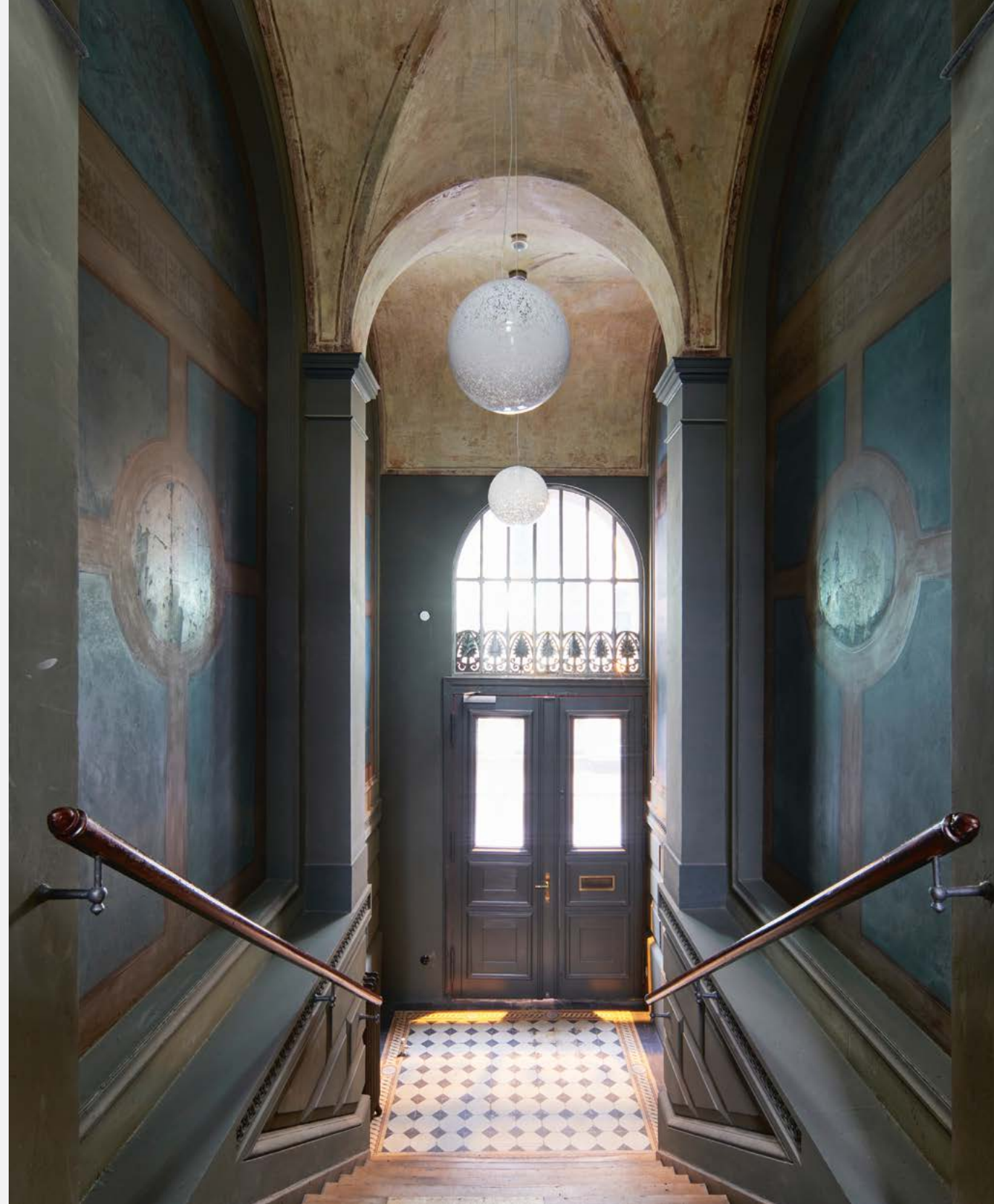
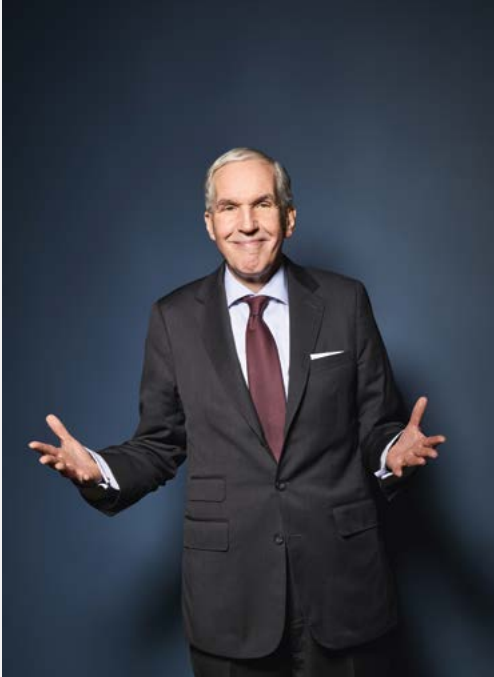


1.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Former Chairman and CEO of Roland Berger

Burkhard Schwenker is strategy consultant and advisor. Formerly Chairman of the Advisory Council, Chairman of the Supervisory Board, and long-time CEO of Roland Berger, Burkhard Schwenker transitioned to the role of Senior Fellow at Roland Berger in 2020. A scholar by training, Burkhard Schwenker earned his degree in mathematics and business administration from the University of Bielefeld, and completed his PhD after gaining management experience as an assistant to the Board of PWA AG. He imparts his knowledge by teaching strategic management at the HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management. Burkhard Schwenker currently serves as Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Hamburger Sparkasse AG and HASPA Finanzholding, and he also sits on the Supervisory Boards of Hamburger Hafen und Logistik AG, Flughafen Hamburg GmbH, and M.M. Warburg & Co. Beyond his professional and academic commitments, Burkhard Schwenker actively participates in several sociopolitical institutions and foundations, including the ZEIT-Stiftung, the Senat der Wirtschaft e.V., the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra, and Stiftung Hamburger Kunstsammlungen.

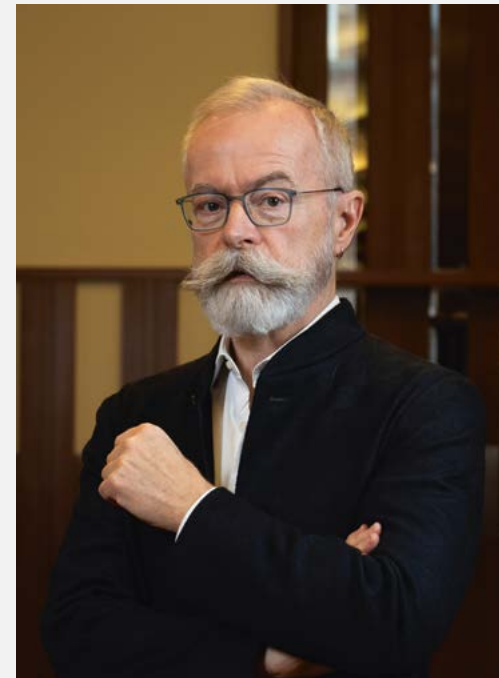


DAVID KENNEDY

Manley O. Hudson Professor of Law and Faculty Director of the Institute for Global Law and Policy, Harvard Law School, USA

Chairman of the Advisory Board

David Kennedy is the Manley O. Hudson Professor of Law and Faculty Director of the Institute for Global Law and Policy at Harvard Law School, where he teaches international law, international economic policy, legal theory, law and development, and European law. His research utilizes interdisciplinary materials from sociology, social theory, economics, and history to explore issues of global governance, development policy, and the nature of professional expertise. As a practicing lawyer and consultant, David Kennedy has worked on numerous international projects, both commercial and public. A member of the US Council on Foreign Relations and a former chair of the World Economic Forum's Global Advisory Council on Global Governance, he has taught at universities around the world.



RAHEL JAEGGI

Professor of Practical Philosophy, Philosophy of Law, and Social Philosophy and Director of the Centre for Social Critique, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany

Rahel Jaeggi is Professor of Practical Philosophy, Philosophy of Law, and Social Philosophy, and the Director of the Centre for Social Critique at Humboldt University in Berlin. She has been a Visiting Professor at Yale University, Fudan University in Shanghai, and The New School for Social Research in New York, as well as a fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University. Rahel Jaeggi's research includes concepts of alienation, commodification or reification, ideology, forms of life, institutions, and solidarity.



2.

ADVISORY
BOARD

Novelist and Playwright

Daniel Kehlmann is a German-Austrian novelist and playwright. His novel *Measuring the World*, one of the most successful German books of the post-war period, has been translated into more than 40 languages. He has been awarded the Candide Prize, the Per Olov Enquist Prize, the Kleist Prize, the Thomas Mann Prize, and the Friedrich Hölderlin Prize. His novel *Tyll* was shortlisted for the International Booker Prize in 2020.



3.

PROGRAMS AND
FELLOWS

Our programs gather thinkers across disciplines to engage the challenges of our time. We address these challenges through the lens of three research areas:

The Human Condition in the 21st Century, The Future of Democracy, and Socio-Economic Transformation.

The programs in 2023–2024 focused on approaches that foster cooperation to reestablish and safeguard our common ground. To various degrees, each program is informed by overarching questions from the research areas: What does it mean to be human? How can democratic self-governance be improved? How can a socio-economic transformation be accomplished?

Below, we introduce the activities and pursuits of the programs and the associated fellows.*

* The fellow profiles reflect biographical information that was accurate when fellows arrived at THE NEW INSTITUTE.



Robert Heinecken,
Untitled Newswomen
(Joan Lunden, Connie
Chung, Jane Pauley,
Diane Sawyer) (1987).
Courtesy: The artist and
Petzel, New York.

Depolarizing Public Debates: Developing Tools for Transformative Communication

How can we depolarize public debates
on socio-ecological transformations?

Relevancy

Controversial debates, whether reported by journalists or played out in digital networks and news coverage, are fundamental to democratic processes. The development of clear alternatives represented by specific actors is a productive part of democracy. Yet, for certain challenges, such as climate change, the solutions do not lie somewhere in the middle between two extremes and it is clear that partial climate protection is not enough. Radical ideas must be debated, which inevitably involves conflict as part of democratic discourse. Under certain conditions, however, controversies risk becoming uncontrollably polarized.

Polarization is the division of society into groups that fundamentally disagree on key issues and no longer recognize each other as legitimate participants in a common debate. Importantly, polarization is neither a universal nor a natural phenomenon, which raises questions about the factors driving it. Our research project therefore investigates the role of digital media networks and news coverage as key drivers of polarization.

About

The program Depolarizing Public Debates: Developing Tools for Transformative Communication was chaired by Michael Brüggemann and focused on how digital media networks and news coverage contribute to the polarization of society, sometimes even creating a self-fulfilling prophecy of division. The group, including fellows Shota Gelovani, Katharina Esau, Ashley Muddiman, Fritz Breithaupt, Hartmut Wessler, Mike Farjam, Helena Rauxloh, and Hendrik Meyer, studied how polarization manifests in the content of news media, digital networks, and unmediated political communication, examining how these arenas interact and influence each other.

Program Chair

Prof. Dr. Michael Brüggemann
Professor of Communication Studies, Climate and Science
Communication, University of Hamburg, Germany

The project concentrated on four key areas of research: “measuring polarization”, “democratic listening”, “how can journalists change the public conversation on polarizing issues?” and “narratives”.

Measuring polarization: Qualitative and Automated Content and Network Analysis

Led by Michael Brüggemann, this part of the project examined whether disruptive forms of climate protest lead to more polarized climate debates in Germany, and which actors are responsible for driving these polarization processes. Climate protests such as those associated with Fridays for Future (FFF) or the Last Generation (LG) are often characterized as polarizing, but different movements are perceived differently. For example, disruptive actions, such as blocking traffic, may elicit stronger reactions than more conventional protests. This research used large-scale manual and computational analyses of over 12,000 news articles and 5 million Twitter posts from 2022 and 2023 to compare the discourses surrounding FFF and LG.

The analysis shows that while LG-related Twitter debates attract more attention, they also provoke more antagonistic and extreme frames, such as the labeling of protesters as “terrorists”. FFF-related debates, while sometimes contentious, attract less toxic content. Media coverage reflects a similar pattern: LG is primarily framed in terms of extremism and crime, while FFF is discussed more in the context of its goal of bringing about climate justice. The findings suggest that right-wing populist actors are often responsible for initiating polarizing content, resulting in an “asymmetric polarization” in which extremist rhetoric spreads more widely across media landscapes.

The findings from this work are presented in two full papers currently under review:

Meyer, Hendrik, Rauxloh, Helena, Farjam, Mike, and Brüggemann, Michael (2024). “The Framing of Disruptive Climate Protest: Comparing German News on Fridays for Future and Letzte Generation”. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/jkaw8>

Meyer, Hendrik, Pröschel, Louisa, and Brüggemann, Michael (2024). “From Disruptive Protests to Disrupted Networks? Analyzing Levels of Polarization in the German Twitter Discourses around ‘Fridays for Future’ and ‘The Last Generation’”. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/nd68z>

Democratic Listening: “Let’s talk” Platform

Led by Hartmut Wessler and Shota Gelovani, this project developed the “Let’s Talk” platform in collaboration with CDLX Berlin to address the lack of incentive to engage in democratic listening on online platforms. The research tested whether new platform features, such as “listening-oriented buttons”, could improve the quality of discussions and reduce affective polarization. In addition, the team trained an AI-based large language model (LLM) to act as a listening-oriented moderator, using a detailed moderation guide. The LLM intervened in discussions that became too tense, off-topic, or disengaged by automatically posting moderation comments.

Early results show that while AI moderation was faster and more effective at identifying poor listening behavior, users interacted more with human-generated moderation comments, possibly due to the more personalized approach of human moderators. The exact results of the experiment will only be known after analysis of the 4,675 comments posted in the discussions, 5,183 reactions clicked by users, and 766 combinations of fully completed pre- and post-surveys from the 766 individuals who participated in the various discussion groups.

The study is pre-registered in the Open Science Framework, and its results were presented at various conferences and workshops in the fall of 2024. This included a joint panel by the Depolarizing Public Debates group at the 10th European Communication Conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in September 2024.

How Can Journalists Change the Public Conversation on Polarizing Issues?

The project, led by Ashley Muddiman, examined how journalists can shift public discourse on polarizing issues like climate change by focusing on cooperative solutions rather than partisan conflict. In an experiment involving more than 1,000 participants in the United States, different types of news articles were tested to see how they affected discussions. The results showed that articles that emphasized solutions to climate change fostered more constructive discussion, with participants feeling more hopeful and willing to engage in online conversations. These articles also generated more interest, with participants expressing a greater willingness to read, share, and pay for solution-focused news compared to conflict-focused or problem-focused articles.

Narratives

Led by Fritz Breithaupt, this research focused on the role of narratives in shaping group identities and driving polarization. It explored the concept of “spontaneous side-taking”, in which individuals quickly choose sides in a conflict and become resistant to changing their position, even when presented with contradictory information. Early findings suggest that people tend to ignore alternative perspectives once they’ve made a choice, highlighting the deep-seated nature of narrative-driven polarization. Participants in the study showed strong memory retention for details associated with their chosen side, but paid little attention to the opposing viewpoint, demonstrating how conflict narratives can entrench polarization.

This project is explored further in the resulting paper:

Woodward, Claire, Hiskes, Ben and **Breithaupt, Fritz** (2024). “Spontaneous Side-Taking Drives Memory, Empathy, and Author Attribution in Conflict Narratives”, *Discover Psychology*, 4(52). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44202-024-00159-w>

Fellows

MICHAEL BRÜGGEMANN

Professor of Communication Studies, Climate and Science Communication, University of Hamburg, Germany

Program Chair

April 2023–September 2024

Michael Brüggemann is Professor of Communication Studies, Climate and Science Communication at the University of Hamburg. He co-chairs the project Social Constructions of Climate Futures at the cluster of excellence Climate, Climatic Change, and Society (CLICCS). In his current research, he focuses on climate communication and the communicative dimension of socio-ecological transformations: exploring how journalism, digital media networks, and different social actors co-produce and shape public debates about global ecological challenges. Recently, Michael has explored the lack of climate coverage in the news, as well as emerging practices of transformative journalism and tendencies towards discursive polarization.



Professor of Germanic Studies and Cognitive Science, Indiana University, Bloomington, USA

The Role of Narratives in Polarization and Polarization Communication

November–December 2023, May–June 2024

Fritz Breithaupt is Professor of Germanic Studies and Cognitive Science at Indiana University, where, in 2017, he was one of the youngest recipients of the permanent title Provost Professor. In 1997 he received his PhD in German literature from Johns Hopkins University. In the past, Fritz was a Fulbright Fellow and an Alexander-von-Humboldt-Fellow. Additionally, he has been a regular Visiting Professor at St. Gallen University for close to a decade. At Indiana University, Fritz is building up a track of courses in cognitive arts and humanities and runs the unique Experimental Humanities Lab, whose goal is to bridge the gap between the sciences and the humanities. Since 2009, his books have been published by Suhrkamp. Fritz's most recent book, *The Narrative Brain*, won several awards, including Wissenschaftsbuch des Jahres 2023 in Austria. His research areas include German and European culture, cognitive arts and humanities, and the history of psychology.



Postdoctoral Research Associate, Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

September–December 2023

Katharina Esau is a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Digital Media Research Centre (DMRC) at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia. She holds a PhD in Communication and Media Science from Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf, and published her dissertation in 2022 as a book titled *Kommunikationsformen und Deliberationsdynamik* (Communication Forms and Dynamics of Deliberation). Katharina received the Best Dissertation Award from the Democracy Foundation of the University of Cologne. Her research specializes in the field of political communication, focusing on the intersection of networked digital publics, democratic innovations, and computational mixed methods. In 2018, she was a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance (University of Canberra). She holds the position of Chief Investigator for the research project “NewsPol: Measuring and Comparing News Media Polarization”, which is part of the Australian Laureate Fellowship Partisanship and Polarization in Online Public Debate.



Postdoctoral Researcher, Institute for Media and Communication Studies, University of Mannheim, Germany

Depolarizing Online Debates by Fostering Democratic Listening

September 2023–June 2024

Shota Gelovani is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Mannheim, specializing in internet and social media studies. Prior to his position at the Institute for Media and Communication Studies, he was a Doctoral Researcher at the Chair of Digital Governance at the Technical University of Munich (TUM). His doctoral thesis, *Bridging Social Cleavages via (Social) Media? A Comparative Study of how Social Media influences Inter-Group Attitudes*, showcases his expertise in exploring the impact of social media on inter-group dynamics in different country contexts. Shota worked on the Horizon 2020 project “Observatory for Political Texts in European Democracies (OPTED)”, where he focused on citizen-produced political texts. Through his work, he is committed to understanding the intricate nuances of political communication.



Associate Professor, Department of Communication Studies, University of Kansas, USA

May–June 2024

Ashley Muddiman is Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Kansas. She received her PhD from the University of Texas at Austin. She focuses on political media effects, with a particular interest in the nuances of digital news and the challenges of political incivility. Her research examines how journalists and news users perceive and engage with political incivility online, the factors that influence news story selection in digital environments, how journalists can intervene in comment sections to make them less uncivil, and how clickbait headlines set expectations for news users. Ashley's recent studies include topics such as the role of the media during the COVID-19 pandemic, the complexities of online relational technology, and the spread of health misinformation. Ashley teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses in political communication, new media and politics, and research methods. She also researches and develops new methods for large-scale text analysis.



Professor of Media and Communication Studies, University of Mannheim, Germany

Depolarizing Online Debates by Fostering Democratic Listening

September 2023–June 2024

Hartmut Wessler holds a chair for Media and Communication Studies at the University of Mannheim. He has conducted research and taught classes as a visiting scholar at New York University, the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil, and the University of Zürich. Hartmut gained his doctorate in Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Hamburg. He is a Co-Chair of the German Communication Association. His work revolves around the democratic qualities of online and offline public debate.



Events / Activities*

29.05.24

Journalism and Community Moderation in Polarized Debates (Workshop)

Those engaged in the practice of journalism and other forms of public discourse moderation must consider the following: To what extent are we, whether intentionally or unintentionally, contributing to the polarization of discourse? The objective of this workshop was to identify ways in which professionals from various fields, including journalism, politics, activism, and community moderation, can collectively contribute to constructive public debates. Within the framework of a “Hamburg Impulse”, recommendations were developed for professional practice based on scientific principles that are compatible with journalistic independence and freedom.

The workshop concluded with a panel discussion featuring Luisa Neubauer (climate activist), Anja Reschke (journalist and TV presenter), and Ricarda Lang (Federal Chairwoman of Bündnis 90/Die Grünen).



*More information about these events can be found on our website.



Ruben Martin de Lucas,
Minimal Republic
(2019/2020). Courtesy:
The artist.

Reclaiming Common Wealth: Towards a Law and Political Economy of Land Commons

What are the pathways, processes, and institutional designs for the generation and governance of land commons?

Relevancy

Institutional investments in land continue to fuel widespread discontent around the world. In cities, affordable housing is becoming increasingly scarce and essential ecological retrofits are being delayed. Meanwhile, large-scale purchases of agricultural land leads to the displacement of rural populations and the rise of harmful monocultures that threaten both local ecologies and food sovereignty. These critiques of private land ownership, corporate control, and the appropriation of social infrastructure have galvanized civil society, sparking protests and calls for systemic change.

Initiatives to de-privatize land and reclaim it as a common resource offer transformative potential. They demonstrate the social and environmental possibilities that can be realized by reorganizing land ownership and its governance. These movements point to new ways of administering land that prioritize the common good over private profit.

About

The Reclaiming Common Wealth program, chaired by Isabel Feichtner, focused on exploring ways of transforming the current legal and political economy of land. Fellows within the program – Tim Wihl, Felicitas Sommer, Susanne Heeg, and Stefan Gruber – engaged deeply with two social movements. The first was the Berlin Tenants' Movement, which advocates for the socialization of real estate and transforming private ownership of land and buildings into common property based on Article 15 of the German Constitution. The second was the Coalition of Progressive German Farmers, which campaigns for equitable access to land, its fair distribution, and sustainable use.

The group's work on developing legal and institutional frameworks for a democratized housing sector and the reconstitution of land as a "commons"

Program Chair

Prof. Dr. Isabel Feichtner

Professor of Public Law and International Economic Law,
University of Würzburg, Germany

was informed by commons theory. Importantly, the program bridged the gap between urban and rural land struggles, fostering dialogue between movements and scholars working on socialization and the commons – areas that are often siloed in academic and activist circles.

Highlights

Bridging Land Struggles and Building Networks

Many of the challenges to just and socially-ecological land policies – including displacement, opaque ownership structures, land concentration, soil degradation, and the financialization of land – are interlinked across urban and rural contexts. Initiatives based in both urban and rural settings have worked on analyzing these problems and developing strategies to address them. Efforts have been directed towards securing land access, especially for small-scale farms, ensuring equitable land and housing distribution, and preventing further soil degradation. To bridge the urban-rural divide, the program fostered networks among activists, researchers, administrators, and policymakers. One of the outcomes of this collaboration is the book *Stadt-Land-Boden – Verbindende Bodenpolitik zwischen Stadt und Land* (Urban-rural-soil: Connecting land policy between urban and rural areas), forthcoming from transcript in 2025, which delves into unified land policies connecting urban and rural settings.

Operationalizing Socialization and Article 15 of the Basic Law

A key focus was the operationalization of Article 15 of the German Constitution, which provides for the socialization of land. The group addressed two key issues: how to unravel opaque ownership structures and how to develop criteria for determining which parcels should be transferred to common ownership. They also explored the issue of fair compensation for previous owners, a critical aspect of the transfer process.

These issues were addressed in expert workshops, and the group’s proposals will contribute to the ongoing drafting of a socialization law by the Deutsche Wohnen & Co. initiative. This initiative aims to put a socialization law to a referendum in Berlin in 2026.

Strengthening Legal Infrastructures for Commons and Commoning

Despite growing interest in commons as a means of social-ecological transformation, the legal and institutional frameworks to support such initiatives remain underdeveloped. In collaboration with commons scholar and activist David Bollier, the program brought together an international group of experts to examine how to build and strengthen legal infrastructures that facilitate and sustain commoning practices.

This international dialogue is critical to resisting the dominance of global market systems and supporting more autonomous, cooperative, and sustainable approaches to land management. A forthcoming synthesis report will provide further insights into this work.

Relevant Publications by Fellows in the Program

Feichtner, Isabel, Heeg, Susanne, Sommer, Felicitas and Wihl, Tim (2024 [forthcoming]). “Auswahl der von einer Wohnungsvergesellschaftung in Berlin betroffenen Grundstücke und Zurechnung von Wohnungen zu Immobilienkonzernen”, Working Paper.

Feichtner, Isabel, Heeg, Susanne, Klingenmeier, Anne, Langlotz, Gesine and Schubel, Katja (2025 [forthcoming]). *Stadt-Land-Bodenpolitik – Verbindende Bodenpolitik zwischen Stadt und Land*. Bielefeld: transcript.

Feichtner, Isabel, Heeg, Susanne and Wihl, Tim (2024 [forthcoming]). “Deutsche Wohnen & Co. Enteignen” in Berlin (Germany): Socializing Housing at a Large Scale”, in Russell, B. and Bianchi, I. (eds.) *Radical Municipalism: The Politics of the Common and the Democratization of Public Services*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

Heeg, Susanne and Wihl, Tim (2025 [forthcoming]). “Socialization as a Care-Enabling Response to a Financialized Housing Sector”. Special Issue of the *British Journal of Sociology*.

Fellows

ISABEL FEICHTNER

Professor of Public Law and International Economic Law, University of Würzburg, Germany

Program Chair

March 2022–June 2024

Isabel Feichtner is Professor of Public Law and International Economic Law at the University of Würzburg. Her research interests cover the distributive effects of law, the democratization of society, and the law of the commons and commoning. She explores how institutional experiments, e.g., the redesign of money or Commons Public Partnerships, can support social-ecological transformation through democratization and commoning. Her monograph *The Law and Politics of WTO Waivers: Stability and Flexibility in Public International Law*, published in 2011 by Cambridge University Press, gained renewed relevance with regard to recent demands for a TRIPS Waiver to facilitate the global fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. She recently co-edited two volumes published in 2023; one on German (post-) colonial law and the other on legal constitutions of value. Isabel founded the Law Clinic *Transformation Law* at Würzburg University.



STEFAN GRUBER

Associate Professor of Architecture and Urbanism, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, USA

January–June 2024

Stefan Gruber is Associate Professor of Architecture and Urbanism at Carnegie Mellon University, where he chairs the Master of Urban Design program. He directs the Remaking Cities Institute, the School of Architecture's research center for urbanism, participatory action, and community design. From 2010 to 2016, he served as a Professor of Geography, Landscapes, and Cities at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Since 2006 Stefan has been working at the intersection of architecture, urbanism, and research through his design practice STUDIOGRUBER. His work focuses on spatial justice with a specific interest in the negotiation between top-down planning and bottom-up transformation of cities. He initiated "Spaces of Commoning", an interdisciplinary research project on commoning, artistic practices, and the city.

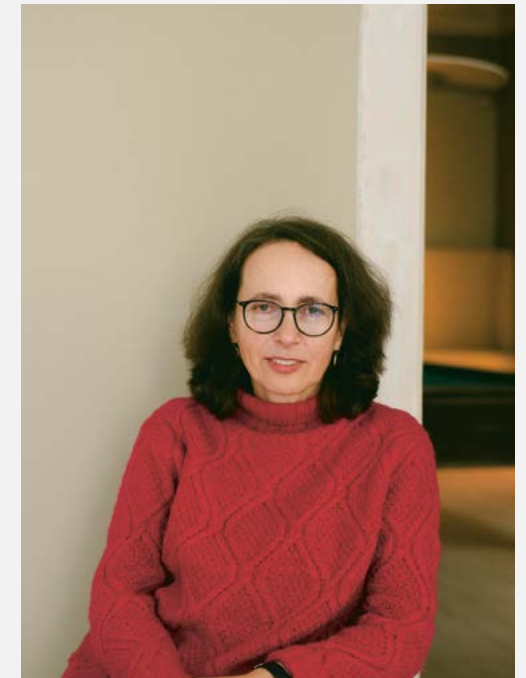


SUSANNE HEEG

Professor of Urban Geography, Goethe University of Frankfurt, Germany

September 2023–June 2024

Susanne Heeg holds the position of Professor of Urban Geography within the Institute of Human Geography at the Goethe University in Frankfurt, within the Department of Geosciences and Geography. Her primary research focus centers on urban areas, considering them as focal points of social struggles and pivotal nodes within global dynamics. Her research encompasses the analysis of processes that underscore the growing significance of cities and urban regions in the contemporary global landscape. Susanne's work delves into the intricate dynamics taking place within cities and metropolitan regions. In particular, she investigates the impact of financial and property market liberalization on the urban environment. One central question driving her research revolves around understanding how the neoliberal reorganization of cities shapes physical spaces, impacts residents' lifestyles, and influences patterns of work and habitation. Notably, she has contributed her expertise as a member of the expert commission assessing the socialization of major housing companies in Berlin.



PhD, Centre of Land, Water and Environmental Risk Management, Technical University of Munich, Germany

September–November 2023

Felicitas Sommer is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Department of Aerospace and Geodesy, Chair of Land Management, at the Technical University of Munich (TUM). As a Science & Technology Studies-inspired legal anthropologist, she studies concepts and values of property and sustainability through the socio-technical infrastructures of data, registers, and administrations. She initiated the research project “Green Data, Indicators, Algorithms: Connecting Green Finance and Smart Cities”, which she now leads. GreenDIA is an interdisciplinary consortium research project involving the Chairs of Land Management (TUM), Remote Sensing (Uni BW), and Statistics & Data Science (LMU). The project investigates cross-sectoral standards and criteria for sustainability measurement in relation to land sealing and land use for residential buildings. This focus builds on her experience as a sustainable finance analyst in a small consultancy, where she was responsible for developing an ESG-rating methodology.



Interim Professor of Public Law and Recent Legal History, University of Erfurt, Germany

September 2023–June 2024

Tim Wihl has been Interim Professor of Public Law and Recent Legal History at the University of Erfurt since April 2022. His academic foci lie in the fields of constitutional and administrative law, legal theory, and modern legal history. Tim’s publications cover human rights theory, legal philosophy, theory of property, political protest (including climate activism), and equality law. Since April 2022, he has been part of the expert panel on the proposed “socialization” of housing companies in the federal state of Berlin. Tim has done intensive research on “commoning”, particularly in the context of the urban housing crisis. Tim has presented papers and given talks on the constitutional and legal feasibility of housing commons at numerous conferences.



Events / Activities*

16–17.11.23

Urban-Rural Land Policy for a Socio-Ecological Transformation (Workshop)

There are many urban and rural initiatives in Germany that are concerned with the protection, preservation, and regeneration of soil, as well as the fair distribution of land. In November 2023, many associated activists met for the first time with researchers and lawyers at THE NEW INSTITUTE to discuss options for action and cooperation for a just land and soil policy. Following the workshop, a policy paper was produced by participants.

27–28.02.24

Re-Designing the International Seabed Authority as a Democratic Institution (Workshop)

Beyond terrestrial land commons, the program also contributed to the discussion about the governance of global commons, particularly the seabed. Governments are currently negotiating a Mining Code for the commercial exploitation of minerals on the deep seabed – considered the common heritage of humankind – via the International Seabed Authority, and there is growing momentum for a moratorium to protect ocean ecosystems.

This inter- and transdisciplinary workshop was jointly convened by the Reclaiming Common Wealth and Governing the Planetary Commons programs, along with individual fellow Frederic Hanusch. The workshop explored how the International Seabed Authority could be transformed into a democratic institution that represents not only human interests but also those of non-human actors, such as marine ecosystems. Furthermore, the workshop examined how the International Seabed Authority might facilitate cohabitation on Earth and in the deep sea, treating these environments as commons. Participants included Indigenous activists, marine biologists, international lawyers, political scientists, and artists.

18–19.03.24

Value and Valuation of Land and Real Estate (Workshop)

The workshop examined how land and housing should be valued and what constitutes fair compensation when property is taken for public purposes or socialized. Although German law mandates “equitable balance” in compensation rather than “market value”, it is often interpreted as requiring market-based payments. Participants, including lawyers, economists, and urbanists, discussed methods to assess market value, including its inadequacies in accounting for climate-related risks to property. The workshop encouraged rethinking the current compensation standard, questioning whether it aligns with goals like democratizing land ownership and transforming housing into a communal resource.

*More information about these events can be found on our website.

13–15.05.24

Infrastructures of Commoning (Workshop)

This workshop, which was co-convened by program chair Isabel Feichtner and commons scholar David Bollier, sought to identify which legal infrastructures might facilitate, sustain, and expand commoning. Adopting a broad understanding of infrastructure, which encompasses culture and practice, the workshop was designed to focus on legal and institutional infrastructures in particular, especially those that support land and housing commons.

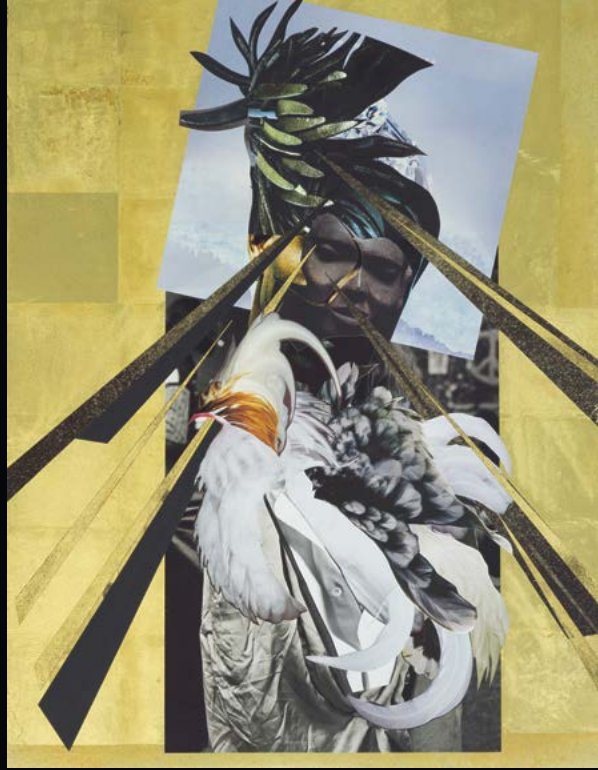


05.06.24

Commoning Research Institutions and Knowledge Production (Workshop)

This workshop explored ideas regarding the implications of common knowledge production and research institutions, as well as the potential for aligning the design of knowledge institutions with transformative and transdisciplinary modes of research. Andreas Roepstorff, Director of the Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies, contributed his perspective to the workshop.





Marcia Kure, *Shifters and Monarchs. The Series X* (2018). © The artist. Courtesy: Susan Inglett Gallery, NYC.

Black Feminism and the Polycrisis: Configuring a Novel Solution Space Through Intersectional Methodology

How can we use the unique insights and intersectional methods of Black feminism to respond to the complexities of the contemporary polycrisis?

Relevancy

The term polycrisis was popularized by historian Adam Tooze to describe the interconnected crises of climate change, pandemics, inequality, economic downturn, and the war in Ukraine that characterize our current era. While this definition is accurate, it is also incomplete in crucial ways. First, there are other pressing crises that aren't typically mentioned in the polycrisis discourse, such as the wars in Gaza and Sudan, the epidemic of male violence against women, and the refugee crisis. Second, there are deeper "meta" crises: the crisis of relationships – between different social groups and between humans and the ecosystems they are part of – and the crisis of knowledge, rooted in epistemic methods derived from Enlightenment dualism and objectivism.

The central idea of the program is that Black feminism provides a critical and transformative lens through which we can understand and address the deeper layers of the polycrisis more inclusively. The program explored how intersectional methodologies offer complex and imaginative responses to global crises that are embedded within systems of power and oppression, focusing on lived experience, interconnectedness, and holism, alongside analytical frameworks and actionable strategies.

The aim of the program is not only to critique the technocratic and Euro-patriarchal power structures that dominate crisis responses, but also to propose a more inclusive and dynamic approach, one that values imagination, aesthetics, and embodied knowledge just as much as intellectual critique. By integrating these dimensions, we hope to shed light on pathways towards a more just and sustainable future.

About

Chaired by Minna Salami, the Black Feminism and the Polycrisis program brought together a group of scholars and activists dedicated to reframing the global polycrisis through the lens of Black feminist thought: Akwugo Emejulu,

Program Chair

Minna Salami
Writer, Journalist, Speaker

Pumla Dineo Gqola, Adenike Titilope Oladosu, Abosede Priscilla Ipadeola, Kathryn Sophia Belle, and Maha Marouan.

The program’s research was concerned with who gets to define and respond to global crises. The term “polycrisis” has gained significant traction in elite circles – from institutions like the World Bank to academic settings – but these same spaces often exclude marginalized voices from the conversation. When these groups *are* included, they are often contextualized as marginalized voices rather than as experts in their own right, whose insights could shape meaningful decisions. This distinction is critical: those most directly affected by the polycrisis bring solutions that are both theoretical and practical, grounded in lived experience. They know what it means to live through these overlapping crises, not just to study them from a distance. The issue isn’t merely one of exclusion, which is problematic enough when attempting to tackle *global* challenges. We cannot disempower and repair destructive power dynamics (crises) by replicating those same dynamics in the ways in which we address them.

When searching for the term “polycrisis” on Google Trends, it is interesting to see that the term is most often searched for in countries such as India, Sri Lanka, South Africa, and Kenya. This suggests that those most impacted by the polycrisis, particularly in the Global South, are actively engaging with the concept. Yet, despite their engagement, their voices remain underrepresented in mainstream discussions. Our research sought to address this gap by advocating for a more inclusive and multidimensional understanding of the polycrisis, one that incorporates the insights and lived experiences of those directly affected. Much of the conversation about the polycrisis has been dominated by data – statistics, facts, diagrams. While these are important, we must not forget that every data point represents a living entity. The crisis is not simply technological or abstract; it is deeply human and ecological. That lived, breathing story is as vital to our understanding as any dataset.

Black feminism is crucial here because it reframes the polycrisis and examines it from the perspective of silenced voices. It interrogates the patriarchal and imperialist structures that shape responses to these crises and addresses the underlying, interconnected meta crises that are often ignored. Black feminist methodologies not only critique these power dynamics but they also offer imaginative and inclusive ways forward, providing both an intellectual and a practical framework to address global challenges from a position of lived reality rather than distant abstraction.

Highlights

Several key moments during the program year were critical to the development of our work. A collective understanding emerged that imagination, historical context, and critical debate are essential to identifying “solution spaces” for the polycrisis. This realization shifted the focus from purely analytical or data-driven approaches to more creative and holistic methods.

Throughout the year, the group approached the issue from this vantage point, resulting in a multi-perspective approach, addressing critical issues, such as climate change, the war in Gaza, feminist foreign policy, artificial intelligence, and resilience. The program’s work has contributed to high-level policy discussions with the German Institute for International and Security Affairs and was addressed at a United Nations session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, where fellow Maha Marouan used Black feminist praxis to address the polycrisis. These engagements have been instrumental in expanding the reach and influence of Black feminist perspectives in global policy discussions.

The group also implemented a “Black feminist poetics” – the idea that aesthetics, personal narratives, and embodied knowledge are essential tools for how we engage with crisis. Out of these creative sensibilities, the group created a short film with fellows Mac Premo and Adrianna Dufay. The film is a finalist in the Lovie Awards in the category of Best Video: Public Service and Activism, and was shortlisted for Best Art Direction and People’s Favorite awards. The film is being screened at universities internationally, helping to bring the insights of the Black feminism program to a wider audience. In addition to documenting the program, the film serves as a creative intervention, using visual storytelling to emphasize the importance of diverse perspectives in responding to crises.

To further explore the polycrisis through art, the program also hosted an artist-in-residence, worked with musicians, and organized a concert. Public events and screenings were held at cultural institutions in Hamburg, including the MARKK museum and M.Bassy. Additionally, the program invited speakers from diverse backgrounds to THE NEW INSTITUTE, ran workshops, and organized “imagination” dinners.

Fellows

MINNA SALAMI

Writer, Journalist, Speaker
Program Chair
November 2022–June 2025

Minna Salami is a Nigerian-Finnish and Swedish feminist author and social critic. Her research interests include the politics of knowledge production, the progression of feminist theory, and contemporary African thought. Her debut book, *Sensuous Knowledge*, has been translated into multiple languages, and she is currently writing a polemical book about feminism in relation to Africa. She has drawn over a million readers to her multiple award-winning blog MsAfropolitan. Minna has presented talks at prominent institutions, including the UN, the Oxford Union, the Cambridge Union, Yale University, and the Singularity University at NASA. She has consulted governments on race and gender equality and has curated events at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. Minna sits on the council of the Royal Institute of Philosophy and the boards of the African Feminist Initiative at Pennsylvania State University, the *Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of the Sahel*, and the Emerge network, and is an associate with *Perspectiva*.



AKWUGO EMEJULU

Professor, Chair in Sociological Studies,
University of Sheffield, United Kingdom
Fugitive Practices and the Polycrisis
September 2023–June 2024

Akwugo Emejulu is Chair in Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield. Before entering academia, she worked as a community organizer, trade union organizer, and a participatory action researcher in the US and the UK. As a political sociologist, Akwugo has research interests in two areas: racial, gender, and class inequalities in Europe, and intersectional activism for justice by women of color. In 2020, she was the inaugural winner of the Flax Foundation's Emma Goldman Award, which supports innovative research.



PUMLA DINEO GQOLA

Professor of Literary and Cultural Studies,
Nelson Mandela University, Port Elizabeth,
South Africa

Public Experiments in Worldmaking: Black
Feminism, Risk and the Polycrisis
January–March 2024

Pumla Dineo Gqola is a feminist author and Professor of Literary and Cultural Studies at Nelson Mandela University, where she holds the South African Research Chair in African Feminist Imagination. She has authored five books, including the landmark *What is Slavery to Me? Postcolonial/Slave Memory in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2010), *Rape: A South African Nightmare* (winner of the 2016 Alan Paton Award), and *Female Fear Factory: Unravelling Patriarchy's Cultures of Violence*. Pumla's coinage of the phrase "the female fear factory" earned the 2023 Breakthrough Award in Humanities and Social Sciences from the Falling Walls Foundation in Berlin.



Climate Change Activist
October 2023–February 2024

Adenike Titilope Oladosu is an internationally recognized climate change activist. She leads the pan-African organization “I Lead Climate Action Initiative” and is a pioneer of the ecofeminist movement and green democracy in Africa. A local climate leader in her home country of Nigeria, she served as Nigeria’s youth delegate to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at COP25 in Madrid. She went on to represent her country again at COP26 and COP27. Adenike was awarded the Ambassador of Conscience Award by Amnesty International Nigeria in recognition of her fight for both climate justice and human rights. In 2019, she participated in the first United Nations Youth Summit in New York, and in 2021 she developed an online curriculum on “Ecofeminism and Climate Change in Africa”. She has recently been invited to be an International Climate Protection Fellow at the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Bonn.



PhD, Humboldt Postdoctoral Research Fellow,
Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt,
Germany

Black Women’s Philosophy of Resilience:
A Feminist Intersectional Perspective in the
Age of Polycrisis

September 2023–June 2024

Abosedede Priscilla Ipadeola is an African philosopher who has been teaching philosophy since 2007. She studied and began her academic career at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. She conducted her doctoral research in the areas of feminist philosophy and political philosophy. She received her PhD from the University of Ibadan in 2014 with a dissertation on *A Maternal Feminist Critique of John Locke’s Contractarian Egalitarianism*. As a recipient of a postdoctoral fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, she conducted research at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany. Abosedede was a Visiting Research Fellow at the School of Philosophy, Religion and History of Science at the University of Leeds in 2022. Her current research focuses on Black feminist studies, African philosophy, global political philosophy, and gender studies.



Philosopher, Author, Speaker, Entrepreneur
January 2024–April 2024

Kathryn Sophia Belle is a former Associate Professor of Philosophy and affiliate faculty member in African American Studies and Women’s Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Pennsylvania State University. Her primary research and teaching interests lie in Africana/African American Philosophy, Black Feminist Philosophy, Continental Philosophy (especially Existentialism), and Critical Philosophy of Race. She has also taught African American Studies, African Diaspora Studies, and Women’s Studies. Kathryn has published articles on race, assimilation, feminism, intersectionality, and sex and sexuality, as well as on contemporary hip-hop. Kathryn is the founding director of the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers (CBWP), the former director (2010–2016) of Cultivating Underrepresented Students in Philosophy (CUSP), and a founding co-editor (2013–2016) of the journal *Critical Philosophy of Race* (CPR). She is the founder of La Belle Vie Coaching, which offers initiatives for high achievers, the happily unmarried, and erotic empowerment.



Associate Professor of Women’s, Gender, and
Sexuality Studies, African American Studies,
and African Studies, Pennsylvania State
University, USA

May–June 2024

Maha Marouan is an African feminist scholar, activist, writer, and documentarian. She is Associate Professor of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, African American Studies, and African Studies at Pennsylvania State University. She is the co-director of the African Feminist Initiative (AFI), a global and transnational platform where feminist scholars and activists engage in interdisciplinary collaborative knowledge production about Africa and its diaspora. AFI was formed in 2015 with the goal of raising awareness of the field of African Feminist Studies and building partnerships among feminist scholars, activists, and institutions. Maha’s recent publications include “Contemporary Notions of Race in Morocco: Blackness, Migration and the Legacy of Slavery” (2023). She works extensively with the United Nations reporting on Mediterranean migration and disappearances. In 2023, Maha was a visiting scholar at Harvard University’s Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.



Events / Activities*

14.03.24

Black Feminism and Conjuring Spirit (Workshop)

Black and African diasporic feminists/womanists (that is to say, all those who identify as such) have frequently sought inspiration from spirituality and ancestral ways of knowing as they have navigated the societal complexities and challenges brought about by the history of oppression.

This workshop evolved from independent scholar Cassandra Ellerbe's ongoing research, which examines African diasporic and shamanic practices, including Kemetic Yoga/Smai Tawi, along with aspects of the Ifá system, with a group of Black diasporic feminists based in Berlin.

30.05.24

Film Screening and Discussion of *Black Feminism and the Polycrisis*

The public premiere of the film *Black Feminism and the Polycrisis* was held at the MARKK museum in Hamburg. The evening's program included a screening of the film and a roundtable discussion.

14.06.24

From Crisis to Liberation

The event facilitated an eclectic mix of knowledge production involving the senses and the mind. The keynote speaker was Akosua Adomako Ampofo, a distinguished scholar in the field of African diaspora studies and Professor of African and Gender Studies at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana. She spoke about "African Feminist Journeys of Healing and Survival, Thriving". Additionally, the event showcased the work of filmmakers and THE NEW INSTITUTE's alumni Mac Premo and Adrianna Dufay, along with an acoustic performance by French-Cameroonian musician Sandra Nkaké.



*More information about these events can be found on our website.





Claudia Andujar, *Urihi-a* – da série *Casa* (Urihi-a from The House series) (2002). © Claudia Andujar.
 Courtesy: Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo.

Governing the Planetary Commons: A Focus on the Amazon

How are the planetary commons to be governed in an ecologically responsible, just, democratic, and resilient way?

Relevancy

Global environmental law and governance, especially insofar as it operates at the interstate level, has failed us. Complicit in creating the conditions that have led to the Anthropocene, environmental law has been unable to tackle socio-ecological planetary decay head-on. Alternative ways of framing the law are urgently needed, as are new legal imaginaries and architectures, and ways of designing laws that are fit for purpose in the Anthropocene Epoch. This process of re-imagination can begin by building upon the concept of the global commons with a more expansive idea of the “planetary commons”. The planetary commons include globally shared geographic regions currently recognized under the global commons, but, more importantly, they also encompass all biophysical systems that secure and regulate critical functions of the Earth system irrespective of national boundaries. Examples include the atmosphere and the oceans, ecosystems such as wetlands, and tipping elements, such as the Amazon Rainforest, which are at risk of being changed irreversibly.

About

The Governing the Planetary Commons program was chaired by Louis Kotzé, who was joined by an interdisciplinary group of researchers and lawyers: Afshin Akhtar-Khavari, Ainhoa Montoya, J.B. Ruhl, and Karen Morrow. Using the Amazon Rainforest as a case study, the group of fellows examined how to govern crucial Earth systems responsibly and sustainably, and explored different governance models that could function in an ecologically sound, democratic, and resilient manner. The goal was to create a framework that would ensure the protection and sustainable management of these essential Earth systems for the benefit of all.

The planetary crisis demands an unequivocal recognition of the unprecedented levels of Earth system degradation, the highly unbalanced world order this is creating, the need to affirm commitments to planetary stewardship, and a critical awareness of both the potential and the limitations of our social institutions, including the law, to address the planetary crisis. While law is only one of many instruments in the regulatory toolbox, it remains an important one that can play a critical role in creating the conditions that foster planetary resilience, justice, and integrity.

Program Chair

Prof. Dr. Dr. Louis Kotzé
 Professor of Law, North-West University, South Africa

As we enter the Deep Anthropocene, the program suggests that the planetary commons can function as an epistemic framework to creatively and urgently develop alternative, more radical, innovative, and contextualized forms of planetary care.

Highlights

The program had the pleasure of hosting a deep-dive workshop in December 2023, which convened leading thinkers from various disciplines around the theme of planetary commons governance. The workshop specifically interrogated the potential and pitfalls of using the planetary commons as an epistemic framework to re-imagine alternative forms of planetary care. A second workshop in June 2024 focused on specific aspects of the planetary commons, namely, tipping elements and how law and governance regimes could be designed to prevent and/or mitigate tipping, and to minimize the social and other impacts when tipping occurs.

The group is particularly proud to have hosted Johan Rockström, Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact, at a public launch of a paper co-authored with program chair Louis Kotzé, which introduced the concept of the planetary commons.

The program activities concluded with a productive writing retreat where leading Earth system scientists and social scientists began work on a paper arguing in support of more intensive collaboration between natural and social scientists working in the area of sustainability.

Relevant Publications by Fellows in the Program

Kotzé, Louis et al. (2023). “Governance of Tipping Elements in the Anthropocene”, *Journal of Environmental Law*, 30(2), pp. 123–145.

Akhtar-Khavari, Afshin et al. (2024). “The Planetary Commons: Reimagining Governance for a Destabilized Earth System”, *Global Environmental Politics*, 18(1), pp. 67–89.

Morrow, Karen et al. (2024). “Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge into Global Commons Governance”, *Journal of Sustainability Science*, 15(3), pp. 201–219.

Fellows

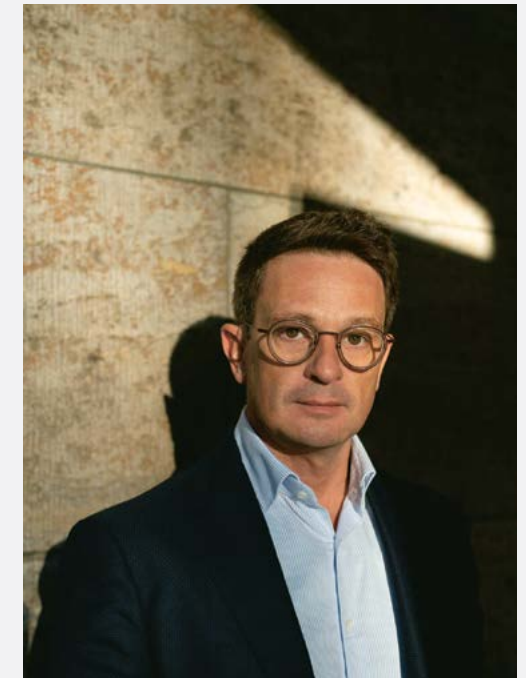
LOUIS KOTZÉ

Research Professor of Law, North-West University, South Africa

Program Chair

January 2023–July 2024

Louis Kotzé is Research Professor of Law at the Faculty of Law, North-West University in South Africa. He is also Senior Professorial Fellow in Earth System Law at the University of Lincoln, United Kingdom, and serves as the Co-Chair of the Earth System Governance Network’s Scientific Steering Committee. His research focuses on human rights, socio-ecological justice, and environmental constitutionalism; law and the Anthropocene; and Earth system law. Louis is an Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Fellow, and in 2018 he was awarded a European Commission Horizon 2020 Marie Curie Fellowship to lead a project on Global Ecological Custodianship-Innovative International Environmental Law for the Anthropocene at the University of Lincoln. In 2022, he served as the Klaus Töpfer Sustainability Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies in Potsdam. He is assistant editor of the journal *Earth System Governance* and a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Commission on Environmental Law.



Professor of International Law, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

Restorative Environmentalism and Governance Strategies for the Planetary Commons

September–December 2023

Afshin Akhtar-Khavari is a Professor of International Law at the School of Law at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia. He earned his BSc (genetics) and LLB from the University of New South Wales, his LLM from the University of Sydney, and his PhD from Griffith University. Afshin's research seeks to move the boundaries of environmental law's concerns and foci by critiquing and reimagining it for the benefit of non-human living beings and systems. His interdisciplinary approach to the law is influenced by reading science and technology, ethics, and international relations and political theory to understand non-human relationality, creativity, and ways that they experience reality. He is particularly interested in ideas and theories about science that push traditions in that discipline and the influence that this then has on developments in law and governance.



Professor of Law, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, USA

May–June 2024

J.B. Ruhl is the David Daniels Allen Distinguished Chair in Law at Vanderbilt University, Director of Vanderbilt's Program on Law and Innovation, and Co-Director of Vanderbilt's Energy, Environment, and Land Use Program. His expertise lies in environmental, natural resources, and property law, and his research focuses on climate change adaptation, ecosystem services, and adaptive governance. J.B. earned his BA and JD from the University of Virginia, his LLM in Environmental Law from George Washington University, and his PhD in Geography from Southern Illinois University.



Professor of Environmental Law, Swansea University, United Kingdom

May–June 2024

Karen Morrow is Professor of Environmental Law at the Hillary Rodham Clinton School of Law, Swansea University, Wales. Her expertise lies in the theory and practice of public participation in environmental law and policy, and gender and the environment. She holds an LLM (Public Law) from King's College London and an LLB (hons) from Queen's University Belfast. Over the years, Karen's research has covered topics such as the governance challenges of the Anthropocene, climate change, the land-use planetary boundary, and payment for ecosystem services.



Researcher at the Center for Humanities and Social Sciences, Spanish National Research Council, Spain

May–June 2024

Ainhoa Montoya is Reader in Latin American Studies and Director of the Centre for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) at the School of Advanced Study, University of London. She is currently on leave from these positions while conducting research as a Ramón y Cajal Senior Fellow at the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) on transboundary watersheds and biodiversity hotspots, which are often considered and governed as transnational or global commons. Ainhoa's research covers the areas of political and legal anthropology, geography, and political ecology with a focus on Latin America. She holds a PhD from the University of Manchester, an MPhil from the University of Cambridge, and a BA (hons) from the Autonomous University of Madrid.



Events / Activities*

11–13.12.23

Governing the Planetary Commons: A Deep Dive (Workshop)

The workshop built upon a proposal put forth by an interdisciplinary group of leading scientists to redefine the global commons and to recognize the Earth's biophysical systems, which provide resilience and stability to the Earth system, as "planetary commons".

07.02.24

The Planetary Commons

Johan Rockström (Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and Professor of Earth System Science at the University of Potsdam) formally introduced and discussed his recently published paper "The Planetary Commons: A New Paradigm for Safeguarding Earth-Regulating Systems in the Anthropocene". The publication was co-authored by 22 leading international researchers including program chair Louis Kotzé.



*More information about these events can be found on our website.

17–19.06.24

Tipping Elements: A New Constitution for Law and Governance in the Anthropocene? (Workshop)

Scientists have identified around 15 climate "tipping points". Crossing these would disrupt not only natural ecosystems but also socio-economic and political systems that are reliant on a stable environment. This workshop explored whether these tipping points could form a basis for new "constitutions" for law and governance in the Anthropocene.





Naraphat Sakarthornsap, *Iris dans un vase Benjarong* (2022). Courtesy: The artist.

Conceptions of Human Flourishing – Reformulating the SDGs

How can a non-materialist conception of human flourishing inform the reformulation of the SDGs in 2030?

Relevancy

Current scientific and political worldviews are moving beyond mere technocratic solutions to address global challenges. However, established frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have not fully adapted to this shift. Therefore, it is crucial to change the underlying parameters that guide the renegotiation of the SDGs beyond 2030.

About

The Conceptions of Human Flourishing program, chaired by Andrej Zwitter, aimed to redefine the concept of human flourishing by embracing non-materialist and intercultural perspectives. Drawing from diverse philosophies and development models, the program explored a concept of human flourishing that more accurately reflects the complexity of human experience across cultures. Together with Ariel Macaspac Hernández, Wakanyi Hoffman, Karma Ura, and Dean Rickles, the group worked on a proposal for a more inclusive and holistic understanding of human development. The goal was to develop an alternative framework for the development of future policy agendas. The insights from this group led to a proposal for a significant shift in the parameters underlying the post-2030 renegotiation of the SDGs. This includes revising an inherent scientism and physicalism in the concept of human development and bridging scientific understanding with Indigenous knowledge.

Human flourishing was conceived as an ongoing process rather than a fixed goal, emphasizing that achieving it requires hope and the right narratives to foster that hope. The group emphasized flexibility for humanity's future, which came into perspective through a meta-science approach to the concepts of meaning, hope, and life through various philosophies and worldviews. The concept of "care" was introduced as more than a moral principle, rather as a transformative vision that can drive societal innovation. These ideas were further grounded in empirical research, drawing on Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Index framework. This showed how non-material aspects of flourishing can lead to happiness, even in circumstances of reduced production and consumption. In addition, the program applied the African ethic of Ubuntu as a set of values to challenge the traditional narratives of Global North vs.

Program Chair

Prof. Dr. Andrej Zwitter
Professor of Political Theory and Governance,
University of Groningen, Netherlands

Global South. This was emphasized by the incorporation of an emerging understanding of all cultures, particularly Indigenous and non-western cultures, as encompassing perennial wisdom of flourishing.

Human flourishing was also explored through the lens of an integrative systems approach, which views humans as deeply embedded in their environment in both material and non-material aspects of the human condition. This raised important questions about free will, contrasting a mechanistic view that often marginalizes human freedom. The group's discussions highlighted concerns that current approaches to governance may rely too heavily on this mechanistic perspective, undermining the agency that physics and philosophy suggest humans possess. A central focus of the program was therefore the question of what perspectives we as humans can take.

Highlights

The program featured rich interdisciplinary dialogue with visits from numerous esteemed guests. Of particular relevance beyond individual contributions were four workshops.

6-7.11.2023

Beyond Gender Equality (Workshop)

The workshop aimed to “dig up the roots” to examine the sociology of gender in the coming climate transition and sustainability transformation. Leading academics in the field were invited, among them Margaret O'Neill, Ian Hughes, and Kieran Keohane, all from University College Cork, Bandy Lee from Yale, and Janice Haaken, a documentary filmmaker from Portland, Oregon.



13.02.2024

Human-Friendly Worldviews (Workshop)

The workshop explored how the fields of physics, biology, and philosophy reveal that humans are not passive agents but active co-creators of the world. The discussion emphasized that we are invited by the world to co-create it according to our holistic mental models. We are quite flexible in our choice of world images. Scientific “facts” thus become a new entity: “facts in the world”. This gives us a chance to compare worldviews and study how they can change and overlap. The conversation included numerous thinkers, including fellow George Ellis, former fellow Harald Atmanspacher, and Academic Director Markus Gabriel, as well as Dalia Nassar (University of Sydney) and Kevin Mitchell (Trinity College Dublin).

25-27.03.2024

Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom (Workshop)

The workshop facilitated deep dialogue between Indigenous leaders and scholars, bridging cultural gaps and promoting the integration of traditional knowledge in contemporary contexts. Chief Justice Robert Yazzie of the Navajo Nation, Judge Cheryl Fairbanks of the Tlingit Smithsonian Tribe, and Rainey Enjady, a peacemaking activist from the Apache Mescalero Tribe, shared their insights. Alongside them, intercultural dialogue scholars Michael Hampe (ETH Zurich), Erika Darics (University of Groningen), Paola Velasco Herrejón (University of Oslo), and Victor Koo (Co-Founder Tianren Culture) engaged in conversations that highlighted the importance of Indigenous perspectives. Additionally, the workshop welcomed innovative grassroots initiatives leaders, including Ana Rosa de Lima of Meli Bees, Seth Wiener of Life Comes from It, and Kim Langbecker, former director of Seeds of Wisdom.



Religions in Transformation to Sustainability

The group explored how religions can transcend dogmatic divisions and work with secular and religious groups based on shared ethical principles of care, love, and respect. Contributors included former Irish President Mary McAleese, former US Ambassador to the Holy See, Miguel Diaz, and religious studies scholars Farhana Mayer (University of Oxford), Joram Tarusarira (University of Groningen), and Phuntsho Gyeltshen (Ministry of Agriculture, Bhutan). The discussion focused on how religions can contribute to sustainable development and promote global solidarity, transcending traditional divisions and embracing open, ethical collaboration for a more sustainable future.



Relevant Publications by Fellows in the Program

Zwitter, Andrej (ed.) (2025 [forthcoming]). *Conceptions of Human Flourishing*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Zwitter, Andrej, Bloch, Carole, Ellis, George F., Richard, Hecht, Hernandez, Ariel, Hoffman, Wakanyi, Rickles, Dean, Sukhomlinova, Victoria, and Ura, Karma (2024 [forthcoming]). *Human Flourishing: An integrated systems approach to Development*. Earth Systems Governance.

Zwitter, Andrej, Bloch, Carole, Ellis, George F., Richard, Hecht, Hernandez, Ariel, Hoffman, Wakanyi, Rickles, Dean, Sukhomlinova, Victoria, and Ura, Karma (2024). *Human Flourishing: An Integrated Systems Approach to the SDGs*. SSRN. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4904455> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4904455>

Fellows

ANDREJ ZWITTER

Professor of Political Theory and Governance,
University of Groningen, Netherlands

Program Chair

September 2023–June 2024

Andrej Zwitter is Professor of Political Theory and Governance and Chair of Governance and Innovation, as well as a co-founder of the inter- and transdisciplinary branch Faculty Campus Fryslân at the University of Groningen. This newly founded faculty dedicated to “Global Challenges and Local Solutions” combines education and research in the domains of sustainability, development, and digitalization. Andrej earned his PhD in Law, Legal Philosophy, and International Law. His research foci include Big Data ethics, cyber governance, humanitarian action, and state of emergency politics. Andrej has also published extensively on subjects such as humanitarian action or just war and universal peace theory. He is passionate about understanding how modern technology affects society and how it can contribute to solving global challenges.



ARIEL MACASPAC HERNÁNDEZ

Senior Researcher in the Managing Global
Governance Program, German Institute
of Development and Sustainability, Bonn,
Germany

Homo Curans

October 2023–June 2024

Ariel Macaspac Hernández is a Senior Researcher in the Managing Global Governance (MGG) program at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS) in Bonn. Since 2021, he has also been a private lecturer at the University of Duisburg-Essen. He holds a habilitation degree from the University of Duisburg-Essen, a PhD in Economics and Social Sciences from the University of Cologne, and a PhD in Political Science from the University of Vienna. Ariel has vast experience as a lecturer, curricula designer and researcher in institutions across Germany, Mexico, the Philippines, Jamaica, Brazil, Estonia, and Spain.



WAKANYI HOFFMAN

Writer, Speaker

How Does a Non-Materialist Conception of
Human Flourishing Inform the Reformulation
of the SDGs in 2030?

September 2023–June 2024

Wakanyi Hoffman is an author, scholar of African Indigenous knowledge, and global spokesperson for the Ubuntu philosophy. Her diverse intercultural experiences as a global nomad have enriched her perspective on the human condition. Wakanyi is a graduate of University College London, where her thesis proposed the integration of Indigenous knowledge into global education systems. She is a board member of the Kenya Education Fund, providing high school education to marginalized gifted children. In addition, her advisory role with the Contentment Foundation underscores her commitment to global well-being. She is also a board member of Seeds of Wisdom, which is dedicated to sharing the wisdom and knowledge of Indigenous elders. Wakanyi is the founder of the African Folktales Project, created to bridge the gap between Indigenous and contemporary African societies, and she is a co-founder of HumanityLink, a global system of digital communication solutions for marginalized populations.

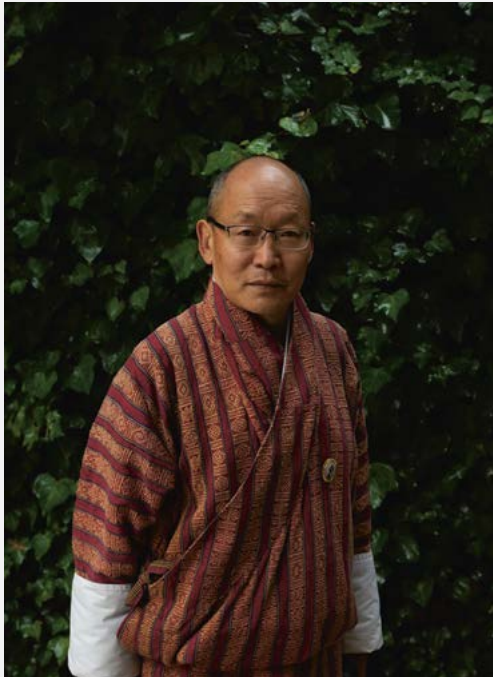


President of the Centre for Bhutan and Gross National Happiness Studies, Thimphu, Bhutan

Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Index

September 2023–June 2024

Karma Ura has been the President of the Centre for Bhutan and Gross National Happiness (GNH) Studies since 2008. The Centre has been at the forefront of promoting and deepening global understanding of Bhutan's home-grown development philosophy of Gross National Happiness and conducting multidisciplinary research about Bhutan. He was a member of the Drafting Committee of Bhutan's first Constitution, enacted in July 2008, and was awarded the red scarf and the ancient title of distinction, Dasho, by His Majesty the Fourth King in 2006 for his dedicated service to the country. Karma has written several books, such as *Bhutan: The Unremembered Nation* and *Leadership of the Wise: Kings of Bhutan*. Karma is also a painter, with works displayed in a national monument (Dochula temple) and a piece in the British Museum. He has been a visiting fellow at various universities including Oxford University.



Professor of History and Philosophy of Modern Physics, University of Sydney, Australia

January–February 2024

Dean Rickles is a Professor at the University of Sydney, specializing in the history and philosophy of modern physics. He is also Co-Director of the University's Centre of Time, which studies the nature and psychology of time. His primary research interests are in the history and philosophy of modern physics, particularly quantum gravity and spacetime physics. He also has strong interests in economic physics, population health, and musicology. Dean holds a PhD from the University of Leeds in conceptual issues in quantum gravity. Between 2005 and 2007, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Calgary. In 2008 he was awarded a 5-year ARC Australian Research Fellowship, and in 2014 he was awarded a 4-year ARC Future Fellowship for research in quantum gravity. Dean has many academic interests beyond physics, philosophy, and history, including the study of consciousness, AI and machine learning, musicology, art, architecture, economics, public health, theology and religion, and psychology.



Events / Activities*

10.10.23

Dual-aspect Monism

Cartesian Dualism suggests that there are two separated domains of reality: the mental and the physical. Former fellow Harald Atmanspacher (Emeritus member of the Turing Center, ETH Zurich) was invited by the group to challenge this division and introduce his concept of dual-aspect monism, which is based on the notion of a psychophysically neutral state – a domain of reality with no distinction between the mental and the physical.

08.11.23

International Foundations of Sustainability

In the realm of international politics, we are confronted with developments that cannot be addressed through a narrow focus on the sovereign entitlements of individual countries. Hans-Joachim Heintze, Professor of International Law at the University of the Ruhr Bochum, presented the case for replacing the right of sovereignty with a law of solidarity.

12.12.23

Basic-needs Sufficiencyarianism

Lukas Meyer, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Graz, facilitated a discussion on the interconnection between basic needs, sustainability, and flourishing. He emphasized that the present generation has a responsibility to ensure that future generations have the capacity to meet their basic needs, including access to drinkable water, food, and healthcare.

06.05.24

Mountains of Fire: Between Nature and Culture

Clive Oppenheimer, a volcanologist and filmmaker from the University of Cambridge, gave a seminar on his recently published book, *Mountains of Fire*. The ensuing discussion aimed to identify strategies to integrate the contributions of scientific, humanistic, and Indigenous knowledge when addressing the specific cases and issues that are both a source of concern and a source of fascination for humanity.

07.05.24

A Mutual-Aid Society Supported by an Economy of Empathy

Professor Takuo Dome of the University of Osaka articulated his vision of a social and economic order based on empathy. He outlined how to operationalize these ideas within a concrete initiative: the Inochi Forum, a platform advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and envisioning the next goals beyond the SDGs.

*More information about these events can be found on our website.

Individual Fellows

THE NEW INSTITUTE offers individual fellowships for scholars and practitioners from academia, politics, business, the arts, media, and journalism who are working on concrete, socially relevant projects related to our research areas and who are interested in collaborative work. These fellows actively participate in the Institute's events, including the weekly collaborative formats, as well as occasional lectures or lunch talks, and contribute to cross-program discussions. As such, they are an integral part of our community and support interdisciplinary exchange.

AVRAM ALPERT

PhD, Writer, Educator, and Lecturer in the Writing Program, Princeton University, USA

How to Be Wise in the 21st Century

May 2022–April 2024

Avram Alpert is a writer, educator, and organizer working to understand what values we can live by in a world as connected, chaotic, and potentially catastrophic as the present. He has written three books on these themes, including, most recently, *The Good-Enough Life*, an argument for why appreciating our limitations (we are only ever good enough) should lead us to ensure decency (goodness) and sufficiency (enoughness) for all. He has also written for publications including *Aeon*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *Truthout*, and the *Brooklyn Rail*. He is a lecturer in the Writing Program at Princeton University. With Sreshta Rit Premnath, he is co-editor and co-manager of programming for *Shifter Magazine*. With Meleko Mokgosi and Anthea Behm, he is co-founder of the Interdisciplinary Art and Theory Program at Jack Shainman Gallery, and with Danny Snelson and Mashinka Firunts, he is a member of the academic-artist collective Research Service.



CAROLE BLOCH

Professor in Language Education, University of the Western Cape, South Africa

The Role of Narrative and Story in Childhood Education

January–February 2024

Carole Bloch is Executive Director of The Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA) and Extraordinary Professor in Language Education, University of the Western Cape. She works in African multilingual settings on literacy teaching and reading culture development among people from birth onwards; she promotes a holistic pedagogy that focuses on the power of story and personal meaning to help ensure equitable learning opportunities for all children and the adults they interact with. In 2012, Carole co-initiated a literacy campaign in South Africa focused on interest and enjoyment, the Nal'ibali National Reading for Enjoyment Campaign, which she led for four years. Under her directorship, PRAESA was awarded the IBBY Asahi Award for Reading Promotion in 2014 and the 2015 Swedish government's Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award for 20 years of work in reading promotion and children's literature development in South Africa.



Filmmaker

August–December 2023

Adrianna Dufay earned her MFA as an actor, worked regionally, and settled in New York, where she also produced her own plays. She then spent a decade in tech as a digital product manager, writing search engine algorithms and managing data analytic tools. She also produced a monthly Gen X women's storytelling event. For the past decade, Adrianna has created short films with her husband Mac Premo for TED, Vanderbilt University, Emerson Collective, and other issue-oriented organizations, including THE NEW INSTITUTE. She lives in Brooklyn with her family.



Professor Emeritus of Applied Mathematics,
University of Cape Town, South Africa

Foundations of Value and Values, and their
Relation to Moral Realism

January–February 2024

George Ellis is considered one of the world's leading theorists in cosmology. However, his research involves many more aspects than just a cosmological perspective. He is engaged in the relation between human emotion and brain plasticity and the nature of social indicators, as well as in considering the policies around low-income housing. Debates between philosophers and physicists prompted him to take a critical position towards overly reductionist physicists. His work consists of more than five hundred articles, sixteen books, and numerous book chapters for which he has been awarded several honorary degrees. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society, London (FRS). George received the John F. W. Herschel Medal from the Royal Society of South Africa (RSSA), the Templeton Prize in 2004, and, as a special honor, he was awarded the Order of the Star of South Africa by Nelson Mandela in 1999.



Writer, Speaker

September 2023–June 2024

Kübra Gümüşay is a writer and public speaker. Her bestselling book *Sprache & Sein* (Speaking & Being) was named as one of the best non-fiction books in 2020 by *Die Welt* and has been translated into six languages. She is the co-founder of eeden, a feminist co-creation space in Hamburg, as well as numerous campaigns and associations, including the anti-racism campaign #SchauHin, the feminist alliance #ausnahmslos, and the campaign "Organisierte Liebe". Her blog *ein fremdwoerterbuch.com* was nominated for the Grimme Online Award in 2011. *Forbes* magazine ranked her in the top 30 under 30 in Europe for media and marketing in 2018. In 2022, Kübra was Visiting Fellow and Mercator Senior Fellow at the Centre for Research in Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CRASSH) at the University of Cambridge. Her current research focuses on just futures, real utopias, and the politics of imagination.



PhD, Co-Founder and Scientific Manager of
the Panel on Planetary Thinking, University of
Giessen, Germany

Planetary Democracy

October 2022–September 2024

Frederic Hanusch is Co-Founder and Scientific Manager of the Panel on Planetary Thinking at Giessen University and co-convener of the Earth System Governance Project's Working Group on Democracy. Considering the stimulating science-art interface, he initiated the Planetary Scholars and Artists in Residence Program. His own research revolves around the intersections of democracy and planetary change. Before joining Giessen University, Frederic received his PhD in Political Science from the University of Duisburg-Essen and worked for the German Advisory Council on Global Change for the German Government (WBGU) in Berlin, where he contributed to various policy-oriented reports. Afterwards, he was a research group leader at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) in Potsdam. Frederic has received several scholarships, including from the International Council of Canadian Studies for a visiting fellowship at the School of the Environment of the University of Toronto.



Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies,
University of California, Santa Barbara, USA

Memory, Trauma, and Storytelling

September–December 2023

Richard Hecht is Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he has been a Full Professor since 1991 and director of the Center for the Study of Religion from 2000 to 2018. He holds a PhD in History of Religions from the University of California, Los Angeles. From 1982–1984, Richard was a Visiting Associate Professor at Rothberg School for Overseas Students at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has supervised many different grants, including a nearly \$1.5 million dollar grant from the Ford Foundation on religious diversity in Los Angeles. Richard has become increasingly interested in the intersections of religion, politics, and culture, and the deep contextualization of religion in its lived environments. His work is comparative and multidisciplinary, both of which are essential, in his opinion, to the larger study of religion. Richard is currently exploring the trajectories of memory, trauma, and storytelling.



International Lawyer

Governing the Global Commons: The UN
Security Council's Management of Complex
and Interconnected Threats to International
Peace and Security

May 2024–March 2025

Susan Lamb is an international lawyer based in Lisbon and admitted to practice in New Zealand. She is a former Crown Counsel in the criminal team of New Zealand's Crown Law Office and justice of the criminal division of the Belize Supreme Court. Susan is a member of the Coordinating Committee for the International Anti-Corruption Court (IACCourt), overseeing the development of the IACC Statute, and is a member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIARB). She holds degrees from Otago University in law and international relations and undertook doctoral studies at Oxford University focused on the scope of the UN Security Council's enforcement powers.



PhD, Visiting Fellow at the Department of
Government, London School of Economics,
United Kingdom

Imperative Mandate

October 2022–September 2024

Bruno Leipold is a political theorist and historian of political thought. His research interests include the work of Karl Marx, theories of popular democracy, the republican political tradition, and nineteenth-century political thought. Currently, he is completing a book entitled *Citizen Marx: Republicanism and the Formation of Karl Marx's Social and Political Thought*. Before joining THE NEW INSTITUTE, Bruno was a Fellow in Political Theory in the Department of Government at LSE, a Max Weber Fellow at the European University Institute in Florence, and a Postdoctoral Fellow in Political Theory at the Justitia Amplificata Centre for Advanced Studies at the Goethe University Frankfurt and the Free University of Berlin. He received his PhD from the University of Oxford in 2017 with his thesis "Citizen Marx: The Relationship between Karl Marx and Republicanism".

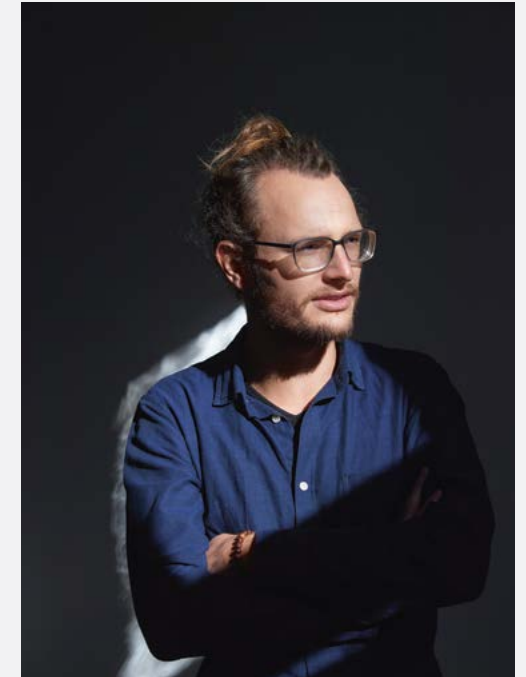


PhD, Affiliated Lecturer at the Department of
Politics and International Studies, University
of Cambridge, United Kingdom

Climate Change and the Challenge of State
Legitimacy

February 2022–April 2024

Tobias Müller is an Affiliated Lecturer at the Department of Politics and International Studies (POLIS) and College Research Associate at King's College, University of Cambridge. Tobias is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the EU funded Horizon 2020 project DRIVE at Leiden University and was principal researcher of SORGES, a project on religion, gender, and the state at the Woolf Institute and the University of Cambridge. He is interested in political and social theory, postcolonial and feminist theory, secularism and religion, and the politics of the climate emergency. With a preference for ethnographic methods, Tobias studies how different groups challenge political institutions and how contemporary states respond to these challenges.



Filmmaker

August–December 2023

Mac Premo makes art, commercials, and short films. His films and art have been exhibited worldwide, including at The Brooklyn Museum, the Ringling Museum, PS1 MoMA, and The New Museum. Mac has won 13 New York Emmy® Awards for his video and animation work, including awards for his photography and set design and for best commercial and best PSA. He sometimes writes and performs one-man plays. Mac is a NYFA Fellow and lives in Brooklyn with his wife Adrianna Dufay and their two kids. Born in Washington DC in 1973, Mac graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1995 and moved to New York that same year.



Activist, Fridays for Future

Klimaatlas / Heuristik zur Hoffnung

March–April 2024

Luisa Neubauer is a climate activist from Germany and one of the most prominent representatives of the German climate movement. In 2018, she met Swedish student Greta Thunberg at the UN Climate Change Conference and subsequently started the movement in Germany together with other activists. Since then, Luisa has helped organize several global climate strikes, met with various heads of state and government, participated in UN climate conferences, and frequently speaks on global stages. In 2021, she and others won a historic climate court case against the German government. Luisa holds a Bachelor's degree in geography and a master's degree in resource analysis and management from the Georg-August University in Göttingen. She has published three books, all of which look at the climate emergency from different angles, using methods of storytelling and science communication. She also hosts the Spotify climate podcast 1.5 Degrees.



Project Associate Professor in the Department of Advanced Social and International Studies, University of Tokyo, Japan

In Quest of a Humane Society: An Attempt to Cultivate an Alternative Concept of Ethics Through Practices

October 2022–September 2024

Maki Sato is a Project Associate Professor at the University of Tokyo, East Asian Academy for New Liberal Arts. She concurrently holds a position at the Humanities Center. Maki is interested in environmental philosophy, which includes a new emerging set of skills and ideas not limited to AI, robotics, and digital currencies. However, her main interest has been in issues surrounding climate change, especially environmental and energy policies seen from a philosophical perspective. Her experience as a consultant for the Green Growth project at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) in Bangkok encouraged her to dedicate her doctoral research to environmental philosophy, focusing on the implications of ideas derived from environmental philosophy for innovative and effective global environmental policies. Between 2015 and 2016, she was a Yale Fox International Fellow.



PhD, Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany

Digital Democracy

October 2022–September 2024

Rahel Süß is a political scientist and philosopher with interests in democratic and digital futures. Her primary areas of focus encompass the practices and processes involved in democratic and digital transformation. Rahel earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in Political Science, along with a bachelor's degree in Philosophy, and a PhD in Political Science, all with distinction, from the University of Vienna. She has conducted research at numerous universities, including the London School of Economics and Political Science, King's College London, Duke University, and Humboldt University. Her research has been funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW), and Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalization (OeAD). Rahel is the author of the article "Who is the Digital Sovereign" (2023) and the books *La Politique de la provocation* (2021), *Demokratie und Zukunft* (2020), and *Kollektive Handlungsfähigkeit* (2015). Rahel is the founder of the journal *engagée*.



Professor of Comparative Literature and East Asian Studies, New York University, USA

Rethinking the Concept of the Universal in the Age of Globalization and Cultural Identities

September 2023–August 2024

Xudong is a Professor of Comparative Literature and East Asian Studies at New York University and is the Founding Director of the International Center for Critical Theory. Xudong's research interests include critical theory, modernism and modernity, theories of representation, narrative and interpretation, political philosophy, aesthetics, and twentieth-century Chinese literature and culture. Of his ongoing concerns are, among others, literary criticism and theory as poetics, socio-ontology, and cultural politics pertaining to an open-ended discourse on universalism. He has published widely on critical theory and transcultural comparisons of Chinese and European modernities.



Yehudit and Yehuda Elkana Fellowship Program

In addition to our fellowship program, THE NEW INSTITUTE has cooperated with the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin to host the Yehudit and Yehuda Elkana Fellowship Program. This program offers fellowships to scholars who have made outstanding contributions to the free exchange of knowledge and have opened spaces for academic controversy in times of deteriorating academic freedom. In the academic year 2023–2024, we hosted two Yehudit and Yehuda Elkana Fellows from Hungary and Turkey. The Fellowship is tied to financial support amounting to 50,000 Euros for individual projects that aim to preserve free scientific exchange.

ESENGÜL AYYILDIZ

Co-Founder Aramızda Association for Gender Research

Genocide. Research Methodologies in Documentary Cinema in the Context of Queer and Feminist Theory

September 2023–March 2024

Esengül Ayyıldız is the co-founder of the Aramızda Association for Gender Research – a solidarity academy established by female scholars to promote gender studies and gender equality. Her second main area of work has been on memory politics through cultural production related to state violence. 2012 to 2017, she was an Assistant Professor at Çukurova University at the Faculty of Communication. In 2017, Esengül, like many of her colleagues, fell victim to an emergency decree that banned her from state employment because she signed the peace petition against inhuman violence conducted by the Turkish State in the Kurdish region. As an activist, she is committed to academic freedom and critical knowledge production in Turkey.



FERENC HAMMER

Associate Professor, Department of Media and Communication, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

Mesh – A Distance Support Scheme for Scholars at Risk

September 2023–March 2024

Ferenc Hammer currently is on sabbatical leave from his position at ELTE Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. His present research and policy initiative is dedicated to addressing certain dimensions of silencing, self-censorship, and intimidation in academia. This approach involves implementing a mentoring system designed for scholars at risk. A crucial objective of this initiative is to introduce and implement an information technology-based communication system into the academic publication process. This system aims to ensure a reduced level of visibility for scholars facing risks in their academic pursuits.





Through its fellowship program, THE NEW INSTITUTE supports research and, thus, publications by individuals and fellow groups. In addition to academic and journalistic publications as our primary output, we also support other kinds of public interventions, such as interviews, podcasts, public readings, and artistic practices. In the following, we list the publications that were produced, either in part or in full, during our fellows' tenure at THE NEW INSTITUTE, as indicated by them.

4.

OUTPUT

Institutional Publications

Gabriel, Markus, Katsman, Anna, Liess, Thomas and Milberg, William (eds.) (2024). *Beyond Neoliberalism and Neo-illiberalism: Economic Policies and Performance for Sustainable Democracy*. Bielefeld: transcript.

Academic Publications

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Akhtar-Khavari, Afshin et al. (2024). “The Planetary Commons: Reimagining Governance for a Destabilized Earth System”, *Global Environmental Politics*, 18(1), 67–89.

McCormack, Phillipa C., **Akhtar-Khavari, Afshin**, and Richardson, Benjamin J. (2024). “Transformation in the forest: The role for restoration in the transition away from native forestry in Australia”, *Restoration Ecology*, 32(7), Article number e14240. <https://doi.org/10.1111/rec.14240>

Woodward, Claire, Hiskes, Ben, and **Breithaupt, Fritz** (2024). “Spontaneous side-taking drives memory, empathy, and author attribution in conflict narratives”, *Discover Psychology*, 4(52). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44202-024-00159-w>

Breithaupt, Fritz (2024). “Von der Schwierigkeit auf andere zu hören: Rezeptivität als Praxis in Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre”, *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, Sonderheft 24, pp. 437–450.

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Ellis, George F.R. (2024). “Quantum Physics, Digital Computers, and Life from a Holistic Perspective”, *Foundations of Physics*, 54, Article number 56. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10701-024-00792-4>

Esau, Katharina et al. (2024). “Destructive polarization in digital communication contexts: A critical review and conceptual framework”, *Information, Communication & Society*, October, pp. 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2024.2413127>

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Gruber, Stefan (2024). “Von der radikalen Imagination zur realen Utopie”, *5Plus Magazin*, No. 1.

Harpham, Geoffrey (2024). “She’s Got Rhythm: Lorraine Daston on Rules”, *Raritan*, 43(3).

Berfelde, Rabea, **Heeg, Susanne** (2024). “Struggling with and through knowledge production. The campaign “Expropriate Deutsche Wohnen&Co’s” attempt at housing definancialisation in Berlin”, *Critical Housing Analysis*, 11(1), pp. 105–114.

Hernandez, Ariel M. et al. (2024). “Global governance through voluntary sustainability standards: Developments, trends and challenges”, *Global Policy*, 15(4), pp. 708–728. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.13401>

Hughes, Ian, **Hernandez, Ariel M. et al.** (2024). “Conceptualising global cultural transformation – developing deep institutional scenarios for whole of society change”, *Environmental Research Letters*, 19 (9). <https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/ad6d7f>

Kottman, Paul A. (2024). “Hegel and the Present of Art’s Past Character”, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 82(2), pp. 238–242. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaac/kpae025>

Rockström, Johan, **Kotzé, Louis et al.** (2024). “The Planetary Commons: A New Paradigm for Safeguarding Earth-Regulating Systems in the Anthropocene”, *Environmental Sciences*, 121(5). <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2301531121>

Kotzé, Louis (2024). “Governance of Tipping Elements in the Anthropocene,” *Journal of Environmental Law*, 30(2), pp. 123–145.

Morrow, Karen et al. (2024). “Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge into Global Commons Governance”, *Journal of Sustainability Science*, 15(3), 201–219.

Müller, Tobias (2024). “Patriarchal ‘Love School’: Entrepreneurial Heroic Masculinity and Neoliberalism in A Pentecostal Church in London”, *American Behavioral Scientist*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642241259789>

Müller, Tobias, Dokumaci, P. (2024). “Resurgent Religion, Resurgent Patriarchy? Strictly Observant Religion, Gender, and the State”, in *American Behavioral Scientist*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642241260386>

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Löb, Charlotte, Rinke, Eike M., **Wessler, Hartmut et al.** (2024). “Unpacking the determinants of outrage and recognition in public discourse: Insights across socio-cultural divides, political systems, and media types”, *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 29(1), 273–294. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612221084206>

Jakob, Julia, **Wessler, Hartmut et al.** (2023). “Is constructive engagement online a lost cause? Toxic outrage in online user comments across democratic political systems and discussion arenas”, *Communication Research*, 50(4), pp. 508–531. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00936502211062773>

Zhang, Xudong (2024). “Freedom True and False: The Bernard Shaw Intermezzo in Lu Xun’s Essay Production in 1933” (*ziyou de zhen yu wei*), *Studies in Modern Chinese Literature*, 7, pp. 1–50.

Zhang, Xudong (2024). “The End of the Exile: A Study On Ways in Which Lu Xun’s ‘Shanghai Decade’ (1927–36) Inaugurated” (*piaoliu de zhongjie*), *BM (Book Matter)*, inaugural issue, Hong Kong, pp. 197–283.

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MISCELLANEOUS

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Outreach

In the fall of 2023, our artist fellows Adrianna Dufay and Mac Premo collaborated with program chair Minna Salami on a short film project as part of the Black Feminism and the Polycrisis program. They created an engaging four-minute film to explain the concept of polycrisis and how Black Feminism can uniquely address its complex challenges. Developed through interviews with members of the program, combined with metaphorical animation, stop-frame art, and workshop footage, the film aims to promote public understanding of Black feminism and inspire further research on the topic. The film premiered at the MARKK museum in Hamburg and later in New York City, highlighting the role of Black feminism in addressing interconnected global issues.

This film is a finalist in the Lovie Awards in the category of Best Video: Public Service and Activism, and was shortlisted for Best Art Direction and People's Favorite. The film is being screened at universities internationally, helping to bring the insights of the Black Feminism program to a wider audience.



In addition, Mac Premo's residency produced the collage series *We'll Figure It Out When We Get There*, which explores his reflections on intellectual curiosity and cultural intersections, and a personal sketchbook collection, all of which embody his artistic experience at THE NEW INSTITUTE.

Speaking about his art, Mac Premo has said: "The body of work as a whole is valuable in reflecting the idea that multiplicity can create beauty... My hope is that I created an intersection of thought and form that culminated in a celebration, an homage to a collision of curiosity."



EXHIBITIONS

Gruber, Stefan (2024). Centro Cooperativista Uruguayo & Stefan Gruber, Remaking Cities Institute: “Community Condenser,” Installation as part of the 2024 International Architecture Biennial of Rotterdam “Nature of Hope.”

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Gümüşay, Kübra (2024). “The art of movement. Was kann ich bewegen?”, Millerntor Gallery und Zweivorzwölf Podcast, Episode 133, June 2, 2024.

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We host a variety of events and discussion formats to share ideas, showcase work in progress, and test arguments. Whether delving deep into the work of our fellows and programs or providing outside stimulation from invited guests, our conferences, workshops, and lectures intensify the exchange of ideas across programs and disciplines.

Our weekly lectures offer a regular opportunity for intellectual exchange, where fellows or speakers invited by our programs stimulate our ongoing discussions.

Together with our collaborative partner Felix Jud Bookstore, we organized different formats that were open to the public. At “Shelf Openings”, fellows curate a shelf of books that have had a significant impact on their lives and intellectual development. For the “Let’s Talk Books!” program, we invite speakers to present a book in an open discussion format.

In the 2023–2024 academic year, we hosted a total of 86 events, 12 of which were open to the public.

5.

EVENTS

Weekly Lectures

05.10.23

Kübra Gümüşay,
“Real Utopias, Alternative Futures & Imagining Otherwise”



11.10.23

Akwugo Emejulu,
“Moral Subjects in White Spaces: On the Impossibilities of Intersectional Solidarity”



18.10.23

Nipun Mehta (founder of ServiceSpace),
“Future of Relationships: Creatively Holding the Tension Between Artificial Intelligence and Heart Intelligence”

01.11.23

Lisa Argyle (Assistant Professor of Political Science, Brigham Young University),
“Leveraging Artificial Intelligence for Democratic Discourse: Chat Interventions can Improve Online Political Conversations at Scale”

14.11.23

Abosede Ipadeola,
“The Debacle of Social Pact: Finding a New Theoretical Framework for Egalitarian Justice”



21.11.23

Daniel Halliday (Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Melbourne),
“Future Questions for The Ethics of Capitalism”

06.12.23

Duncan French (Professor of International Law, University of Lincoln), “Planetary Crises, Planetary Commons, and State Consent: Is International Law Facing (its Long Overdue) Existential Crisis?”

17.01.24

Petar Bojanić (Professor of Philosophy, University of Belgrade), “What Is it to Institutionalize? Project (Projective Mind) and Change as the Basic Figures of Institutional Building”

23.01.24

Sabina Alkire (Professor of Poverty and Human Development, University of Oxford), “Poverty: A Pervasive Condition of Unflourishing”

13.02.24

Charmaine Misalucha-Willoughby (Associate Professor of International Studies, De La Salle University), “The Insecurity Dilemma in the Maritime Domain”

15.02.24

Michael Eldred (Australian philosopher, mathematician, and translator), “Temporal Recasting of Who We Are”

21.02.24

Emilia Roig (Founder of Intersectional Justice), “Creating the New Paradigm: Deploying the Full Potential of the Great Transformation Ushered in by Black Feminists”

29.02.24

Claus Leggewie (Ludwig Börne Professorship and Director of the Panel on Planetary Thinking, University of Giessen), “Political Tipping Point: Can the AfD be Stopped?”



06.03.24

Steffen Mau (Professor of Macrosociology at Humboldt University of Berlin), “Trigger Points”



12.03.24

Costas Lapavitsas (Professor of Economics, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London), “Could There be a ‘Fair Price’ for Bitcoin, or is it Simply a Fraud?”

13.03.24

Augusto López-Claros (Global Governance Forum), “A Second Charter: Imagining a Renewed United Nations”

08.05.24

Azucena Morán (Research Institute for Sustainability, Helmholtz Centre Potsdam), “Deliberating a Just Transition – Globally?”

14.05.24

Mary Scudder (Associate Professor of Political Theory in the Department of Political Science at Purdue University, Indiana), “Getting Democracy Just Right”

16.05.24

Toni Hastrup (Professor of International Politics and Chair in Global Politics at the University of Manchester), “Is Feminist Peace Within Reach?”

21.05.24

Sabelo Mcinziba (Artist, scholar, and activist),
“Philosophical Histories of Land and Law in South Africa”

23.05.24

Mazviita Chirumuuta (Senior Lecturer, School of Philosophy, Psychology & Language Sciences, the University of Edinburgh), “Contextualizing the Computational Mind”

28.05.24

Cara Daggett (Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Virginia Tech), “Renewable Masculinities”

05.06.24

Jennifer C. Nash (Jean Fox O’Barr Professor of Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies at Duke University), “Traveling Intersectionality”

17.06.24

Wesam Amer (former Dean of Faculty of Mass Communication and Languages, Gaza University) “Hamas’ Digital Communication Strategies and Discourses Amid the Ongoing War in Gaza”



Public Events

22.09.23

Discursive Polarization Around Climate Protests: Who Is Polarizing Whom?
Depolarizing Public Debates Program, re:publica Reeperbahn Festival



23.09.23

How Data Sharing Works in the Public Interest
The New Hanse Project, re:publica Reeperbahn Festival

13.10.23

Book conversation about *The Maniac* by Benjamin Labatut

Moderated by Jan Ehlert (NDR), in cooperation with Felix Jud Bookstore and Suhrkamp Verlag



18–20.10.23

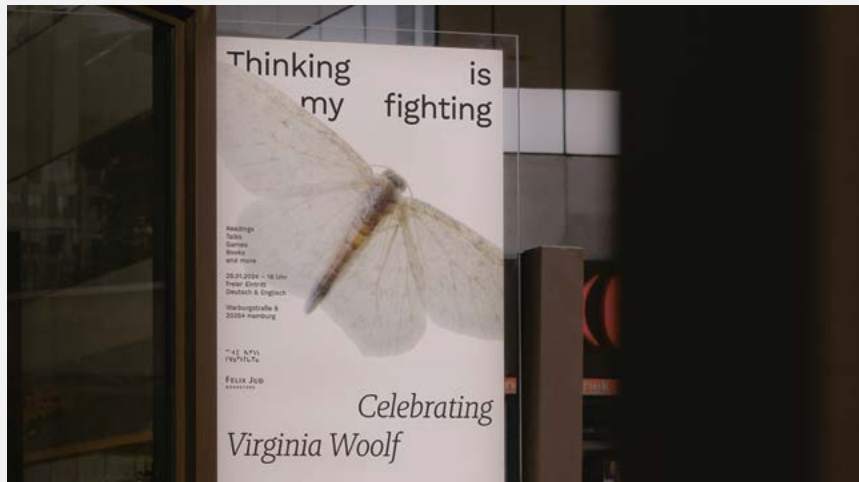
Towards a New Enlightenment

Podium Discussion at the Frankfurt Book Fair with Markus Gabriel and Andrej Zwitter, moderated by Peter Neumann (DIE ZEIT)

25.01.24

Thinking Is My Fighting: Celebrating Virginia Woolf's Birthday and Feminist Literature

"Let's Talk Books!" in cooperation with Felix Jud Bookstore



01.02.24

Discussion of the book *Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds, and Shape Our Futures* by Merlin Sheldrake

"Let's Talk Books!" in cooperation with Felix Jud Bookstore

07–08.03.24

Reading our Futures

Women's event and roundtable hosted by the Black Feminism and the Polycrisis Program and the Horizon Europe Research project, Co-Creating Inclusive Intersectional Democratic Spaces across Europe (CCINDLE), in cooperation with Felix Jud Bookstore



13.03.24

Rewilding and the Planetary Forest with Fellow Frederic Hanusch and Clemens Finkelstein

"Let's Talk Books!" in cooperation with Felix Jud Bookstore

27.03.24

Wild Democracy: The Right to Protest with Fellow Tim Wihl

"Let's Talk Books!" in cooperation with Felix Jud Bookstore

15.05.24

Conversation with Meredith Whittaker on AI, Tech Power, and Surveillance

Meredith Whittaker in conversation with Anna Katsman (Academic Director of THE NEW INSTITUTE), Thomas Gegenhuber (Professor for Socio-Technical Transitions at Johannes Kepler University Linz), THE NEW INSTITUTE fellows, and participants in the Helmut Schmidt Future Festival, in cooperation with the Helmut Schmidt Future Festival



15.05.24

Helmut-Schmidt-Zukunftspreis (Helmut Schmidt Future Prize)

THE NEW INSTITUTE, together with the Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt Foundation and DIE ZEIT, presented the Helmut Schmidt Future Prize, which is awarded annually for innovative achievements in the fields of democracy, society and technology. The prize ceremony was held at the Thalia Theater in Hamburg.



Phil Dera for DIE ZEIT



Phil Dera for DIE ZEIT

10.06.24

Is Reading a Remedy for Polarization? The Role of Non-Fiction Books in Democratic Discourse

A discussion with panelists Astrid Séville (Professor at Leuphana University Lüneburg), Shota Gelovani (fellow at THE NEW INSTITUTE), Peter Kraus vom Cleff (Managing Director of the Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels), and Ulrich Kühn (Head of the Arts and Cultural Journalism Department, NDR Kultur), and hosted by Jan Ehlert (NDR), in cooperation with the German Non-Fiction Prize (Deutschen Sachbuchpreis) and Felix Jud Bookstore



20.06.24

The Dimensions of Loss in Fiction with Fellow Maha Marouan

In cooperation with Felix Jud Bookstore

Internal Events

05–07.09.23

Rethinking Capitalism, Creating Value for Social Well-Being (Workshop)

Our economy must serve our social needs and respect our planetary boundaries. In its current form, capitalism has proven unfit for this purpose. Market economies drive environmental degradation and social crises felt in rising inequality, falling solidarity and increasing poverty. The requisite economic transformation must promote not just economic ends but the well-being of individuals in thriving societies within planetary boundaries. What, however, is required for such a transformation? This workshop stimulated an exchange between the work of leading experts on these issues and our institutional ambition.

Participants included Federica Carugati, Lecturer in History and Political Economy, Kings College London; Ha-Joon Chang, Research Professor of Economics, School of Oriental and African Studies London; Diane Coyle, Professor of Public Policy, University of Cambridge; Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, Professor of Economics and Behavioral Science, University of Oxford; Eduardo Engel, Professor of Economics, University of Chile; Marc Fleurbaey, Professor of Economics, Paris School of Economics; Ulrike Hermann, *taz – die Tageszeitung*; Will Milberg, Professor of Economics, New School for Social Research; Debra Satz, Professor of Ethics in Society, Stanford University; Moritz Schularick, Professor of Economics and President of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy; Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Senior Fellow, Khazanah Research Institute



07.11.23

The Winter Institute: The Universal in Crisis

The Winter Institute was jointly hosted by New York University, the Australian National University, the University of Tokyo, and the University of Bonn, and was organized by Markus Gabriel (Academic Director), alumnus Takahiro Nakajima, fellow Xudong Zhang, and Paul Pickering, Founding Director of the Australian Studies Institute. The project focused on the various notions and practices of producing an anthropological common ground, thereby addressing the hope that we can transcend the boundaries of specific identities without succumbing to the much-discussed dialectics of a false Enlightenment universal, which indirectly or even directly only gives voice to some particular conception of an (alleged) universal or other.



22.11.23

Screening and Discussion of the Documentary *The Settlers* by Shimon Dotan and Netaya Anbar

Former fellows and award-winning filmmakers Shimon Dotan and Netaya Anbar presented their documentary *The Settlers* (2016), which takes an intimate look at life inside the Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

05–06.06.24

Capitalism & Crises: How to fix them (Workshop)

This workshop used Colin Mayer's new book *Capitalism and Crises: How to Fix Them* to explore the prospects of recoupling moral and economic progress through both democratic and economic measures. Colin Mayer is Emeritus Professor of Management Studies at the Blavatnik School of Government and Saïd Business School at the University of Oxford, United Kingdom.

24–25.06.24

From Data Warfare to Data Well-Being (Workshop)

The workshop examined the concept of “webfare,” a term coined by Maurizio Ferraris (Professor of Theoretical Philosophy at the University of Turin) in his recent publication *Webfare: A Manifesto for Digital Well-Being*, as a form of digital welfare. It sought to initiate a value shift which places value judgments and human needs instead of merit at the center of society.





During the 2023–2024 academic year, we actively promoted collaborations and focused on cooperation with partners from academia, civil society, politics and business. Here are some of the institutions with which we have collaborated.

6.

COOPERATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS

Centres

Preceding the founding of THE NEW INSTITUTE in Hamburg, Erck Rickmers funded several research centres at universities. The goal was to support their research at the intersection of academic and social transformation.

THE NEW INSTITUTE's Centre for Social Critique at Humboldt University Berlin, Germany

The Centre in Berlin is following the tradition of the critical theory, under the guidance of the political philosopher Rahel Jaeggi. The interest is in the pathologies of capitalism both current and past to understand how social change can be best advanced in an age of escalating inequality.

THE NEW INSTITUTE's Centre for Environmental Humanities at Ca'Foscari University Venice, Italy (until March 2025)

The Centre in Venice is led by Francesca Tarocco, a writer, critic, and researcher with regard to the intersection of Buddhist and Asian Studies. The program here is shaped around the environmental humanities, connecting its research to the history and challenges of its home, Venice.

Humanities and Social Change Center at the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom (until April 2024)

The Centre in Cambridge focuses on the complex relationship between technology and democracy. In this context, Marcus Tomalin is supervising research on the social impact of artificially intelligent communications technology.

Yehudit and Yehuda Elkana Fellowship

The Yehudit and Yehuda Elkana Fellowship invites researchers dedicated to the free exchange of knowledge and the facilitation of academic debate to spend three to six months at THE NEW INSTITUTE in Hamburg or the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. This initiative was created in collaboration with the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin and is additionally supported by the Volkswagen Foundation and Möllgaard Stiftung (Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft).

Helmut-Schmidt-Zukunftspreis (Helmut Schmidt Future Prize)

Continuing in 2024, THE NEW INSTITUTE, together with the Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt Foundation and DIE ZEIT, presented the Helmut Schmidt Future Prize, which is awarded annually for innovative achievements in the fields of democracy, society and technology. Following in the footsteps of Ugandan activist and social entrepreneur Vanessa Nakate and Finnish politician Sanna Marin, technology advocate Meredith Whittaker was honored in this third year. The American AI researcher, consultant, and manager is president of the non-profit Signal Foundation, responsible for the messenger service of the same name, which is designed to ensure the security of its users. Whether as a rebellious Google developer, a Professor at New York University, or a government advisor, Whittaker has been committed to the responsible and humane development of AI. This convinced the jury of the Helmut Schmidt Future Prize to honor Meredith Whittaker this year and thus also set an example: "In innovation oriented towards the common good, the central values of the prize 'Democracy, Society, Technology' come together, and this is almost paradigmatic in the context of the rapid development of AI", stated the jury in explaining its decision.

The jury for the Helmut Schmidt Future Prize this year was composed of Chairman Uwe Jean Heuser, and Alexander Birken, Antje Boetius, Francesca Bria, Sanna Marin, Alaa Murabit, Vanessa Nakate, Erck Rickmers, and Meik Woyke.

Integrity Initiatives International (III)

Since 2023, THE NEW INSTITUTE has engaged with Integrity Initiatives International (III), an NGO fighting grand corruption and institutionalizing the effort to create an International Anti-Corruption Court (IACCourt) to combat global economic crime.

Several nations have already committed to working towards the creation of an IACCourt, including Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Moldova, the Netherlands, Nigeria, and, most recently, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The European Parliament has called for the creation of the court and the United Kingdom's Labour Party has said it will champion the proposal. These countries and many more are actively participating in the initiative.

THE NEW INSTITUTE is proud to support the III in its efforts to draft a model treaty for the future IACCOURT and to host its biannual treaty committee meetings.

The Integrity Initiatives International assembled leading international jurists, lawyers, scholars, and anti-corruption experts from all around the world to gather at THE NEW INSTITUTE for the first meeting of the IACCOURT model treaty drafting project. The draft model treaty will provide a basis for public discussion among states, civil society, and the private sector on how to create an effective IACCOURT.

Chaired by Justice Richard Goldstone, former Justice of the Constitutional Court of South Africa, and III Senior Treaty Advisor Maja Groff, the participants included: Charles Adeogun-Phillips of Nigeria, Former Head of Special Investigations at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda; Mónica Castillejos-Aragón of Mexico, Former Senior Legal Advisor to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers; Leopoldo Pagotto of Brazil, Co-Chair of the Anti-Corruption Committee of the International Bar Association; Iffat Rahman of Bangladesh, Ambassador for the African Bar Association; and Justice Maria Wilson of Trinidad and Tobago, Justice of Appeal of the Supreme Court of Trinidad and Tobago.



Felix Jud Bookstore

Since moving into our Institute's building in 2022, we have been cooperating with the Hamburg bookstore Felix Jud, which operates the Felix Jud Bookstore in the Warburg Ensemble.

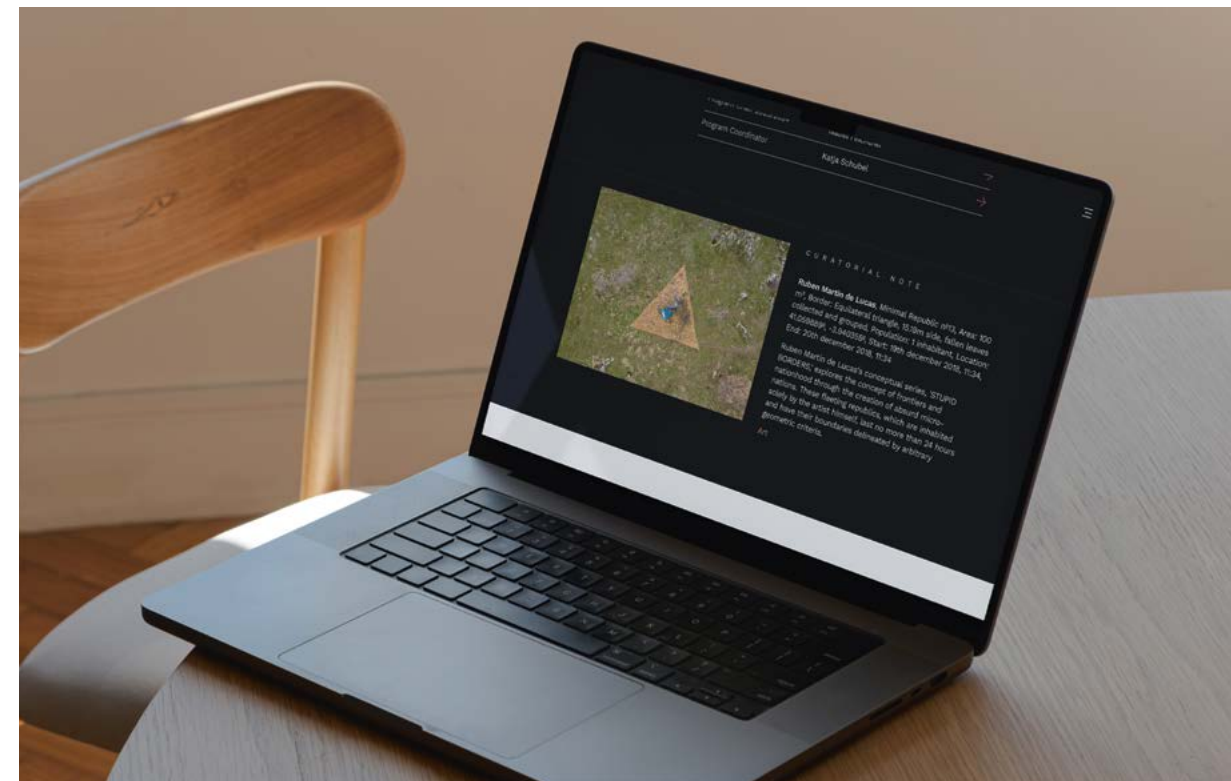
The Felix Jud Bookstore in THE NEW INSTITUTE is an international, multi-perspective, transdisciplinary bookstore with a focus on questions of ecology, new forms of economy, democratic innovation and new concepts for a better world. We collaborate with the bookstore on a number of public events featuring our fellows as well as external guests, from lively discussions of single books to presentations by fellows of the books that have influenced their work and their lives.



Our media team amplifies the Institute's voice by bringing in external perspectives and sharing our fellows' research with the public. We act as a bridge to local and global audiences, creating visibility through inventive formats in media production, communication, and the arts.

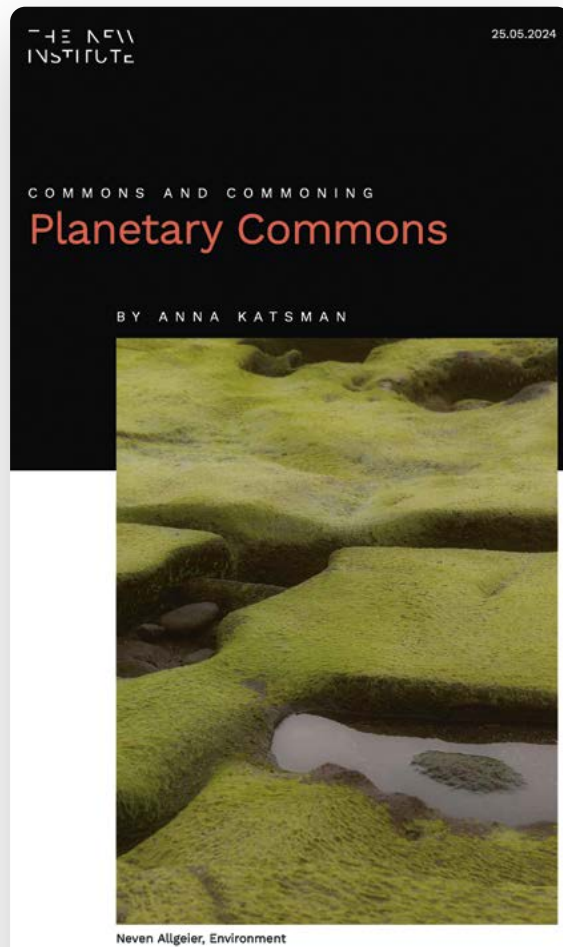
With a focus on strong visual storytelling, we edit and produce audio, video, and photography. Art is central to our identity, providing spaces for reflection and connection with like-minded creatives. In 2023–2024 we collaborated with more than 20 artists on our media projects.

7. MEDIA



Newsletter

In the 2023–2024 academic year, we continued publishing *The Update*, our institutional newsletter, which shares insights across and beyond THE NEW INSTITUTE. *The Update* covers a diverse mix: event highlights, fellow introductions, partnerships, and curated reading lists. Alongside this, we launched *On Commons & Commoning*, a special newsletter series by Anna Katsman, our Academic Director. Our subscriber community has grown steadily, with a 14% increase over the past year.



Neven Allgeier, Environment

The planetary conditions that have allowed human civilization to flourish for the past 10,000 years during the Holocene epoch are not just “there,” given, eternal. From a geological perspective, these conditions are incredibly young, a product of the earth’s constant process of actively reproducing itself through

THE NEW

In spring 2024 we published the first volume of our book series THE NEW, *Beyond Neoliberalism and Neo-illiberalism: Economic Policies and Performance for Sustainable Democracy*, with transcript. The goal of the series is to make humanistic research relevant and accessible to wider audiences, and to that end all of our publications are available as Open Access publications.



8.

LIBRARY

The library aims to facilitate knowledge creation within the Institute. It is primarily a service facility that quickly provides requested information, handles research requests on specific topics, and compiles bibliographies. At the same time, the library is also a physical space housing a collection of books. This curated and customized selection of print (and digital) resources reflects the current work at the Institute with a strong focus on the humanities and social sciences. Yet, the overarching focus, which also integrates selected titles from the natural sciences and works of fiction and art, is designed to inspire fellows to look beyond the focus of their own research. Additionally, the aim is to ensure that the library continually grows and develops in close dialogue with the community. The library's growing collection comprised 2,700 physical books in July 2024.

Our library is actively involved in local and regional associations, and regularly invites colleagues from other institutions to visit us for direct exchange. This included helping to organize this year's (2024) Library Congress, which took place in Hamburg.

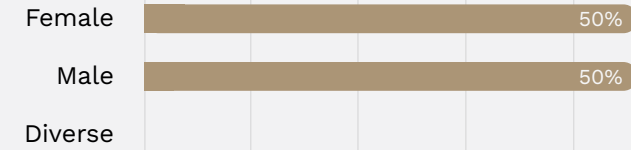
The library facilitates interaction between the fellows, the Institute, and the public. It oversees the cooperation with the Felix Jud Bookstore – a branch of the iconic Hamburg bookstore that operates within the Institute's premises. In particular, the librarians coordinate the bookstore's stock, which is intended to provide insight into the themes of the Institute's programs. The bookstore hosts public, low-key events in which the fellows' contributions (such as book presentations of their own or other authors' works) serve as the starting point for a conversation in which all guests can participate in a relaxed atmosphere.



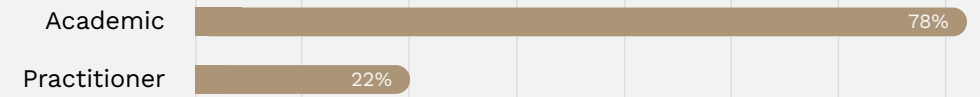
9.

FELLOW STATISTICS

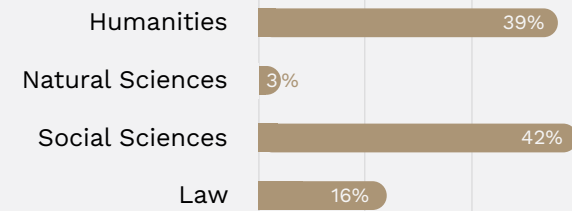
Gender



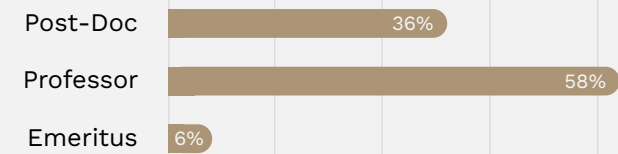
Sector



Field (Academic Sector)



Career Stage (Academic Sector)



0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40

Number of Program Chairs, Fellows, and Visitors

Country and Continent of Residence*

Africa

South Africa	3	
Nigeria	1	
Total	4	9%

Asia

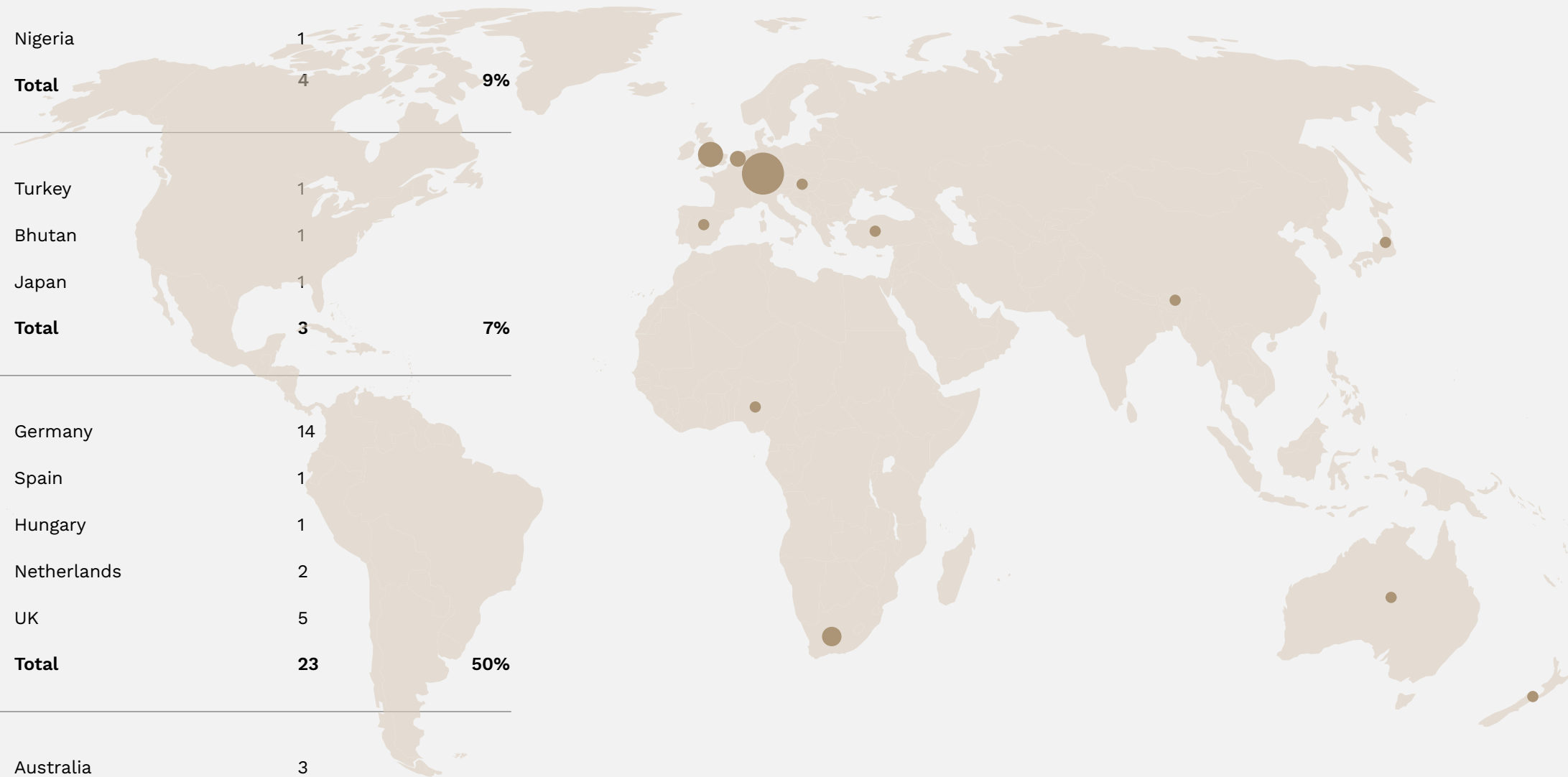
Turkey	1	
Bhutan	1	
Japan	1	
Total	3	7%

Europe

Germany	14	
Spain	1	
Hungary	1	
Netherlands	2	
UK	5	
Total	23	50%

Oceania

Australia	3	
New Zealand	1	
Total	4	9%



*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding differences.



Country and Continent of Residence

Latin America

Mexico 1

Total 1 2%

North America

USA 11

Total 11 24%



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