

som sym

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Ethnologisches
Sommersymposium

11./12. Juni 2026

Frankfurt am Main

Programm



FROBENIUS-INSTITUT
FÜR KULTURANTHROPOLOGISCHE
FORSCHUNG

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Ethnologisches Sommersymposium
am 11./12. Juni 2026
im Frobenius-Institut

Goethe-Universität
Norbert-Wollheim-Platz 1
60323 Frankfurt am Main



Vorwort

Dank der großzügigen Förderung der Frobenius-Gesellschaft können wir dieses Jahr zum achten Mal ein ethnologisches Sommersymposium veranstalten, für das wir wieder hervorragend qualifizierte Studierende und junge Forscherinnen und Forscher gewinnen konnten.

Wir freuen uns auf zwei Tage mit einem anspruchsvollen Programm, das mit Vorträgen, Poster-Präsentationen und Filmen des ethnologischen Nachwuchses gefüllt ist.

Das Frobenius-Institut für kulturanthropologische Forschung öffnet auch wieder seine Türen für die Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmer des Sommersymposiums und bietet Einblicke in seine faszinierenden Sammlungen, in die größte ethnologische Fachbibliothek Deutschlands sowie die Publikationsmöglichkeiten von Paideuma, einer der ältesten Fachzeitschriften des Landes.

Wir sind gespannt auf diesen besonderen Austausch mit dem wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchs und laden außerdem alle interessierten Freunde des Frobenius-Instituts ein, sich am Symposium zu beteiligen.

Mit den besten Wünschen
Prof. Dr. Roland Hardenberg

Programmübersicht

Do, 11. Juni 2026

Gebäude Normative Orders, Raum EG 0.1

- | | | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|--|
| 13.15 Uhr | Registrierung | 17.30 Uhr | Co-Work: Multimodal Research with Returned Ghanaians
Melina Götz, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main |
| 13.45 Uhr | Begrüßung
Prof. Dr. Roland Hardenberg, Direktor des Frobenius-Instituts | 18.00 Uhr | Film
Seasonal Sensories
Philipp Thurmaier und Maria Viktoria Probst,
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München |
| 14.00 Uhr | Keynote
Nourishing Growth and Suffocating Life: Water, Politics, and Infrastructure in Urban Oklahoma
Prof. Dr. Daniel Mains, University of Oklahoma | 18.30 Uhr | Film
Nuestra Herencia
Lesly Garcia Soto, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn |
| 14.30 Uhr | “El Triángulo de la Muerte”: Resisting Death and Imagining Futures in the Struggle against Gold Mining in Cotuí
Carolin Ganz Vargas, Freie Universität Berlin | 19.00 Uhr | Abendbuffet |
| 15.00 Uhr | Landscapes of Loss? The Making of Ecological Loss in Glacial Worlds
Antonia Tungal, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg | | |
| 15.30 Uhr | Mimesis und Ekstase: Hubert Fichtes Erforschung von Candomblé und Vodou in den 1970er Jahren
Dr. Björn Bertrams, Museumsdorf Cloppenburg | | |
| 16.00 Uhr | Kaffeepause | | |
| 16.30 Uhr | Resignification of Pre-Hispanic Sacred Spaces in Dominican Evangelization in Peru
Lorenzo Risco, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn | 10.00 Uhr | Führungen durch die Ethnologische Bibliothek Leo Frobenius
Untergeschoss, Raum 0.615 |
| 17.00 Uhr | From Tourist Gazes to Internal Presences: Notes on the Transformations of Majorcan Festivities in the Ballermann, a German Nightlife Hotspot in Spain
Omar Trujillo Hernández, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg | 10.15 Uhr | Führungen durch die Sammlungen
Untergeschoss, Raum 0.311 |
| | | 11.00 Uhr | Paideuma-Workshop
Erdgeschoss, Raum 501 |
| | | 12.00 Uhr | Postervorstellungen |

Fr, 12. Juni 2026

IG-Farbenhaus

Nourishing Growth and Suffocating Life

Water, Politics, and Infrastructure in Urban
Oklahoma



From the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, to declining water levels in the Colorado River, water quality problems in the United States have become increasingly common. I argue that all too often subsidizing economic growth has self-destructive consequences for drinking water and stormwater infrastructure. I examine the case of Norman, Oklahoma, a liberal college town in one of the most conservative states in the U.S., that is in many ways a microcosm of the nation. In this context, the relationship between nourishing growth and suffocating life must be understood in terms of the intersection between capitalism and shifting forms of citizenship.

El Triángulo de la Muerte

Resisting Death and Imagining Futures in the
Struggle against Gold Mining in Cotuí



Drawing on ongoing ethnographic research in Cotuí, Dominican Republic, this presentation examines how local communities sustain resistance against large-scale gold mining under conditions of environmental destruction and repression. Focusing on everyday organizing, community assemblies, and protest practices, the talk explores how hope and future-oriented visions emerge in a context where water, the basis of life, is sacrificed for gold in the name of extractive capitalism. The presentation shows how collective struggle is shaped by tensions between loss, exhaustion, and endurance, and how visions of the future are negotiated in relation to memories of land, livelihood, and continuity. These dynamics reveal how hope becomes a central force in sustaining resistance despite profoundly unequal and violent conditions.

Landscapes of Loss?

The Making of Ecological Loss in Glacial Worlds



The Alps are among the regions in Europe most severely affected by climate change, and the retreat of their glaciers is attracting increasing public attention. Mourning ceremonies for individual glaciers – such as Pizol (2019), Nördlicher Schneeferner (2023) and Morteratsch Glacier (2023) – have come to symbolize a collective concern over the fate of alpine environments. While research has primarily interpreted these ceremonies through the lens of ‘ecological grief’, this study addresses a preceding question: How is the loss of a glacier constructed as such in the first place? Drawing on qualitative interviews, ritual analysis, and historical contextualization, the project examines the cultural practices, interpretive frameworks, and discourses that render glacier retreat affectively and politically meaningful. Its aim is to understand the conditions under which changing glacial landscapes come to be produced, experienced, and politicized as ecological loss.

Mimesis und Ekstase

Hubert Fichtes Erforschung von Candomblé
und Vodou in den 1970er Jahren



Hubert Fichte reiste ab 1969 mehrfach nach Brasilien und Haiti, um die rituellen Praktiken des Candomblé und Vodou zu erforschen. Im Zentrum seines Interesses standen die Ekstasetechniken dieser Religionen sowie die Frage nach der Bedeutung der Ekstase für den Sozialisationsprozess. Im Vortrag will ich Fichtes Forschungs- und Erkenntnisprozess während der 1970er Jahre nachzeichnen und darauf eingehen, welche Rolle fachwissenschaftliche Gesprächspartner wie Joachim Sterly, Manfred Wöhlcke von Glehn oder Eike Haberland darin spielten. Dabei komme ich auch auf die »Ketzerischen Bemerkungen für eine neue Wissenschaft vom Menschen« zu sprechen, die Fichte 1977 am Frobenius-Institut vortrug.

Resignification of pre-Hispanic sacred spaces in Dominican evangelization in Peru

Lorenzo Risco
University of Bonn

I present the results of the study on the Christian conversion of indigenous populations who lived in the vicinity of Dominican monasteries at the beginning of the Spanish occupation of the central Andes of Peru (1532–1570). The process of resignification of pre-Hispanic sacred spaces within the colonial sphere is explained, shaped through Christian evangelization carried out specifically in the coastal convents of Chicama and Chincha. The application of the spatial turn as an interpretive framework constituted the theoretical foundation of this study, drawing on Henri Lefebvre's concept of the production of space, which addresses not only physical spatial relations but also mental and social ones. The research made it possible to propose the concept of the production of conventual space, which was projected by Indigenous populations onto an "ancestralized" landscape. The production of space took place both in the convent atrium and in the nave of each convent church. Consequently, the evangelized populations re-signified the surrounding sacred spaces through the placement of wooden crosses on nearby tutelary hills, which had previously represented pre-Hispanic divinities. This was the case of Tres Cruces Hill in Chicama valley and Chinchaycámac Hill in Chincha valley.



From Tourist Gazes to Internal Presences

Notes on the Transformations of Majorcan Festivities in the Ballermann, a German Nightlife Hotspot in Spain



Festivities are quintessentially ambiguous. In cultural tourism, heritage celebrations traditionally incorporate the foreign gaze. However, this process is disrupted as local-tourist relationships deteriorate through schismogenesis, the tendency of social groups to define themselves against each other. S'Arenal, Majorca, illustrates this disruption. Here locals cannot assimilate tourists' schismogenic party, the Ballermann, and rather summon old miners known since the 13th century as Trencadors of Marès (quarystone) to S'Arenal festivals. As an internal Otherness, these "presences" emerge in summer festivities along Marès stones. In symbolically encompassing the tourist-local opposition into the more complex human-matter cooperative relationship, Trencadors alleviate schismogenic tension through celebration.

Co-Work

Multimodal Research with Returned Ghanaians

Melina Götze
Goethe University
Frankfurt am Main



This presentation focuses on practices of co-work, a flexible and situational approach to collaborative research developed during ethnographic fieldwork with Ghanaians forcibly returned from Germany. Unlike conventional models of collaboration, co-work embraces episodic engagement, asymmetric contributions, and the use of multiple modalities, including audiovisual media, photography, documents, and storytelling. It foregrounds ethical, improvisational, and context-sensitive research practices that respond to inequality, power relations, and authority in the field. By tracing interactions with different interlocutors, I show how shared activities and creative improvisations enabled ways of knowing together and alongside one another. The presentation invites a rethinking of ethnography as an experimental, multimodal, and ethically attuned search for mutual understanding.

Seasonal Sensories

18.00 Uhr

Film

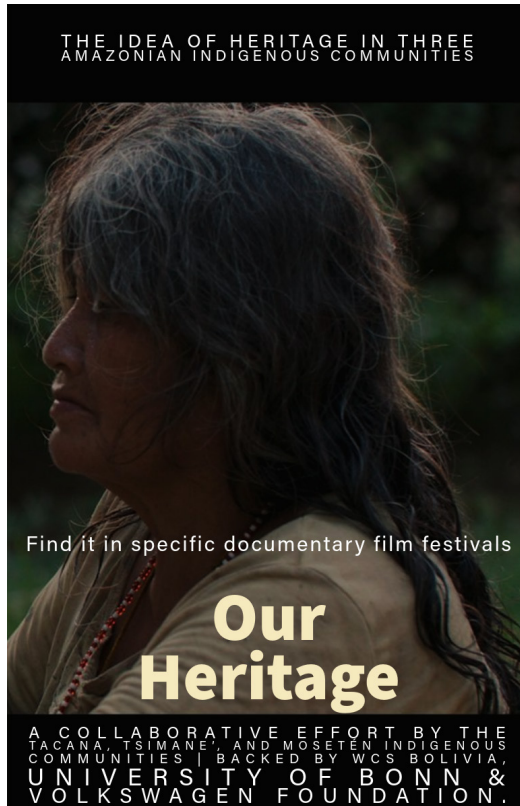
Philipp Thurmaier and
Maria Viktoria Probst
Ludwig-Maximilians-
Universität München



Seasonal Sensories is a documentary film about the relationship between an organic beekeeper and his bee colonies in the Bavarian Alpine foothills. Using an observational approach, the film follows the beekeeper Werner through late summer and autumn, focusing on beekeeping as a multisensory practice. Sound, smell, and other sensory impressions are central elements of his interaction with the bees, which appear in the film as non-human actors. By combining audiovisual ethnography, sensory ethnography, and sound experiments, the film explores a unique human–bee relationship that goes beyond traditional beekeeping: using microphones, Werner listens closely to the buzzing and transforms it into new sonic compositions.

Nuestra Herencia

Lesly Garcia Soto
Rheinische Friedrich-
Wilhelms-Universität Bonn



The short film *Nuestra Herencia* (“Our Heritage”) presents the perspectives of the Tacana, Tsimane’ and Mositén peoples of the Bolivian Amazon on the meaning of cultural and biocultural heritage. Developed through collaborative research between Indigenous organizations, researchers, and conservation institutions, the film highlights how heritage is understood not only as archaeological remains or historical sites, but as a living relationship between people, territory, knowledge, and spiritual practices. Community voices reflect on memory, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and the responsibility of caring for ancestral landscapes. By foregrounding Indigenous perspectives, the film illustrates how local knowledge and cultural practices contribute to the protection of cultural landscapes and the long-term stewardship of the Amazon.

Transnational Fandom and Transnational Fan Identities in Hawassa, Ethiopia

Local Practices and the Football Culture

Marius Heimer
Frobenius Institute,
Frankfurt am Main



The poster presentation aims to scientifically examine the peculiarities of football and its fans in Hawassa in southern Ethiopia. The terms ‘transnational fandom’ and ‘transnational football identity’ are central to this, because despite the existence of professional football leagues and the Ethiopian Football Federation as the institution behind them, young adults in Hawassa are mostly uninterested in either the national leagues or the Ethiopian cup competitions. Instead, they support teams from the English Premier League, wear their football jerseys in public, post about their team on social media, and cheer for them during televised matches. Furthermore, minor arguments and heated debates can arise when watching a big game together or discussing a past match. In addition, I will address the origins of this development and examine its problems.

The Future of Museum Databases

An Analysis of Digitising Practices in Germany and India

Afreed Mehta
Goethe University
Frankfurt



This study situates itself in the transformations within the museum, focusing on the digitisation of collections that has become pervasive in the twenty-first century museum landscape. By critically examining the process of digitising collections, this research aims to explore how digitisation and the process of the creation of databases has transformed museum work. While increasingly being used as a way to communicate and disseminate information, it is critical to examine how this knowledge is being produced, what goes into the process of digitising and making extensive databases that not only span out of the physical premises of the museum but has the power to integrate different places, peoples and perspectives.

Gender, Space and Care

Reclaiming „Feminine Spaces“ as Tools of Empowerment

Ginevra Tsepiso
Moruthoane

University of Bayreuth



This research explores what it means to care in the context of Lesotho and how Pitiki function as spaces of care in the country. Pitiki groups in Lesotho are private spaces only accessed by women, their main objective is to empower women and promote their wellbeing. Drawing on my ethnographic research in Lesotho, I argue that Pitiki can be understood as a space of care framed as a response to patriarchal dominated societies and gendered expectations about women. Through activities like financial support or professional help Pitiki groups build community and solidarity which are vital to frame the groups as spaces of care that women conceptualize as a tool for growth and empowerment.

Future Ancestors

Envisioning the Future from Indigenous perspectives in North America and the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota

Alina Mutschler

University of Freiburg



In Lakota science, a seven generations principle is applied to ensure that the lives of at least the next seven generations are not harmed by present-day decisions. To be a future ancestor means to live for the faces not yet seen: To provide a path for generations to come. The ways Native Nations have envisioned their futures in the past have shaped their lives. What role do visions play in times of multiple crises, which are particularly noticeable in North America today? What does it mean to imagine a future for young people growing up on reservations? Drawing on years of research, this study centers on the lived experiences of young Lakota navigating uncertain times.

“La terre a fini — The Land is Finished”

Family Land Practices in Agropastoral Areas,
Northern Benin



The domains of family land practices are key to understanding the broader dynamics of changing tenure systems. Using participatory land tenure mapping, this presentation shows how families allocate, share, and parcel land, and examines how these practices shape local land use and management. Family land practices are not uniform—these variations influence negotiations and contestations over land use. This ethnographic account examines the challenges and opportunities that emerge from these practices, demonstrating how they interact with broader dynamics of scarcity and transformation, revealing both the resilience and vulnerabilities of agropastoral systems.

Living in Between

The Embodied Struggle for Home

Yixin Zheng

Heidelberg University



This presentation challenges the binary of “homelessness” versus “home” by examining the lived experiences of the jieyou (homeless people) at Taipei Main Station. Based on interviews and participant observation, I explore a state of “liminal dwelling”: a continuous oscillation between displacement and the “feeling of home”. The research reveals that while the jieyou never fully “arrive” at an expected home, they are socially “caught” by a situated network of care and actively employ embodied survival strategies. Through these tactical practices, they inhabit a complex, ambivalent space that neither fully public nor private, but suspended in between.



Das Frobenius-Institut befasst sich mit der Erforschung kultureller Diversität und anthropologischer Kongruenzen in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart. Es sieht seine Aufgaben darin, kulturanthropologisches Wissen zu erweitern und über den wissenschaftlichen Dialog einen reflektierten Umgang mit kultureller Differenz zu fördern.

Aufgrund der Geschichte des Instituts liegt ein Schwerpunkt der Forschung auf kulturanthropologischen Studien zu Afrika. Weitere regionale Schwerpunkte haben sich in den letzten Jahrzehnten ergeben, etwa durch ethnographische Studien in Ozeanien und Südostasien. Seit 2017 hat das Frobenius-Institut unter der Leitung von Prof. Dr. Roland Hardenberg seine Forschung um Süd- und Zentralasien erweitert und befasst sich verstärkt mit der kulturellen Wertschöpfung von religiösen Ressourcen.

Sammlungen

Die **Bibliothek** des Frobenius-Instituts ist mit ca. 138.000 Bänden die bedeutendste Spezialbibliothek für Ethnologie im deutschsprachigen Raum.

Das **Felsbild-Archiv** umfasst über 8.600 inzwischen vielfach als Raritäten geltende Felsbildkopien aus Afrika, Ozeanien, Australien und Europa. Es ist die weltweit älteste und umfassendste Sammlung dieser Art.

Das **Ethnographische Bildarchiv** beinhaltet rund 40.000 Aquarelle, Ölbilder und Zeichnungen, entstanden zwischen den 1840er und den 1960er Jahren in Afrika, Ozeanien und dem indigenen Australien.

Die Bestände des **Fotoarchivs** beinhalten vor allem Fotos, die während der verschiedenen Forschungsreisen des Instituts von 1904 bis in die achtziger Jahre angefertigt wurden. Das Archiv besteht aus ca. 70.000 Fotos, vor allem Schwarzweiß-Aufnahmen.

Die **Ethnographische Sammlung** besteht heute aus etwa 7.000 Objekten, mehrheitlich aus dem Bereich der Alltagskultur afrikanischer Gesellschaften.

In seiner Rolle als Zentrum der Geschichte seiner Fachdisziplin, beheimatet das Frobenius-Institut mehr als ein Dutzend wissenschaftlicher **Vor- und Nachlässe** namhafter deutscher EthnologInnen.

Frobenius-Gesellschaft e.V.

Werden Sie Mitglied

Die Frobenius-Gesellschaft, gegründet 1924, ist einer der ältesten ethnologischen Fördervereine im deutschsprachigen Raum.

Zielsetzung der Frobenius-Gesellschaft ist die Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten des Frobenius-Instituts, von Forschungsprojekten und Publikationen sowie Veranstaltungen.

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