

CALL FOR PAPERS

Afterlives: Rethinking the Politics of Loss and Demise

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

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Afterlives appear in manifold ways. From deceased ancestors and celebrated martyrs, over decaying ruins and material remains, to past ideologies and bygone moral orders: even after their actual life time, persons, things and ideas often retain a presence in the here-and-now, posing vital questions about time, justice and social order. This interdisciplinary, one-day symposium seeks to explore how, when and why afterlives become activated, where they draw their potency from and how they constitute social and political communities.

Much popular discourse and scholarly thought has approached the lingering presence of the past in the here-and-now through the notion of memory. As a concept, however, memory remains problematically tied to an understanding of temporality as linear progression within a frame of secular immanence. By contrast, in this symposium we want to investigate *afterlife* as a concept that brings into view manifestations of the past that defy linear imaginations of time, question the prevalence of this-worldly presence and become articulated through complex human-non-human assemblages.

We invite contributions that explore how afterlives are made and unmade through material and immaterial means and how their affective and sensual reverberations shape social and political worlds. We are particularly interested in how afterlives, as they draw death, loss and demise into the present, raise potentially troubling questions about social justice and retribution, engendering fields of intense political contestation. By investigating how afterlives exert claims on the living in this way and to what effect, our aim is to rethink the politics of loss and demise beyond the strictures of this-worldly presentism.

We welcome proposals from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds (including anthropology, archaeology, history, art history, geography, sociology, political science, area studies, literature...) on, but not limited to, the following questions and themes:

- Afterlives and the constitution of social and political communities
- The materiality of afterlives
- Afterlives and historical change
- Visual and narrative representations of afterlives
- Afterlives and the contestations they engender
- Afterlives and their potency: where does it stem from? What does it engender?
- What makes afterlives experienced as destabilizing or haunting in some contexts, as opposed to celebrated and sought after in others?
- What are the methodological challenges of studying afterlives, and how may they be overcome?

Please send abstracts of max. 250 words to marlene.schafers@ugent.be by **1 February 2019**. Accepted papers will be pre-circulated amongst symposium participants and will be due on 24 May 2019.

Unfortunately, we will not be able to cover travel and accommodation costs for participants. Lunch, coffee and a dinner will be catered for.

Convenor

Dr. Marlene Schäfers

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellow

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