**Reemerging Iconoclasms. On the contemporariness of image controversies**

Online Workshop of the **Institute of Art and Art History at the University of Duisburg-Essen in cooperation with the KWI Essen**

**Date**: 1-2 July 2021

**Concept and Organization**: Prof. Dr. Birgit Mersmann (University of Duisburg-Essen), Prof. Dr. Christiane Kruse (Muthesius University of Fine Arts and Design, Kiel)

**Participation:** The workshop will take place online via Zoom. Guests are welcome. Please register until June 30th 2021 via email to [emily.beyer@kwi-nrw.de](mailto:emily.beyer@kwi-nrw.de)

Religiously and politically motivated iconoclasms are a cultural-historical phenomenon with a centuries-old tradition. Hardly any culture that has invented images as insignia of its symbolic order, whose members have expressed their self-image, identity, interests in and through images, has not also experienced hostile attacks on its pictorial symbols. In contemporary cultures with societies that see themselves as enlightened, tolerant, and liberal towards others, acts of image destruction should actually be considered obsolete. The opposite is the case: Current iconoclasms are not only – as for instance in the Middle East – directed against contemporary pluralism and its representatives; even in pluralistically structured contemporary societies, iconoclasms can break out again at any time with new violence – think of the dispute over the dismantling and destruction of civil war memorials in the southern states of the USA, which has been described as ‘American iconoclasm.’

In the 21st century, global political conflicts are not solely conducted militarily. Where warlike conflicts are to be avoided, monument collapses, the desecration of images and the violent destruction of cultural heritage take center stage. Where terrorists ignite violent clashes, the destruction of world heritage sites is considered a triumph that is particularly effective for the media, as ISIS demonstrated in Syria and Iraq in 2017. Iconoclastic actions have become the (image-)war-fueling dynamite in the public and media arena of political, religious, national and identitary conflicts.

The online workshop aims to analyze the return of iconoclasms in the present under three topics: I. Clashes over Monuments, II. Un-Iconcism: Media and Artistic Strategies of Image Destruction, III. Idol Disputes: Imagery between Matter and Magic.

**Workshop Program with Time Schedule**

Thursday, 1 July 2021

13:45 Welcome Address by the Director of the KWI Essen, Prof. Dr. Julika Griem

13:50 Introduction (Birgit Mersmann)

**Panel I. Clashes over Monuments. Political Transformations and Identity Rifts**

14:00 Silvia Naef (Genève)

*Destructions, Reconstructions and Re-Appropriations of Public Monuments in Iraq*

14:15 Gertrud Hüwelmeier (Berlin)

*Malevolent and Benevolent Iconoclasm in Late Socialist Vietnam*

14:30-15:00 Discussion

15:00 Sven Lütticken (Amsterdam)

*The Labour and Practice of Iconoclasm*

15:15 Arnold Bartetzky (Leipzig)

*New Iconoclasms. Discomforting monuments between decommunization and decolonization*

15:30-16:00 Discussion

Coffee Break 16:00-16:15

16:15 Martin Schieder (Leipzig)

*„What should we do with the empty plinth?” The Art of Monument Fall*

16:30 Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill)

*Contesting the Confederate Landscape in the United States, 1975 to the Present*

16:45 Sybille Frank (Darmstadt)

*Urban Fallism. Iconoclasm and activism*

17:00-17:45 Discussion

Friday, 2 July 2021

**Panel II: Un-Iconism: Media and Artistic Strategies of Image Destruction**

10:00 Markus Rautzenberg (Essen)

*Epopteia vs. theoria? Indexicality between blindness and insight*

10:15 Stephan Schwingeler (Hildesheim)

*Iconoclasm as Artistic Strategy: Video game art between transparency and opacity*

10:30-11:00 Discussion

**Panel III: Idol Disputes: Imagery between Matter and Magic**

11:00 Gabriele Genge (Essen)

*Re-Inventing Totemism: Iconoclastic traditions in* *Léopold Sédar Senghors concept of the „image idéogramme“*

11:15 Christoph Günther (Mainz)  
 *Iconic Socioclasm. Smashing idols to obliterate identities*

11:30-12.00 Discussion

12:00-13:00 Lunch break

13:00 Pooyan Tamimi Arab (Utrecht)

*The Image That Mattered Too Much: Displaying and removing the Prophet Muhammad at the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam*

13:15 Marion Müller (Trier)

*Punishing Images. An iconological retrospective on ‘execution in effigies’ practices past and present*

13:30 Birgit Meyer (Utrecht)

*“Idols” in the Museum: How iconoclasm and protection intersect*

13:30 Panel Discussion

14:15 Final Discussion and Concluding Remarks

14:30 End of workshop