

Culture and Catastrophe in Modern Europe  
March 1-2, 2024

All events, unless otherwise specified, will take place at the Neubauer Collegium, 5701 S. Woodlawn Ave. Chicago, IL 60637

**THURSDAY, Feb. 29**

6:00pm - **Dinner and Tour of Neubauer Exhibition**  
7:30pm **“Radio/Rauhfaser/Television”**

**FRIDAY, March 1**

9:00am Breakfast

9:30am - **Introduction and Group Discussion**

10:30am *What investments do you bring to our discussion of culture and catastrophe? What stakes does our negotiation of the intersection of these concepts have either for you or your larger field?*

10:30am - Coffee  
10:45am

10:45am - **Concepts and Temporalities of Catastrophe**

12:15pm *We would like to begin with a conversation about what we mean when we mobilize the term catastrophe. What features define a catastrophe and what kinds of temporalities does it imply? How has this concept changed historically, and if we should understand catastrophe as essentially historically specific, are there nevertheless core features that allow us to connect its disparate usages? How does this negotiation between historical meanings and contemporary meanings impact our effort to engage with this concept in the myriad ways this workshop hopes to do?*

Moderator: Ken Moss, Professor of History, University of Chicago

Jonathon Catlin Postdoctoral Associate at the Humanities Center,  
University of Rochester

Michael Geyer Professor Emeritus of History, University  
of Chicago

Jonah Siegel Professor of English, Rutgers University

Christoph Weber Associate Professor of German, University of North  
Texas

12:30pm - Lunch  
1:30pm

1:30pm - **Culture as Agent in, of, or against Empire**  
3:00pm *Empire not only occasioned local catastrophes; it was itself a catastrophic political form. Its implications for culture were equally destructive. We would like to use this panel as a way to think about the experiences of erasure and displacement that accompany empire and the ways culture has done work amid them, whether as an agent of emancipation, oppression, or simply representation.*

Moderator Leora Auslander, Professor of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity and History, University of Chicago

Kira Thurman Associate Professor of History, German Studies, and Musicology, University of Michigan

Emma Kuby Assistant Professor of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Philipp Lehmann Associate Professor of History, University of California, Riverside

3:00pm - Break  
3:15pm

3:15pm - **Ruin and Memory in the Aftermath of Catastrophe**  
4:45pm *What roles does culture play once the literal and metaphorical dust settles after a catastrophic event? How does culture varyingly structure, reinforce, and respond to the contingencies of a post-catastrophic environment? How does it demand representation or allow for misrepresentation? How does it respond to or rely on sites of ruin, and what is its role in bolstering the (sometimes obsessive) memory cultures that crop up in ruin's wake?*

Moderator Tara Zahra, Professor of History, Faculty Director of the Neubauer Collegium, University of Chicago

Jeremy Best Associate Professor of History, Iowa State University

Susan Crane Professor of History, University of Arizona

Andrew Hennlich Associate Professor of Art History, Western Michigan University

Yuliya Komska Associate Professor of German Studies, Dartmouth University

4:45pm - Break  
6:00pm

6:00pm - Dinner

8:00pm Marisol at the Museum for Contemporary Art  
205 E. Pearson St.  
Chicago, IL 60611  
*Transportation provided*

**SATURDAY, March 2**

8:30am - Breakfast

9:00am - **Preservation**

10:30am *Why does catastrophe—or even the mere threat of catastrophe—drive society to preserve cultural artifacts that sometimes seem to bear little on the post-catastrophic project of survival? At what cost? What is the link between preservation impulses and remembrance cultures? What sort of existential horizons do projects of cultural preservation imply?*

Jennifer Allen

Associate Professor of History, Yale University

Jonida Gashi

Chair of the Department of Art Studies, Academy of Albanian Studies

Alice Goff

Assistant Professor of History, University of Chicago

10:30am - Coffee

10:45am

10:45am - **Possibilities and Limits of Culture in World-Making**

12:15pm *What work has society assigned to culture in post-catastrophic contexts? In what ways does it help us to make worlds anew, even envision utopias? What features give it this capacity? What are the limits to this capacity, especially when catastrophes have destroyed important modes of cultural expression?*

Kasia Jeżowska

Lecturer in the Faculty of Arts, Design, and Architecture, University of New South Wales

Nisrine Rahal

Visiting Assistant Professor of History, Wake Forest University

Christopher Williams-Wynn

Postdoctoral Research Fellow,  
Kunsthistorisches Institut Florenz

12:30pm - Lunch

1:30pm

1:45pm - Concluding Discussion

3:15pm

6:30pm - Post-Workshop Dinner

5316 S. Hyde Park Blvd Apt. 2

Chicago, IL 60615