

Call for Papers

The PUBLIC in Public and Applied History **The 2nd Conference of the Jean Monnet Network “Applied European Contemporary History”**

Venue and Dates:

Wrocław University (Poland), March 6th to March 8th 2019

Rationale:

Public history is often defined as history *for* the public, *by* the public, *with* the public, *about* the public or *in* the public sphere. Even though the public is an essential element of public and applied history, theoretical debates on how “the public” is conceptualized are scarce. Theoretical reflections within the field are mostly confined to analyses of how history is being presented in the public sphere or focus on the underlying historical narratives and the “products” generated by public historians. This conference will tackle the apparent void in the theoretical discourse and focus on the public: its characteristics, role and position as well as on opportunities and challenges it poses to public history and applied history and to public historians. Thus, the conference aims at fostering a debate on the theoretical backgrounds of public history combined with, and informed by, case studies.

Gaining a more detailed understanding of “the public” in processes of co-production of historical knowledge is one of the core interests of the Jean Monnet Network “Applied European Contemporary History”. This is related to questions about the extent of what the public refers to as national or transnational, European boundaries. Addressing this question will help to reach one of the network’s most important goals: to explain national historical cultures in their specific constructions and further create relationships between neighboring European countries, thus making potential conflicts both recognized and understood.

We envisage the following areas of discussion:

History *for* the public/*with* the public: Addressing, educating and engaging audiences.

What are the main target groups of public history endeavors? How are their needs/expectations examined and addressed? How are processes of perception being analyzed within the framework of visitor/customer research? How do these approaches differ in different countries? How are public history projects adjusted to meet particular types/groups of the public? How are they influenced by the public? What purposes do such adjustments serve?

Research on assessing the effectiveness of public history methods/tools/approaches and on the public role of public historians, on their autonomy and dependencies.

History by the public: Responding to the activities “from below”.

How does the public inspire and motivate public historians? What are the challenges of such activities for public historians? How does the feedback loop between academic and lay historians work?

Characteristics of mutual relations between professional public historians and history amateurs/local activists.

History on the public: The image of the public in public history presentations.

How is the public represented in public history “products”? What is specific for public history if compared with social history, gender history, microhistory, oral history etc.?

Approaches towards overcoming the domination of political history.

Conceptualizing the Public: How the public is framed in public history.

What are the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings public history is referring to when conceptualizing the public? Which disciplinary backgrounds and discourses are involved when public historians define the public? Is the public framed solely as the recipient of historical knowledge produced by historians? How can a co-production of historical knowledge between the public and the academic world be characterized? How can one overcome the perception of the public as “the other”?

Both theoretical concepts and reports from the field are welcome. They can be local, national or international in scope. We envision addressing the topic with an interdisciplinary approach and encourage submissions from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds including history, sociology, cultural studies, gender studies, ethnology, anthropology and museum and performance studies. If you wish to take part in this conference please send a short abstract (max. 300 words) and a short CV to Joanna Wojdon (joanna.wojdon@uwr.edu.pl) and Juliane Tomann (juliane.tomann@uni-jena.de). The deadline for submission is September 15th 2018. We will notify all participants by October 15th 2018. The conference will take place in Wroclaw (Poland) from March 6th to March 8th 2019. Accommodation will be arranged and travel costs will be covered. The conference will take place in English.