

Profile

Cassis Kilian is a lecturer (Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin) at the Department of Anthropology and African Studies (IfEAS). Her research on the project “Post-colonial Experiments: The Appropriation of ‘White Roles’ in African Film“ was granted with a scholarship for doctoral candidates from the Research Center of Social and Cultural Studies Mainz (SoCuM). She was awarded a PhD with distinction (Preis der Sulzmann-Stiftung für eine herausragende Doktorarbeit) from Mainz University in 2011.

Prior to her research, she worked as an actress. Together with actors from Africa and Europe, she explored affinities of anthropology and performing art and artistic approaches to topics that are difficult to access for scholars. She has authored a book, diverse journal articles and book chapters on African film, cosmopolitanism, embodiment and sensory perception. Her book “Attention in Performance: Acting Lessons in Sensory Anthropology” was published by Routledge in the Series “Anthropological Studies of Creativity and Perception” edited by Tim Ingold in 2021.

She currently works with Mirco Göpfert and Melanie Brand on a project that explores humour as an epistemic practice.

Conferences, Panels, Workshops and Plenaries

10/2017 Organization of the workshop “Verspielte EthnologInnen: Darstellende Kunst als reflexive Praxis zur Erkundung einer vernetzten Welt” at the Conference of the German Anthropological Association at the FU Berlin (GAA) (with Annika Strauss).

12/2016 Organization of the international conference “Fraud, Fake and Make-believe: Transregional and Transdisciplinary Perspectives” at the University of Frankfurt a.M. (with Jan Beek and Matthias Krings).

07/2015 “Etüden zum ‘sense memory’: Schauspielunterricht für Ethnologen”, workshop at the biennial conference of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Volkskunde (dgv), “Kulturen der Sinne: Zugänge zur Sensualität der sozialen Welt“, University of Zurich.

10/2013 Host of the panel discussion “Empört euch, aber bitte öffentlich! Ethnologie als Störwissenschaft” at the German Anthropological Association’s (GAA) biennial congress “Verortungen: Ethnologie in Wissenschaft, Arbeitswelt und Öffentlichkeit“, Mainz University.

09/2011 Organization of the conference “Was machen Marker? Logik, Materialität und Politik von Differenzierungsprozessen”, Mainz University (with postgraduates of SoCuM, Research Center of Social and Cultural Studies Mainz).

04/2010 Organization of the panel “Glimmering Utopias: 50 Years of African Movie – Flimmernde Utopien: 50 Jahre afrikanischer Film” at the biennial conference of the African Studies Association in Germany (VAD) “Continuities and Dislocations: 50 Years of African Independence“, Mainz University (with Ute Fendler).

Papers

03/2021 (with Melanie Brand and Mirco Göpfert) The power of ridicule: Laughter, knowledge and politics in Tehran, Johannesburg and Berlin. Paper presented at The Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK's conference (ASA), online event hosted by the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of St Andrews.

09/2019 If I Were a Horse: Mimesis as a Means to Overcome Anthropocentrism. Paper presented at the 4th Symposium of Social and Cultural Studies at SoCuM "Posthuman. Perspectives on Nature/Culture"), Mainz University.

05/2017 "I would prefer not to": Dilemmas in Collaboration. Paper presented at the "Spring Gathering" of the project "Knowing from the Inside", University of Aberdeen.

09/2016 Human sounds and their resonance: Responding to breath, voice and text. Paper presented at a workshop of the project "Knowing from the Inside, University of Aberdeen.

07/2016 If I were a horse: mimesis as a means to overcome anthropocentrism. Paper presented at EASA's biennial conference, Department of Human Science and Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Milano-Bicocca.

10/2015 Dieudonné Nianguona's Performance 'Le Kung Fu'. Presented at the round table discussion "Afropean Mimicry & Mockery II", Künstlerhaus Mousonturm, Frankfurt am Main.

09/2015 Films We Live By: Dieudonné Nianguona's Ethnographie der Mediascape Rhein-Main. Paper presented at the German Anthropological Association's (GAA) biennial congress, University of Marburg.

04/2015 (with Emil Aboisso Mbo) Les rythmes de l'urbanisation du monde. Un acteur et une ethnologue explorent les possibilités des citoyennetés cosmopolites. Paper presented in the seminar "L'enquête et ses graphies: figurations iconographiques d'après société" at the EHESS in Paris.

02/2015 Sense memory exercises: Acting Lessons for Anthropologists. Paper presented at the workshop "Enacting Modalities of Feeling: Anthropological Explorations into Affective, Sensual and Material Connections" at the University of Vienna.

05/2014 Specialists in Mimesis: Performing art as a means of exploring a travelling concept. Paper presented at the Årskonferanse Norsk Antropologisk Forening "Ulikhetens natur. Denaturalisering og comparative (u)muligheter", Bergen.

07/2014 Global Players: Schauspieler als Ethnologen. Paper presented at the Departmental Seminar Series (Anthropology and African Studies), Mainz University.

07/2014 Rhythms of Global Urbanization: An Actor and an Anthropologist explore Cosmopolitan Citizenships. Paper presented at EASA's biennial conference, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology – Estonian Institute of Humanities, Tallinn.

10/2013 Nkem Owoh – Ein afrikanischer Schauspieler als Ethnologe. Presented during the course of the project „Arrivals II“, Theater Neumarkt, Zurich.

07/2013 Post-colonial Experiments: The Appropriation of 'White Roles' in African Film. Paper presented at the 3rd global conference "Images of Whiteness: Exploring Critical Issues", Harris Manchester College, Oxford.

06/2013 African Actors as Anthropologists of Globalization: Performing Art as a Means of Exploring Differences. Paper presented at the 5th European Conference on African Studies (ECAS), Centro de Estudos Africanos – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa.

04/ 2013 The Actor as Anthropologist – Strange Methods to Explore Bodies. Paper presented at the conference "Practices and their Bodies: What Kind of Artefact is the Lived Body?", Mainz University.

01/2013 Il faut que ça saigne: Quelques réflexions sur la science-fiction de Jean-Pierre Bekolo. Paper presented at the conference "Archéologie du Futur: Cinémas africains et utopies", Iwalewa-Haus Bayreuth.

06/2012 Flimmernde Utopien: Fünfzig Jahre afrikanischer Film. Paper presented during the course of "Ringvorlesung Afrika", Mainz University.

09/2011 (with Caroline Schmitt) Good Hair – Bad Hair? Haar als Marker. Paper presented at the conference "Was machen Marker? Logik, Materialität und Politik von Differenzierungsprozessen", Mainz University.

07/ 2010 (with Claudia Böhme) Es geht auch ohne Leinwand: Zur Geschichte des afrikanischen Kinos. Paper presented during the course of "Ringvorlesung Afrika", Mainz University.

04/2010 Osuofia à Dakar: ‚Singularités d’un cinéma au pluriel‘. Paper presented at the biennial conference of the African Studies Association in Germany (VAD) "Continuities and Dislocations: 50 Years of African Independence", Mainz University.

11/2009 From the Spectator to the Actor: The First African Western. Paper presented at the conference "The Western – Intercultural Perspectives", Mainz University.

02/2009 Rouch versus Sembène. Presented during the course of the project "Afrika2Fischis", Seidlvilla Munich.

10/2008 Bamako von Abderrahmane Sissako – ein Film in der Tradition von Glauber Rocha? Paper presented at the conference "Glauber Rocha und das Kino des Südens", Iberoamerikanisches Institut Berlin.

06/2007 (with Matthias Krings), 'Weiße Rollen' im schwarzafrikanischen Film. Paper presented at ZIS' (Centre of Intercultural Studies) anniversary celebration, Mainz University.