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UNIVERSITÄT MAINZ

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**SYMPOSIUM**

**NOTIONS OF JIHAD  
RECONSIDERED:**

**PERSPECTIVES ON MEDIA, MATERIALITY AND  
POLITICAL VIOLENCE**

**KUNSTHALLE MANNHEIM**

**JOHANNES GUTENBERG UNIVERSITY MAINZ**

**6-8 OCTOBER 2021**

## DESCRIPTION

The symposium *Notions of Jihad Reconsidered: Perspectives on Media, Materiality, and Political Violence* explores how different notions of jihad and political violence have entered and been shaped by discursive formations in academia, media, and the arts. It takes the aesthetic dimensions of images and sounds that have emerged over the last 20 years in the engagement with 9/11 and its aftermath as a starting point to rethink the various notions of jihad and its relation to political violence.

The symposium includes a joint visit of the special exhibition MINDBOMBS – Visual Cultures of Political Violence and an Artist Talk at the Kunsthalle Mannheim, a keynote lecture as well as four thematic panels. During the four thematic panels, renowned scholars and artists explore the visual and sonic aesthetics that have helped manifest perceptions of jihad. They critically reflect on the practices of knowledge production in different social spheres that have conditioned notions of Jihad and political violence, debating the canonization and archiving of mediations and imaginations of Jihad, as well as ethnographic case studies that show how notions, media, and materialities of Jihad are entangled with local and global structures of power.

The thematic design of the symposium draws on the premise that since the attacks of 11 September 2001 in the USA, global politics, regional orders and social cohesion in many societies have been exposed to unprecedented dynamics. Images, sounds, and their mediations have played an essential role in the perception of this event and its consequences. Usama Bin Ladin's video calling on all Muslims to take up arms against the United States and its allies in a sanctified struggle framed as Jihad was only one element in the widespread dissemination and popularisation of this polysemic concept from the Muslim tradition. As one of the many consequences of the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent 'war on terror', discourses on Islam per se, Muslim religiosity, belonging and power relations in Europe and North America were increasingly shaped by rather narrow understandings of Jihad as embodying a potential for violence inherent in the religious foundations of Islam. Under these premises, certain characteristics were attributed to

Muslims and their compatibility with 'Western' notions of social order was questioned (Bayat 2007: 5).

The attacks of 9/11 also mark a turning point for many visual and media scholars: on the one hand, recordings of such events gained unprecedented visibility and rapid dissemination via the Web 2.0. On the other hand, the content of these images had an increasingly spectacular, shocking, or traumatizing effect (Mitchell 2011: 2). Taken together, they represent a 'new geography of rage' that provoked remediations in popular media culture in regions not directly affected (Behrend & Wendl 2015). In their various manifestations, not only the images of the collapsing Twin Towers have entered our collective memory. It is also impossible to imagine global audiovisual cultures without the mediations of the subsequent invasion and the so-called 'war on terror' in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other countries, images of tortured prisoners in Guantánamo and Abu Ghayb, as well as the networked images and videos of the ongoing war in Syria. Shared in manifold iterations, altered, contested, recomposed, and placed in different contexts in the form of digital media, these sounds and images testify to the fact that this concept cannot be limited to its religious meanings. They manifest the materiality of violence, shape the wide range of sentiments about what Jihad means, and affect discursive formations that evaluate Muslim life and religiosity also in terms of their relationship to jihad and political violence.

Against this background, the symposium *Notions of Jihad Reconsidered* will present a scholarly discussion that complements and critiques existing research on the topic. In order to offer a broad and comparative perspective, the event will be introduced with a joint visit of the special exhibition *MINDBOMBS - Visual Cultures of Political Violence* at Kunsthalle Mannheim. The artworks displayed in one part of the exhibition explicitly engage with mediations of Muslim militants as well as the devastation of war and violence. As an opening event, an Artist Talk on Art and Political Violence at Kunsthalle Mannheim will facilitate a discussion between art historians and artists represented in the exhibition, whose work addresses left-wing, right-wing, and Muslim militant violence, its repercussions and entanglements with broader social and political processes. This event will provide fruitful impulses for four thematic panels during the following two days in Mainz.

## **ABOUT THE JUNIOR RESEARCH GROUP *JIHADISM ON THE INTERNET: IMAGES AND VIDEOS, THEIR APPROPRIATION, AND DISSEMINATION***

This Symposium is the culmination of the work of the Junior Research Group *Jihadism on the Internet: Images and Videos, their Appropriation and Dissemination* at the Department of Anthropology and African Studies at the University of Mainz. In the group, headed by Christoph Günther and funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), an IT specialist and six junior scholars from the fields of anthropology, film and media studies, and Islamic studies, have been working together since mid-2017. Collaboratively, they analyse audio-visual media of Jihadi movements and explore the ways in which a broad spectrum of social actors engages with these mediations. They have produced a number of publications, including the edited volume *Jihadi Audiovisuality and its Entanglements: Meanings, Aesthetics, Appropriations* (Edinburgh University Press, 2020).

Contact: notions-of-jihad[a]uni-mainz.de

## **POSSIBLE RESTRICTIONS AND HYGIENE CONCEPT IN THE WAKE OF THE ONGOING COVID19 PANDEMIC**

The symposium will be held in a hybrid format, considering hygiene measures then applicable at Johannes Gutenberg University or Kunsthalle Mannheim.

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## PROGRAMME WEDNESDAY 6 OCTOBER

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- Location 1:      Kunsthalle Mannheim
- 13.00           **Registration**
- 13.30           **Welcoming**  
                  Sebastian Baden (Kunsthalle Mannheim)
- 13.45           **Introduction**  
                  Christoph Günther  
                  (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)
- 14.30           **Curator's guided tour through the exhibition**  
                  ***MINDBOMBS – Visual Cultures of Political Violence***
- 17.00           **Artist talk *Art and Political Violence***  
                  with Morehshin Allahyari, Khalid Wad Albaih, Johan  
                  Grimonprez, Henrike Naumann, and Wendy Shaw
- 19.00           **Dinner**
- from 20.30      **Transfer to Mainz**

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## PROGRAMME THURSDAY 7 OCTOBER

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- Location 2: Haus Recht und Wirtschaft (ReWi I), Mainz
- 11.00 – 12.00 **Time for Networking and Watching Video Essays**
- 12.00 – 13.00 **Lunch**
- 13.00 – 15.00 **Panel 1 | Affective Archives – Enduring Sounds and Images**
- Chair: Robert Dörre  
(Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)
- Presenters:
- Michael Krona (University of Malmö)  
Kevin B. Lee (Merz Akademie Stuttgart)  
Donatella Della Ratta (John Cabot University, Rome)  
Aaron Zelin  
(Washington Institute for Near East Policy)
- 15.00 – 15.30 **Coffee break**
- 15.30 – 17.00 **Keynote  
Christiane Gruber (University of Michigan)**
- 17.00 – 17.30 **Coffee break**
- 17.30 – 19.30 **Panel 2 | Aesthetics of Jihad: Audiovisual Mediations and Formations**
- Chair: York Beese  
(Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)
- Presenters:
- Martin Daughtry (New York University)  
Nelly Lahoud (New America, Washington DC)  
Simon Menner (Berlin)  
Ahmed Al-Rawi (Simon Fraser University)
- 20.00 **Conference Dinner**

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## PROGRAMME FRIDAY 8 OCTOBER

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- 12.00 – 13.00 **Lunch**
- 13.00 – 14.00 **Time for Networking and Watching Video Essays**
- 14.00 – 16.00 **Panel 3 | Ethnographic Perspectives on Imaginations and Materialities of Jihad**  
Chair: Simone Pfeifer  
(Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)  
Presenters:  
Hamza Esmili  
(Centre Maurice Halbwachs (ENS-EHESS-CNRS) Paris)  
Nadia Fadil (KU Leuven)  
Martijn de Koning (Radboud University Nijmegen)  
Anja Kublitz (Aalborg Universitet)
- 16.00 – 16.30 **Coffee Break**
- 16.30 – 19.00 **Panel 4 | Notions of Jihad and the Production of Knowledge**  
Chair: Alexandra Dick  
(Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)  
Presenters:  
Salman Sayyid (University of Leeds)  
Jaan Islam (University of Edinburgh)  
Darryl Li (University of Chicago)  
**15 Minute Pause for Breathing**  
Nicole Nguyen (University of Illinois – Chicago)  
Farid Hafez (Williams College)
- 19.30 **End of the Symposium**

## ABSTRACTS

### **PANEL 1: *AFFECTIVE ARCHIVES – ENDURING SOUNDS AND IMAGES***

**Michael Krona:**

**An ‘*individual of interest*’ – experiences of democratic state authorities’ interest in terrorism researchers and data, and the challenges for academic freedom**

The field and practices of terrorism research are constantly changing. Academics working with monitoring extremist spaces online, collecting data and analyzing it for academic purposes, have in recent years received attention from external stakeholders. Law enforcement, intelligence organizations, state- and non-state actors share common interest in the information and data on potential extremists or terrorists connected to their specific domain and jurisdiction. At the same time, from the academic researcher’s point of view, the ethical considerations on methods to retrieve and study extremist data online are vast and in need to be more clearly defined. A specific reason for this need is the legal challenges that this type of work poses. Downloading and storing large amount of research data on for instance Islamic State supporters and jihadist extremism in general, potentially put academics on lists of interest for state authorities.

This paper deals with these new ethical and judicial considerations involved in being a terrorism researcher. It’s based on a personal account of ending up on a list of “individuals of interest” from counter terrorism police in a European country, followed by detainment and questioning in connection to international travel. With the author’s experiences of a lengthy process including seizure of research data and extensive interrogation concerning personal contacts, beliefs, and intentions – this paper highlights the risks and potential implications of conducting extremism research. How does the interest in extremism data, and legal measures to obtain it, from external stakeholders intersect with academic freedom and integrity, and what potential consequences can it have on academic work in the field and for the individual researcher?

**Kevin B. Lee:**

**Self/Critical Spectatorship: *Bottled Songs***

*Bottled Songs* is an ongoing media project depicting strategies for making sense of online extremist propaganda. Filmmakers and media researchers Chloé Galibert-Laîné and Kevin B. Lee compose letters addressed to each other, narrating their encounters with videos originating from the Islamic State. They use a desktop documentary approach to trace and record their investigations playing directly upon their computer screens. The presentation will reflect on the challenges and possibilities for videographic analysis to engage with extremist media.

**Donatella Della Ratta:**

**Violence, Visibility, and viruses from ISIS to Coronavirus**

This talk reflects on the relationship between violence and visibility, regimes of media representation and regimes of warfare, and on their intertwinement in the hyper-connected dimension of web 2.0.'s participatory culture. It goes back to the 'double shooting' of the early days of the 2011 Arab uprisings – *shooting* as in filming and *shooting* as in killing –, shedding light on how this dynamic is fully inscribed in a networked dimension where both gestures – the 'cam shot' and the 'gun shot' – are equally rendered into digital commodities to be posted, copied, shared, manipulated, and liked within the economy of the social web. The talk focuses on how ISIS has cleverly managed to master the double shooting, blending together the cam shot and the gun shot, visual regimes and military regimes, into a unique strategy based on the enactment of terror by means of participatory culture 2.0. Finally, the talk briefly touches upon the current phase, marked by the emergence of what I call the 'cum shot', where the human body itself is being turned into a device of violence and visibility that produces the subject and their subjectivity through molecules ingested and injected in the name of pleasure and safety, in order to face the increasing insecurity brought by global terrorism, health crises and the planetary diffusion of previously unknown biochemical threats.

**Aaron Zelin:**  
**The Case of Jihadology and the Securization of Academia**

This paper explores the case of the web site, Jihadology, which the author founded and has managed for the past ten-plus years. It explores various issues including why such a site is necessary and/or useful, questions about dissemination and open access, lessons learned about responsibility and interaction with jihadis online, the evolution of the website that has the largest repository of jihadi content, interactions with governments and technology companies and how they viewed and dealt with the website. The paper also explores how the experience gained might help other researchers interested in creating primary source-first websites to assist in their research as well as to the benefit of others in the field. Therefore, this paper aims to shed light not only on this unique case, but also on the moral and ethical questions that have arisen through maintaining the Jihadology website for more than a decade in a time of changing online environments and more recent calls for censorship.

## KEYNOTE

### **Christiane Gruber: From ISIS to the AFD: Ultraist Rhetoric and Visuality in Orientalist Concurrence**

When ISIS militants burst onto the scene more than six years ago, journalists and pundits were quick to label the Islamist group a medieval martial movement. Since then, however, scholars have shown how this particular extremist group—one among many ultraist socio-political formations active worldwide—should in fact be considered hyper-modern in its use of futuristic-nostalgic rhetoric, astutely crafted visual messaging, and vast portfolio of media and communication technologies. As of late, however, ISIS has been outstripped in sheer production and online presence by a number of right-wing political groups in Europe and the United States, such as Identity Evropa, Alternative für Deutschland, Act for America, and Stop Islamization of America. A close analysis of the rhetorical and visual production of these Euro-American extremist and hate groups reveals not a diametric clash with ISIS's own output but rather a concurrence in symbolic lexica, in which, above all, a new form of Orientalism—of anathemizing the perceived other—is asserted to craft and entrench a nativist stance. This “border security” stance involves a range of identity-based taxonomic simplifications as well as a calculated instrumentalization of fears linked to migration, miscegenation, and misogyny.

## **PANEL 2: *AESTHETICS OF JIHAD: AUDIOVISUAL MEDIATIONS AND FORMATIONS***

**Ahmed Al-Rawi:**

### **Terrorism education in ISIS's use of children's mobile apps**

This study analyzes three children's educational mobile apps used by ISIS (Letters' Teacher, Night and Day Prayers, and Alphabet Teacher). Using the Walkthrough method (Light, Burgess, & Duguay, 2018) that discusses the different features of each app, I provide a detailed description and contextualization of these apps supported by screenshots, external sources, and other school textbooks produced by ISIS. I argue that the terrorist group aimed at providing well designed and executed apps that do not only offer important language and religious learning potentials, but also aim at radicalizing and brainwashing children into believing in militant Jihad, hatred of non-Muslims, and other beliefs that ISIS held. This study fills a major gap in research as there are no previous empirical studies that focused on these educational apps and their radicalization objectives.

**Martin Daughtry:**

### **Wartime Audition and the Media Representation of Sound**

Existential precarity and the ongoing threat of proximate violence can dictate many of the terms upon which sound is perceived, interpreted, cherished, endured. Nowhere is this more true than in the modern combat zone, where people must struggle to create auditory regimes that conform to the extreme demands that wartime sounds place upon them. This paper tracks some of the virtuosic acts of audition and inaudition (i.e., refusal or inability to listen) that emerged among US military service members and Iraqi civilians during the 2003-11 Iraq War. Collectively, these acts, and the structures that enable them, can help us better understand the phenomenology of violence and trauma, the fragility and contingency of our sensory engagement with the world, and the multiplex disjunctures that separate the experience of (acoustic) violence from media representations of same.

## **Nelly Lahoud: Anashid and Jihadism**

Anashid (sg: *nashid* a Capella/chants), as defined by Ammon Shiloah, is “a piece of oratory, a chant, a hymn and a form of vocal music” following a poetic metrical rhythm. At first glance, anashid may seem like a side issue for the study of jihadism, but, upon closer examination, they are central to the militant culture and the propaganda of jihadi groups. The presentation covers three themes through a longitudinal approach to the way anashid have featured in the audio-visual releases of jihadi groups:

- (1) The early phase of jihadism saw groups rely mostly on existing Islamic anashid for their internal use and to incorporate in their media – drawing mostly on militant themes to incite followers to take up jihad;
- (2) The emergence of jihadi media post-9/11 saw groups produce their own anashid to bolster their standing; and
- (3) The Islamic State produced and marketed anashid as part of its state building enterprise.

## **Simon Menner: Murder as a Cooking Show – Thoughts on the Visual Language of Jihadi Propaganda Online**

Before being able to call for the death of the West on the Internet, every jihadi media warrior needs to accept the terms and services of sites like YouTube or Facebook. While this might appear to be a mere technicality, I am, in fact, not talking about the legal mumbo-jumbo no one ever reads. The true terms and services, as understood here, are the ways these sites function. The ways the audience expects to be entertained. The visual language one must use to succeed when competing against Pewdiepie, Minecraft or makeup tutorials.

### **PANEL 3: ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES ON IMAGINATIONS AND MATERIALITIES OF JIHAD**

#### **Hamza Esmili: Utopias of djihad**

The proposed paper is centered on a long-term investigation with families of European emigrants (*muh'ajirûn*) to wartime Syria as well as on several fieldworks at the Syrian-Turkish borders and in northern Iraq. Rather than assuming the coherence of a “*radical*” quest, its hypothesis is based on the following assertion: in the context of the Syrian revolution and the emergence of the Islamic State, the word “*djihad*” encompasses historically successive and sometimes competing definitions. Thus, by focusing on the subjective multiplicities among selected biographical trajectories of emigrants, the paper will aim at presenting “*djihad*” as a notion encapsulating several instantiations of religious utopia, in Karl Mannheim’s sense of “what is yet to be” (Mannheim 1936 [1929]).

MANNHEIM, K. 1936 [1929]. *Ideology and Utopia*, London: Routledge

#### **Nadia Fadil: Virtual innocence. On the status of the Children of Belgian departees in North-East Syria**

In the aftermaths of the uprisings in the Middle-East, approximately 5000 European citizens travelled to the region of the Levant. Among those who have left, one third have returned, while others have died or disappeared or are stuck in the camps. Among them 400 Adults and 700 children. European countries have overwhelmingly refused to repatriate these citizens, due to their participation in activities considered terrorist. Since 2014, travelling to region has been considered an offense, irrespective of one’s activities. This paper seeks to reflect on the situation of these European citizens, in particular through the perspective of the children. Whereas a growing number of studies have attended to the new regimes of exclusion produced by the war on terror, few have attended to the effects on those who haven’t committed any

offence but are related – through kinship – to the accused, i.e. their children. I will argue that the status of the children is characterized by a condition of virtual innocence, a condition that stands in between statelessness (as theorized by Arendt) and danger.

**Martijn de Koning:**

### **Marking Muslimness – Muslim responses to the construction of risk, danger and Salafi Jihadism in the Netherlands**

In this paper I explore the interactions between the policy instruments of the Dutch authorities and those labelled as radicals and/or extremists, more in particular Salafists and Jihadists. From 2002 onwards the Dutch government established a policy to counter the risks on clandestine political violence it associated with tendencies among the Muslim populations that were considered a threat to social cohesion, integration and the rule of law. In this contribution, based upon policy analysis and ethnographic research among those categorized as Jihadis, I will analyse how the categories of Salafism and Jihadism are constructed, how they operate and the reactions they engender among sections of those labelled by the authorities as “Salafis” and/or “jihadis”. My argument here is twofold. Firstly, I will argue that the interaction between state policies and alleged Jihadis shows how Jihadis and the state construct themselves in interaction with each other. And, secondly, I will show that this interaction creates both a centrifugal and centripetal securitization.

**Anja Kublitz:**

### **The Miracle of the Arab Spring: Optimism among Danish Jihadists**

Among my Danish Muslim interlocutors, the Arab Spring was received as a miracle—a divine intervention that called upon them to radically change their lives. From one day to the next, they turned towards God and decided to travel to the Middle East to take up arms. According to the interlocutors, the miracle of the Arab Spring made them wake up to find themselves as part of the Muslim umma—the community of the last prophet Mohammed—that is, the prophet of the time of the end—but

also to find that maybe the end of time had arrived and that they could choose to join the Great Battle. Based on long-term fieldwork, this article investigates my interlocutors' optimistic practices of struggling in the way of Allah. Arguing against Roy's central thesis that European jihadists are violent nihilists who adopt Islam, rather than religious fundamentalists who turn to violence, I contend that we need to reinstate God and the relation between divine determination and my interlocutors' agency in order to explain why jihadists do as they do. To understand this relation, I draw on Agamben's distinction between messianism (the time of the end) and apocalypse (the end of time). My interlocutors believe that they live in End-times: they know that the world is about to end but they do not know when, and I suggest that it is exactly this gap that their jihadists' practices strive to bridge.

## **PANEL 4: NOTIONS OF JIHAD AND THE PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE**

**Farid Hafez:**

### **How the Austrian Secret Service turned Islamophobia Studies into a Security Threat. An academic and personal account**

The War on Terror led to the invention of a series of programs that build on the imagination of threatening Muslim masculinity prone to violence and threatening the social and political order of Western states from the inside. Following the inception of so-called de-radicalization programs, soon these countering violent extremism programs were expanded to countering non-violent extremism. Hence, the target was not violence but thought. Lately, some European countries have introduced measures and legislations to combat or even outlaw what has become known as “political Islam” (Austria) or “Islamist separatism” (France), targeting not violent groups, but Muslim civil society. Several state institutions and think tanks have produced knowledge to legitimize these measures and create a fertile ground for major violent interventions by the state. Also, the critique of these policies that is often related to postcolonial, gender, Islamophobia, and racism Studies, has been demonized as either ignorantly supporting political Islam or as a weapon of “political Islam.” In my paper, I will draw on the files of an investigation, in which talking and writing about Islamophobia has been framed as an intentionally used method to create a European Islamic State by a secret Muslim conspiracy.

**Jaan Islam:**

### **The Portrayal of Salafi-Jihadism: The Production of Knowledge in Fabricating a Global Enemy**

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the “Salafi-Jihadīs” would be feared as the new enemy. Previous studies have shown that the label ‘Salafi-Jihadism,’ however, is misleading as it refers to a diverse range of movements as opposed to a global movement with a single history and set of beliefs. This paper argues that the label Salafi-Jihadism is

reminiscent of false dichotomies often applied to distinguish Muslims in the West. To demonstrate this, the paper traces the use of the term in contemporary Salafī sources, including those who identify with the term, such as Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī, and those who are associated with the term but refuse to be characterized by it, such as Abū Baṣīr al-Ṭartūsī. Through these case studies, this paper shows how the production of knowledge in the western academy influences not just popular conceptions of Islam and Muslim identity, but, significantly, the identity of Muslim fighters themselves. It is argued that as a result of the term being ascribed to a range of diverse movements, the media representation of Salafī-Jihadism conveyed a false sense of unity which then in turn affected Muslim conceptions of global jihad.

**Darryl Li:**  
**Will the Real Jihadi Please Stand Up? On “Jihadism” as a Conceptual Weapon**

This paper is an attempt to explain concisely and clearly why the concept of jihadism is not only analytically unhelpful, but politically invidious. Believers call many things jihad -- from personal struggles for self-improvement to armed violence -- and debate over the proper uses of the word. The concept of jihadism, however, attempts to designate only a subset of these many diverse activities. Not only does this exercise often involve dubious criteria dichotomies -- violence vs. non-violence, state vs. non-state activity -- it inevitably gives rise to an implicit residual category, namely invocations of jihad that are somehow not "jihadist." Moreover, the very act of delineating which invocations of jihad count as jihadism and which do not is an intervention into a debate among believers using criteria from outside the tradition. In this sense, it is also an exercise of secular power, and one that places believers in a trap of toxic authenticity whereby believers are subjected to unending and insatiable demands to condemn violence by other Muslims in order to prove their loyalty to dominant regimes.

**Nicole Nguyen:**  
**Jihad Goes to Court: Armed Struggles, Terrorism Prosecutions, and Abolitionist Futures**

In presiding over the prosecution of Mohammed Hamzah Khan, US District Judge John Tharp concluded, “To want to join the Caliphate is to want to join jihad, which is war,” with the intention to “exterminate anyone who disagrees with their religious dogma.” In the case against Babar Ahmad, however, US District Judge Janet Hall expressed her own hesitation in adopting popular interpretations of jihad, reasoning, “the concept of jihad in Islam is struggle, and it’s both an internal and a defensive struggle, but it’s never what happened on 9/11.” Rather than reduce armed struggles to sensationalized notions of jihad, Judge Hall explained that, to understand the defendant’s actions, she needed to consider the geopolitical conditions “relating to the struggle in Bosnia by Muslims against the Serbs and their efforts to ethnically cleanse Bosnia of Muslims.” These different judicial interpretations of jihad and corresponding geopolitical knowledge shaped the outcomes of these legal cases. Drawing on interviews with terrorism lawyers and security professionals, this talk thinks through how variable understandings of jihad have organized the prosecution of individuals charged with terrorism- related crimes in the United States, how legal actors have challenged and reinforced dominant epistemic frameworks, how terrorism expertise has shaped legal proceedings, and how we might differently think about the relationship between power, politics, and violence.

**Salman Sayyid:**  
**Jihad and the Post-Western**

Jihad has been one of the key tropes of Orientalism; therefore, there is little wonder that it can be found in the manifestations of Islamophobia. Jihad plays on the idea that 'Islam' is inherently violent. The current expressions of this propensity to violence can be seen in representations of terrorism, 'honour killings, and acts of criminality attached to Muslimness. In contradiction with representations of jihad as a synecdoche for Islam. Some argue that jihad is really about spiritual striving and is misrepresented by an unholy alliance between Western dominated global media and Muslim extremists. In this presentation, I will not adjudicate between these rival understandings of jihad. I will not offer an etymological analysis about the correct interpretation of jihad, nor will I cite chapter and verse written by Muslim scholars searching for a theological grounding of jihad. Rather I want to reflect on the question of political violence in a conjuncture in which equivalence between empire, Europe and episteme has become frayed. One way of describing this fraying is to call it the post-Western horizon. This presentation aims to explore the relationship between legitimacy, violence and the shape of post-Western politics and the political. This means I want to insert the contested representations of jihad in the theoretical framework suggested by the Weberian insistence on the relationship between the monopoly of violence and the definition of a state, and its subversion by decolonial logics.

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## SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF PARTICIPANTS

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### **Khalid Wad Albaih**

Khalid Wad Albaih is a Sudanese political cartoonist and multidisciplinary artist, born in Bucharest, Romania. He is currently living and working in Denmark as an ICORN/PEN artist in residence for the city of Copenhagen. Before he moved to Denmark, he lived in Doha, Qatar, working for the Qatar Museums Authority as Head of Installation and Design. His cartoons are published under the umbrella of Khartoon!, a pun on Sudan's capital Khartoum and cartoon, and present a confluence of journalism and art. Additionally, he publishes his written social and political commentary in publications such as Aljazeera, CNN and The Guardian. He founded @DohaFashionFridays and is a co-founder of Khartoum Art & Design Center and has published two books 'Khartoon' and 'Sudan Retold' featuring his work and the works of other Sudanese artist.

Website: [www.facebook.com/khalidalbaih](http://www.facebook.com/khalidalbaih)



### **Morehshin Allahyari**

Morehshin Allahyari is an artist, activist, writer, and educator. She was born and raised in Iran and moved to the United States in 2007. Her work deals with the political, social, and cultural contradictions we face every day. She thinks about technology as a philosophical toolset to reflect on objects and as a poetic means to document our personal and collective lives and struggles in the 21st century. Morehshin is the co-author of The 3D Additivist Cookbook in collaboration with writer/artist Daniel Rourke. Morehshin has been part of numerous exhibitions, festivals, and workshops around the world including Venice Biennale di Architettura, New Museum, The Whitney Museum of American Art, Pompidou Center,

Museum of Contemporary Art in Montreal, Tate Modern, Queens Museum, Pori Museum, Powerhouse Museum, Dallas Museum of Art, and Museum für Angewandte Kunst. She has been an artist in residence at BANFF Centre (2013), Carnegie Mellon University's STUDIO for Creative Inquiry (2015), Autodesk Pier9 Workshop in San Francisco (2015), the Vilém Flusser Residency Program for Artistic Research in association with Transmediale, Berlin (2016), Eyebeam's one year Research Residency (2016-2017) in NYC, Pioneer Works (2018), and Harvest Works (2018). Her work has been featured in The New York Times, BBC, Huffington Post, Wired, National Public Radio, Parkett Art Magazine, Frieze, Rhizome, Hyperallergic, and Al Jazeera, among others. She is the recipient of The Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant (2019), The Sundance Institute New Frontier International Fellowship, and the leading global thinkers of 2016 award by Foreign Policy magazine. Her 3D Additivist Manifesto video is in the collection of San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and recently she has been awarded major commissions by The Shed, Rhizome, New Museum, Whitney Museum of American Art, Liverpool Biennale, and FACT.

Website: [www.morehshin.com](http://www.morehshin.com)



### **Ahmed Al-Rawi**

Ahmed Al-Rawi is an Assistant Professor of News, Social Media, and Public Communication at the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University, Canada. He is the Director of the Disinformation Project that empirically examines fake news discourses in Canada on social media and news media. His research expertise is related to social media, global communication, news, and the Middle East. He authored five books and over 100 peer reviewed book chapters and articles published in a variety of journals.

E-Mail: [aalrawi@sfu.ca](mailto:aalrawi@sfu.ca) | Website: [www.aalrawi.com](http://www.aalrawi.com)



### **Martin Daughtry**

J. Martin Daughtry is an associate professor of music at New York University. His work and teaching explore acoustic violence; listening; jazz; Russian guitar poetry; auditory imagery; and environmental questions. His monograph *Listening to War: Sound, Music, Trauma, and Survival in Wartime Iraq* (OUP 2015) received a PROSE Award from the Association of American Publishers, and the Society for Ethnomusicology's Merriam Prize. At present he is writing a book on voice, atmosphere, and environmental precarity.

E-Mail: [jmd19\[a\]nyu.edu](mailto:jmd19[a]nyu.edu)



### **Hamza Esmili**

Hamza Esmili is a postdoctoral researcher within the "*Deradicalizing the city*" project at KU Leuven. He defended his PhD in sociology at Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales in 2021. His work is focused on religious reaffiliation among immigrants and their children in Europe as well as on the various politico-theological forms of life that emerge from the contemporary reinvestment of the Islamic discursive tradition. Simultaneously, his work questions how such a religious form of life can be received within the liberal society.



## **Nadia Fadil**

Nadia Fadil works as an Associate Professor at the IMMRC (Interculturalism, Migration and Minorities Research Centre) at the University of Leuven. After having obtained a PhD at this same institute, she has been affiliated as a Postdoctoral Jean Monnet Research Fellow at the European University Institute (2008-2009), a Visiting Fellow at the University of California Berkeley (2011-2012), a Fulbright Visiting Fellow at Columbia University (2018) and an FWO Postdoctoral fellow at the KU Leuven (2009-2012). Her work centers on Islam in Europe (taking Brussels as ethnographic site), both as a lived tradition as well as an object of regulation. She draws on this empirical question to reflect on a vast set of theoretical issues such as subjectivity and power, ethical selfhood, postcoloniality, governmentality, race and secularism. Her most recent publications include *Secular Bodies, Affects and Emotions. European configurations* (with Monique Scheer and Birgitte Scheplern Johansen, Bloomsbury 2019) and *Radicalization in Belgium and the Netherlands. Critical perspectives on Violence and Security* (with Martijn de Koning and Francesco Ragazzi, IB Tauris 2019). She has also been active as a columnist and writer in the Belgian press and is a board member of a few organizations working on migration, multiculturalism and social inequality in Brussels.

E-Mail: [nadia.fadil\[a\]kuleuven.be](mailto:nadia.fadil@kuleuven.be)



## **Johan Grimonprez**

Johan Grimonprez's critically acclaimed work dances on the borders of practice and theory, art and cinema, documentary and fiction, demanding a double take on the part of the viewer. Informed by an archeology of present-day media, his work seeks out the tension between the intimate and the bigger picture of globalization. It questions our contemporary sublime, one framed by a fear industry that has infected political and social dialogue. By suggesting new narratives through which to tell a story, his work emphasizes a multiplicity of realities. Grimonprez's curatorial projects have been exhibited at museums worldwide, including the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; and MoMA. His works are in the collections of Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa; and Tate Modern, London. His feature films include *dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y* (1997, in collaboration with novelist Don DeLillo, selected by the Guardian as one of the "30 great works in the history of video art"), *Double Take* (2009, in collaboration with writer Tom McCarthy) and *Shadow World* (2016, in combination with journalist Andrew Feinstein). Traveling the main festival circuit from the Berlinale, Tribeca to Sundance, they garnered several Best Director awards, the 2005 ZKM International Media Award, a Spirit Award and the 2009 Black Pearl Award at the Abu Dhabi Film Festival, and were also acquired by NBC Universal, ARTE, and BBC/FILM 4. He published several books, including *Inflight* (2000), *Looking for Alfred* (2007) and a reader titled *It's a Poor Sort of Memory that Only Works Backwards* (2011) with contributions by Jodi Dean, Thomas Elsaesser, Tom McCarthy, Hans Ulrich Obrist, and Slavoj Žižek. He lectured widely, among others at the University de Saint-Denis (Paris 8), Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University's Institute of Politics; Tate Modern; MoMA (New York); Columbia University; Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT); the Parliament of Bodies of Documenta 14, and he participated in the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program, and is now on a research grant at

HOGENT/KASK , Ghent. His recent film project (with investigative journalist Andrew Feinstein), *Shadow World: Inside the Global Arms Trade*, was awarded a production grant from the Sundance Institute, premiered at the 2016 Tribeca IFF (New York). It went on to win the Best Documentary Feature Award at the 2016 Edinburgh International Film Festival, and premiered its US broadcast on Independent Lens on PBS in 2017. Currently Grimonprez is developing *Soundtrack to a Coup d'État*, a feature film with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in the lead, also featuring prime minister Patrice Lumumba, shuttle diplomat Dag Hammarskjold and jazz ambassadors Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie & Duke Ellington, in a harrowing tale of cold war intrigue and termite poop, that is about to run off-script. His artwork is represented by the Sean Kelly Gallery (New York), and gallerie kamel mennour (Paris).

Website: [www.johangrimonprez.be](http://www.johangrimonprez.be)



### **Christiane Gruber**

Christiane Gruber is Professor and Chair in the History of Art Department at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; she also is Founding Director of *Khamseen: Islamic Art History Online*. Her scholarly work explores medieval to modern Islamic art and visual culture, in particular figural representation, book arts, modern art and contemporary materiality, and global extremist iconographies. Her most recent publications include her single authored book *The Praiseworthy One: The Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Texts and Images* and her edited volume *The Image Debate: Figural Representation in Islam and Across the World*, both published in 2019.

E-Mail: [cjgruber\[a\]umich.edu](mailto:cjgruber@umich.edu)



## **Farid Hafez**

Farid Hafez is currently Class of 1955 Visiting Professor of International Studies at Williams College. He is also Senior Research Fellow at Georgetown University's The Bridge Initiative. In 2017, he was Fulbright visiting professor at University of California, Berkeley and in 2014, he was visiting scholar at Columbia University, New York. He is also Associate Faculty of Rutgers University's Center for Security, Race and Rights. Since 2010, Hafez has been editor of the Islamophobia Studies Yearbook, and since 2015 co-editor of the annual European Islamophobia Report. He has received the Bruno Kreisky Award for the political book of the year, for his anthology *Islamophobia in Austria* (co-ed. with John Bunzl) and published more than 100 books and articles, including in high-ranking academic journals. Moreover, Hafez regularly publishes op-ed's and is frequently interviewed by media outlets.

Email: fh6[at]williams.edu



## **Jaan Islam**

**Jaan S. Islam** is a PhD Candidate of Islamic Studies and AHRC Doctoral Fellow at the University of Edinburgh. He has multiple publications in comparative political thought, and currently studies Salafi-Jihadism and decolonial political theory. Jaan is a co-author of a forthcoming book on the political thought of Ibn Taymiyya, entitled *Islam and the State in Ibn Taymiyya: Translation and Analysis* (Routledge).



## **Martijn de Koning**

Martijn de Koning teaches at the Department of Islamic Studies at Radboud University, Nijmegen, in the Netherlands. Between 2013 and 2019, he was involved in the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) funded project ‘forces That Bind and/or Divide’ (on how Muslims can claim a voice in the public debates on Islam) and in the European Research Council (ERC) funded programme ‘problematizing “Muslim Marriages”: Ambiguities and Contestations’, both at the Department of Anthropology of the University of Amsterdam. Martijn de Koning has published on Moroccan-Dutch youth and identity formation, radicalization, Salafism, Islamophobia, racialization and activism among Muslims in the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium. In 2008 he published ‘Zoeken naar een “zuivere” islam’ (Searching for a ‘pure’ Islam) based upon his PhD research. Together with Nadia Fadil and Francesco Ragazzi he published the edited volume ‘Radicalization in Belgium and the Netherlands – Critical Perspectives on Violence and Security (IB Tauris 2019). And with Carmen Becker and Ineke Roex he published ‘Islamic Militant Activism – “Islands in a Sea of Disbelief”’ (Palgrave 2020). He maintains his own weblog CLOSER.

E-Mail: [martijn.dekoning\[a\]ru.nl](mailto:martijn.dekoning@ru.nl)



## **Michael Krona**

Michael Krona is a scholar of media, communication and visual communication at Malmö University, Sweden. He holds a PhD in media and communication studies from Lund University, and has conducted research on Daesh propaganda and online communities since 2014. His digital ethnography and monitoring of the violent jihadist online ecosystem has, among other academic publications, resulted in the book “The Media World of ISIS” (2019), co-edited with Rosemary Pennington. He is frequently hired as commentator for various media outlets, and occasionally as advisor for international organizations in counter-extremism, for instance the Global Coalition Against Daesh.

E-Mail: michael.krona[a]mau.se



## **Anja Kublitz**

Anja Kublitz is an associate professor at the Department of Politics and Society, Aalborg University, Denmark. She holds a PhD in anthropology from University of Copenhagen and has conducted fieldwork in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and since 2005 among Muslim immigrants in Denmark. Her research concerns how conflicts reconfigure space and time and forge political subjects. Currently she is studying the emergence of Danish jihadists. Her publications include “Omar is dead: aphasia and the escalating anti-radicalization business.” *History and Anthropology* 2021, 32(1), p. 64-77; “The Rhythm of Rupture: Attunement among Danish Jihadists.” In: *Ruptures: Anthropologies of Discontinuity in Times of Turmoil*. Holbraad, M., Kapferer, B. & Sauma, J. (eds.). London: UCL Press, 2019, p. 174-192; and (with Højer, Puri and Bandak) “Escalations: Theorizing sudden accelerating change.” *Anthropological Theory* 2018, 18(1):36-58.

E-Mail: kublitz[a]dps.aau.dk



## **Nelly Lahoud**

Nelly Lahoud is a Senior Fellow in New America's International Security Program. Her research has focused on the evolution and ideology of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. She has also published on women's role in AQ and ISIS and the use of anashid (a capella) by these two groups in their media output. Her book *The Bin Laden Papers* will be published by Yale University Press in Spring 2022.

E-Mail: lahoud[a]newamerica.org



## **Kevin B. Lee**

Kevin B. Lee is a filmmaker, media artist, and critic. He has produced over 360 video essays exploring film and media. His award-winning *Transformers: The Premake* introduced the "desktop documentary" format and was named one of the best documentaries of 2014 by Sight & Sound. Through *Bottled Songs*, his collaborative project with Chloé Galibert-Laîné, he was awarded the 2018 Sundance Institute Art of Nonfiction Grant, the 2018 European Media Artist Platform Residency, and the 2019 Eurimages Lab Project Award at Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. He is currently Professor of Crossmedia Publishing at Merz Akademie, Stuttgart. Beginning in 2022 he will be the Locarno Film Festival Professor for the Future of Cinema and the Audiovisual Arts at Università della Svizzera italiana (USI).

E-Mail: kevin.lee[a]merz-akademie.de



## **Darryl Li**

Darryl Li is assistant professor of anthropology and associate member of the law school at the University of Chicago. He is the author of *The Universal Enemy: Jihad, Empire, and the Challenge of Solidarity* (Stanford University Press, 2020), an ethnographic and archival study of "foreign fighters" in the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He is also an attorney licensed in New York and Illinois and has participated in litigation arising from the War on Terror, including defense of captives held at Guantánamo Bay.

E-Mail: [darrylli\[a\]uchicago.edu](mailto:darrylli@uchicago.edu)



## **Simon Menner**

Simon Menner, born 1978 in Germany, studied fine arts at the Universität der Künste Berlin and the School of the Art Institute in Chicago. Solo and group shows in museums and galleries such as Museum of Contemporary Photography Chicago, Museum für Fotografie Berlin, Benaki Museum Athens, NRW Forum Düsseldorf or Anchorage Museum.

E-Mail: [simon\[a\]simonmenner.com](mailto:simon@simonmenner.com) | Website: [www.simonmenner.com](http://www.simonmenner.com)



## **Henrike Naumann**

Henrike Naumann is a German installation artist. Naumann studied stage and costume design at the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts and scenography at the Konrad Wolf Film University of Babelsberg. She lives in Berlin. After growing up in the youth culture of her hometown that she describes as heavily dominated by Neonazis, she uses her installations to address the history of right-wing terrorism and the aesthetic of commonplace homes. She calls furniture the medium of her art. Through a rapidly expanding series of exhibitions, Naumann received significant media exposure in Germany. In addition to her artistic work she also lectures and teaches.

Website: [www.henrikenauermann.com](http://www.henrikenauermann.com)



## **Nicole Nguyen**

Nicole Nguyen is associate professor of educational policy studies at the University of Illinois-Chicago. She is author of *Suspect Communities: Anti-Muslim Racism and the Domestic War on Terror* (University of Minnesota Press, 2019) and *A Curriculum of Fear: Homeland Security in US Public Schools* (University of Minnesota Press, 2016).

E-Mail: [nguyenn@uic.edu](mailto:nguyenn@uic.edu)



## **Donatella Della Ratta**

Donatella Della Ratta is a scholar, writer, performer, and curator specializing in digital media and networked technologies, with a focus on the Arab world. She is Associate Professor of Communications and Media Studies at John Cabot University, Rome. Donatella holds a PhD

from the University of Copenhagen and is former Affiliate of the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. She has managed the Arabic speaking community for the international organization Creative Commons from 2007 until 2013. In 2012 she co-founded the website SyriaUntold, recipient of the Digital Communities award at Ars Electronica 2014. She has curated several international art exhibitions and film programs on Syria. She is author and editor of a wide range of books and essays on Arab media and networked technologies. *Shooting a Revolution: Visual Media and Warfare in Syria* (Pluto Press, 2018) is her latest monograph.

E-Mail: ddellaratta[a]johncabot.edu



### **Salman Sayyid**

Salman Sayyid is a Professor of Social Theory and Decolonial Thought and the Head of the School of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Leeds. Professor Sayyid is a political theorist. His research interests explore the constitutive interplay between rhetoric and social structures, such as the part played by racism in the formation of modern societies or investigations of alternative worlds signalled by the various Islamist projects. His approach is informed by the intersections between decolonial thought and discourse theory. His substantive work has ranged from Islamophobia, diasporas to political Islam and epistemic decolonization. Sayyid's recent research has been around organizing the Critical Muslim Studies project as a means of understanding Islamicate societies, histories and cultures outside Eurocentric framings. Sayyid's writings have been translated into numerous languages. His major publications include *A Fundamental Fear* (a book despite being banned by the Malaysian government is now in its third edition); and *Recalling the Caliphate*. He is the founding editor of *ReOrient: The Journal of Critical Muslim Studies* and an editor of the Pluto Press series: 'Decolonial Studies, Postcolonial Horizons'.

E-Mail: s.sayyid[a]leeds.ac.uk



## **Wendy Shaw**

Professor Wendy M. K. Shaw (Ph.D. UCLA, 1999) researches postcolonial art historiography and decolonial art history of the Islamic world and the modern Middle East. She is author of *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (University of California Press, 2003), *Ottoman Painting: Reflections of Western Art from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic* (IB Tauris, 2011). What is “Islamic” Art: *Between Religion and Perception* (Cambridge University Press, 2019, awarded the Honorable Mention for the 2020 Albert Hourani Book Award of the Middle East Studies Association and the 2021 Iran Book Award), and *Loving Writing* (Routledge, 2021).

E-Mail: [wendy.shaw@fu-berlin.de](mailto:wendy.shaw@fu-berlin.de)



## **Aaron Zelin**

Aaron Y. Zelin is the Richard Borow Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a Visiting Research Scholar at Brandeis University, and founder of [Jihadology.net](http://Jihadology.net). He is also author of the book *Your Sons Are At Your Service: Tunisia's Missionaries of Jihad* (Columbia University Press, 2020).

E-Mail: [azelin@jihadology.net](mailto:azelin@jihadology.net)

## SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF ORGANISING TEAM



### **Christoph Günther**

Christoph Günther leads the junior research group *Jihadism on the Internet: Images and Videos, their Dissemination and Appropriation* at the Department of Anthropology and African Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz. Having a background in Islamic Studies, his research interests include religio-political movements in the modern Middle East, visual cultures and iconography, and the sociology of religion. His book *Entrepreneurs of Identity: The Islamic State's Symbolic Repertoire* will be published in winter 2021 with Berghahn Books.

E-Mail: [c.guenther\[a\]uni-mainz.de](mailto:c.guenther[a]uni-mainz.de)



### **Robert Dörre**

Robert Dörre is a media scholar with a focus on social media and digital culture. He studied media culture studies, film studies, and sociology in Mainz and Cologne and subsequently completed his PhD as part of the DFG-funded research training group *Documentary Practices. Excess and Privation* at the Ruhr University Bochum. The dissertation, which deals with audiovisual self-documentation in social media, has been awarded the Young Talent Award of the Büchner-Verlag. He is a research associate at the Institute for Media Studies at Ruhr University in Bochum and a member of the BMBF-funded junior research group "Jihadism on the Internet" at Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz. He is currently researching the distribution, networking and archiving of illegal media content in social media.

E-Mail: [rdoerre\[a\]uni-mainz.de](mailto:rdoerre[a]uni-mainz.de)



### **Simone Pfeifer**

Simone Pfeifer is a social and cultural anthropologist with a focus on visual, digital and media anthropology. She is currently working as a post-doctoral researcher in the research project *Jihadism on the Internet: Images and Videos, their Appropriation and Dissemination* at

the Department of Anthropology and African Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany. Her work explores social, visual, and digital practices, using experimental ethnography and digital curatorial strategies for the co-creation of knowledge. Her research revolves around migration and mobility with a focus on transnational social relations between Senegal and Germany and Muslim everyday life in relation to German speaking social media.

E-Mail: [pfeifer\[a\]uni-mainz.de](mailto:pfeifer[a]uni-mainz.de)



### **Yorck Beese**

Yorck Beese studied media sciences at Kiel University. His research at Johannes Gutenberg-Universität focuses on the film of the Islamic State and other radical islamic groups.

He currently writes his PhD thesis on the cinefication of the Islamic State's film at the University of Bochum.

E-Mail: [yorck.beese\[a\]uni-mainz.de](mailto:yorck.beese[a]uni-mainz.de)

## **Alexandra Dick**

Alexandra Dick is a member of the junior research group Jihadism on the Internet at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and a PhD candidate in Islamic Studies at Ruhr University Bochum. In her PhD project, she analyses the role of anāshīd among the so-called Islamic State. She studied Anthropology and Islamic Studies at the University of Tuebingen as well as Social Anthropology of Development at SOAS, University of London. In 2020, she was a visiting scholar at the City College of New York.

E-Mail: alexandra.dick[a]uni-mainz.de

## **Larissa-Diana Fuhrmann**



Larissa-Diana Fuhrmann has been working at the Department of Anthropology and African Studies at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz as a researcher in the junior research group *Jihadism on the Internet* since 2017. She operates at the intersection of the arts and science and uses curatorial practices as a tool for knowledge production and knowledge transfer in her research. She focuses on artistic appropriation practices in the context of political violence. She is currently doing her PhD on artistic contestations and postcolonial perspectives on the violence of the so-called Islamic State.

E-Mail: lfuhrm[a]uni-mainz.de



### **Maike Wiechert**

Maike Wiechert studied media studies at Bauhaus University Weimar and Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais and is currently doing her masters in social and cultural anthropology at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. She is a student assistant in the research project *Jihadism on the Internet: Images and Videos, their Appropriation and Dissemination*.

E-Mail: [wiechert\[a\]uni-mainz.de](mailto:wiechert[a]uni-mainz.de)



### **Marlene Zieglmayer**

Marlene Zieglmayer earned her bachelor's degree in cultural anthropology and art history at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and is now going to pursue her master's degree. Her master's project focuses on religious diversity and naming in Burkina Faso. She works as a student assistant for the research project *Jihadism on the Internet: Images and Videos, their Appropriation and Dissemination*.

E-Mail: [maziegel\[at\]uni-mainz.de](mailto:maziegel[at]uni-mainz.de)

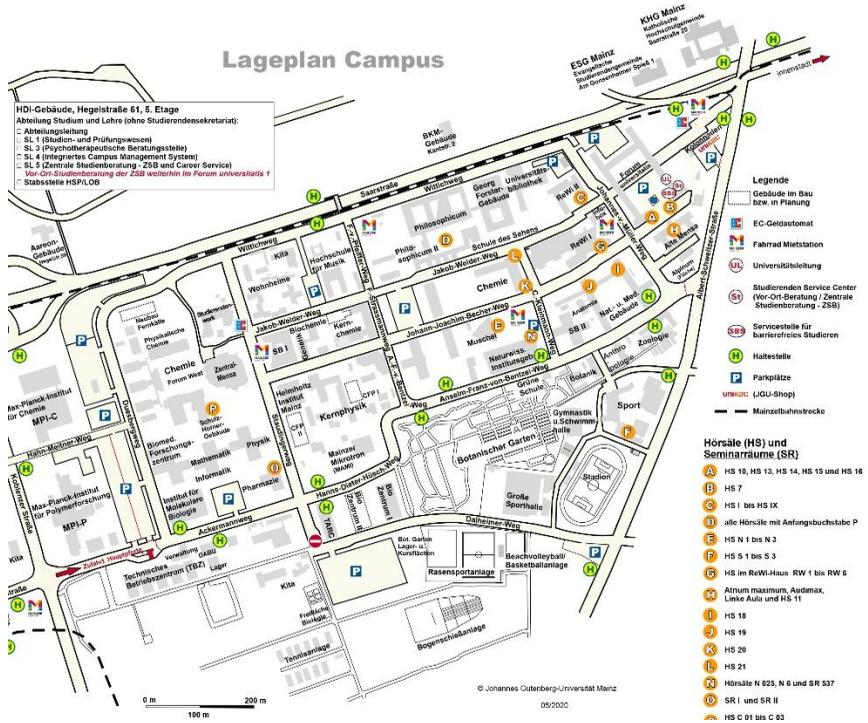
# LOCATIONS

## Location 1:

Kunsthalle Mannheim, Friedrichsplatz 4, 68165 Mannheim

## Location 2:

Hörsaal RW1, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz  
Jakob-Welder-Weg 9, 55128 Mainz (Room 00 125)



The easiest way to get to the Gutenberg Campus is to alight at the main station and to then take a bus or tram. We would recommend using the tram lines 51, 53, and 59, all of which stop directly at the main entrance to the campus.