Participants

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June 13 – 15 2024
International Conference
Nothing Matters
On Negative Objects,
Spaces, and Relations

Nothing literally matters today. In the face of severe ecological and geopolitical crises, materiality itself is deeply affected by nothingness and negativity: landscapes are riddled with holes and voids due to massive resource extraction, mountains of waste pile up as negative matter, glaciers shrink and become monuments of loss. Thus, we are confronted with a multitude of material nothings, nonplaces, and non-relations. What relations do we maintain with the void, the absent, the forgotten and the vanished? Through which operations, acts, gestures, and practices is something turned into nothing? How does nothing materialize in various media milieus like film, literature, and games? And what kind of hidden potentialities may lie in material nothingness? By proposing a material, relational, and operative view on nothing, the conference ties in with recent media-philosophical concepts like operative ontologies and anthropomediality and brings them into dialogue with interdisciplinary discussions around the negative turn recently announced in contemporary social, geographical, and media theory.

Thursday June 13
1:30 p.m. Arrival
2:00 p.m. Welcome and Introduction
2:15 p.m. Achim Landwehr (Universität Konstanz)
The Hole Story. How Otto von Guericke did get lost in time and what it tells us about the constitutive role of voids in modern European culture
3:15 p.m. Laura Meis (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)
Designing Disappearance. Cultural and Affective Legacies of Disposal Architectures
4:15 p.m. Coffee Break
4:45 p.m. Lorenz Engell (Bauhaus-Universität Weimar)
Nothing to See, Nothing to Do. Jarmusch, Duras, Jarman
6:30 p.m. Reception at Lichtauskinos (Am Kirschberg 4)
8:00 p.m. Film Screening
Homo Sapiens
(Nikolaus Geyrhalter, Ö 2016, 94 min.)

Friday June 14
10:00 a.m. Susie Scott (University of Sussex)
Navigating Negative Identity, Doing, Being, and Feeling Nothing as Meaningful Social Action
11:00 a.m. Christian Hess (Bauhaus-Universität Weimar)
Neither nor/as well as. Reflections on Neutral Phenomena
12:00 p.m. Lunch Break
3:00 p.m. Nina Haltermann (Universität Hamburg)
Landscape and an Aesthetics of the Void. Perspectives from Chinese Mountain-Water-Painting
4:00 p.m. Coffee Break
4:30 p.m. Dominik Schrey (Universität Siegen)
Loss Landscapes. Mapping Timelines of Glacial Disappearance
5:30 p.m. Rosetta S. Elkin (Pratt Institute New York)
Landscapes of Retreat
7:00 p.m. Dinner at Residenz-Café (Grüner Markt 4)

Saturday June 15
10:00 a.m. Sulgi Lie (Bauhaus-Universität Weimar)
The Negative Camera. On Samuel Beckett’s “Film”
11:00 a.m. Tori Pape (Universitaet Amsterdam)
Nothing Happened. On Stealth Gameplay and the Becoming-imperceptible of Political Action
12:00 p.m. Coffee Break
12:30 p.m. Martin Siegler (Bauhaus-Universität Weimar)
Holoecene. Media Philosophy of Negative Spaces.
1:30 p.m. Lucas Poli (Humboldt-Universität Berlin)
Nothing Will Have Taken Place. Negativity, Space, and the Apocalypse
2:30 p.m. Closing Discussion