

What was Contemporary Literature?

Heidelberg Center for American Studies (HCA)
September 26-28, 2024

Conveners: Laura Bieger (Ruhr-Universität Bochum)
Philipp Löffler (Universität Heidelberg)

Conference Program

Thursday, September 26

9:30-10:00 Conference Opening

10:00-12:30 Theories of Periodization and Literary-Historical Storytelling 1

Michael Clune (Case Western Reserve University), "The Lovecraft Era: American Literature after 1980"

Adam Kelly (UC Davis), "When American Literature Was Contemporary Literature"

Beth Blume (Harvard University), "Chasing Epiphanies: The Search for a Better Moment in Contemporary Fiction"

12:30-13:45 Lunch

13:45-16:15 New Developments in Aesthetics and Literary Form 1

Timothy Bewes (Brown University), "To Forgo the Benefit of the Hindsight That We Nevertheless Have"

Silvia Schultersmandl (Münster University), "Everybody's Autobiography? The Cruel Optimistic Fantasies of Online Life Writing Studies"

John Alba Cutler, "¿Contemporáneas?: Latinx Literature and the Denial of Coevalness"

16:15-16:45 Coffee

16:45-18:30 New Developments in Aesthetics and Literary Form 2

Juliana Spahr (Northeastern University), "Structures of Authorization"

Margaret Ronda (UC Davis), "Poems for Near Futures"

18:30 Reception at Heidelberg Center for American Studies

Friday, September 27

9:30-12:00 Theories of Periodization and Literary-Historical Storytelling 2

Philipp Schweighauser (Basel University), "What Was Contemporary Native American Literature?"

Sarah Wasserman (University of Delaware), "Ghosts of the Present: The Forgotten Forms of Contemporary Fiction"

Tim Lanzendörfer (Frankfurt University), "Where is Literature in the Contemporary?"

12:00-13:15 Lunch

13:15-15:45 The Institutions and (Infra)Structures of the Literary Field 1

Johannes Voelz, "Autofiction and the Structural Transformation of the Private Sphere"

Stephanie Li (Duke University), "Black Parental Epistles in the 21st Century"

Lee Konstantinou (University of Maryland at College Park), "Rise of the Creator-Owner: Comics, Neoliberalism, and Mass High Culture"

16:00-18:00 Walk to the Castle

19:30 Conference Dinner

Saturday, September 28

9:00-12:45 The Institutions and (Infra)Structures of the Literary Field 2

Aarthi Vadde (Duke University), "Platformed Literature"

Kathryn Roberts (University of Groningen), "Where was Contemporary Literature?: Utopia and Precarity in the Residency Novel"

10:40-11:00 Coffee

Alexander Starre (FU Berlin), "The Novel in the Age of Reese's Book Club"

Günter Leypoldt (Heidelberg University), "Curating the Novel Today"

12:45-13:00 Conference Closing