ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE
DFG RESEARCH TRAINING GROUP
»IDENTITY AND HERITAGE«
(TU Berlin/Bauhaus-Universität Weimar)

Identität & Erbe
Graduiertenkolleg

Call for Papers for the section: »INHERITING AS A CULTURAL TECHNIQUE«

19–20.11.2020
Venue to be announced (Berlin or Weimar)
In the case of pandemic restrictions, the event will be held online

Inheriting as a cultural technique

The sphere of potentially inheritable artefacts engages various actors in determining and maintaining cultural heritage ("Kulturerbe"). They are involved in the formation, transmission and transformation of historical narratives that play a central role in the construction of social identities and collective memories. Each of the social spheres active here - be they political, or institutional in the form of 'the sciences' or 'expert-groups' such as architects and monument conservators – have different norms, habits, standards and relationships that regulate the handling of artefacts and shape the complex field of cultural heritage. Actors battle each other in the selection, definition, (critical) theorization and management of artefacts that are designated as cultural heritage. It is a negotiation process that shows: cultural heritage is 'made' (heritage production).

To what extent can this 'heritage production' be understood and conceptualized as a cultural technique? Coming from the agrarian, the term 'cultural techniques' refers to methods of making land cultivable, and thus also 'cultural land'. In addition to basic skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic, systems of order and representation, today cultural techniques are also understood as/to include operative techniques, topographical, architectural and medial forms of political dispositifs, habitual skills as well as body techniques such as gestures or rites (Bernhard Siegert). Initially applied intuitively, cultural techniques are ultimately passed on and conceptualized through social interaction. Cultural techniques and practices of inheritance and bequest vary depending on the groups involved and on the cultural assets to be inherited, and can be understood as procedures of transferring, acquiring, as (genealogical) succession and passing-on, as quoting or adapting. So too can subversive, governmental or violent appropriations be regarded as procedures of a cultural technique of 'inheriting'. Furthermore, the legitimizing power of 'cultural heritage' makes it a contested concept, in which power relations and conflicts are expressed.

The conference Practices of Inheritance of the DFG Research Training Group 'Identity and Heritage' includes a dedicated section on "Inheritance as a Cultural Technique". In this section, we would like to ask under what conditions cultural heritage is 'produced' and which 'practices of inheritance' can be differentiated as cultural techniques that refer to a continuing past. We are looking for contributions – primarily, but not exclusively – from the fields of architectural history/theory, art and cultural history, sociology, postcolonial theory, monument conservation (theory), as well as from the applied practice areas of these fields. We call for papers in the following three thematic areas:

1. Selecting and Determining

In the selection of material and immaterial goods to be inherited, a mediation between past, present and future takes place. How can we conceptualize the techniques used here to valorize certain goods?
The bequeathing person (testator), the bequeathed and the inherited asset (estate) and the inheriting person (heir) are in a reciprocal relationship: the heirs constitute themselves as

such during the selection process and the selected inheritance affects their self-image. Which inheritance practices and processes contribute to the identity construction of the actors involved in the inheritance, and how?

2. Appropriation and Adaptation

Inheriting and bequeathing cultural assets encompasses various techniques of appropriation, such as conservation, archiving, citation, translocation, re-contextualization, erasure and overwriting. These all go hand in hand with the adaptation of cultural heritage. Questions that arise here are how inheritances transfers are steered in the context of cultural heritage, how they affect the artefacts, and to what extent they can change cultural heritage (by developing, reinventing or setting it aside).
The appropriation of cultural heritage often takes place under duress, for example through exploitation and expropriation, in the course of wars, regime changes and shifts in borders. But there are also more implicitly violent forms of appropriation and assignment as well as acts of 'cultural appropriation'. We ask whether and how one and the same cultural heritage can be appropriated by different groups?

3. Governing and Challenging

Transmission processes are conflictual and often accompanied by tensions, contradictions and hegemonic aspirations, whereby the institutionally and professionally "certified" mastery of cultural techniques is also an instrument. Power, governmentality and conflict lend themselves to examination as the framing conditions for inheritance as a cultural technique, by asking how interpretive power is legitimized and how a cultural heritage canon or a genealogy is determined.

Which sedimentary inheritance techniques allow the formation and/or stabilization of powers, how are these techniques questioned and can possibilities be created for non-hierarchical or minimally hierarchical negotiations?

We seek contributions that critically examine the questions and theses presented. We strive for an active exchange among the participants and welcome submissions from different research approaches.

Contributions should not exceed a speaking time duration of 20 minutes. Abstracts (300 words) and a CV should be submitted by email to Simone Bogner, cfp[at]identitaet-und-erbe.org on or before 31.07.2020. Successful participants will be informed about their inclusion in the conference programme at the end of August.
It is planned to publish the contributions (peer-reviewed) in the publication series of the Research Training Group. Therefore, the submitted proposals must not have been published elsewhere and must show an original contribution to the themes of the call. The deadline for submission of papers or lecture manuscripts is November 12, 2020.

The conference languages are German and English. Travel grants can be granted on a limited basis.

A PDF of this CfP and further information on the Research Training Group can be found at http://www.identitaet-und-erbe.org/