

GSA DISTINGUISHED LECTURE 2021

Art, Science, and the Paradox of Knowledge: Decolonizing the European Avant-Garde

Thomas O. Haakenson
California College of the Arts, USA



Photo by Mary Grace Hudson on Unsplash

Wednesday, October 20, 2021
6–8 PM CET/MEZ, FU Berlin

Hybrid event: for online access please register via email

In his GSA Distinguished Lecture 2021 *Art, Science, and the Paradox of Knowledge: Decolonizing the European Avant-Garde* Thomas O. Haakenson frames an important rethinking of the relationship between art and science in Europe since the mid-nineteenth century. However, “Europe” is not a foundational site of discovery in this context, but rather a questionable and illusory point of departure. Offering insights from new research as well as key case studies from his recently published book, *Grotesque Visions: The Science of Berlin Dada*, Haakenson outlines ways in which the supposedly European avant-garde originally served as the ground for rethinking key assumptions of Western knowledge production more broadly. In decolonizing the story of the “European” avant-garde in this way, Haakenson offers up provocative strategies for reenergizing the field of German Studies as well.

Dr. Thomas O. Haakenson is Associate Professor in the graduate and undergraduate Critical and Visual Studies Program at California College of the Arts in San Francisco and Oakland, USA. He holds a doctorate in Comparative Studies in Discourse and Society from the Department of Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature at the University of Minnesota, as well as minors in German and the History of Science and Technology. In 2013 he completed a Certificate in Program Evaluation from the Department of Organization Leadership, Policy, and Development at the University of Minnesota.

Haakenson's new book, *Grotesque Visions: The Science of Berlin Dada* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), focuses on the radical avant-garde interventions of Salomo Friedländer (aka Mynona), Til Brugman, and Hannah Höch as they challenged the questionable practices and evidentiary claims of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century science.

Thomas O. Haakenson is co-editor of the book series *Visual Cultures and German Contexts*, and is the former co-editor of the book series *German Visual Culture*. He has co-edited several anthologies, including *Jürgen Habermas and the European Economic Crisis: Cosmopolitanism Reconsidered* with Gaspare M. Genna and Ian W. Wilson; *Representations of German Identity* with Deborah Ascher Barnstone; *Becoming TransGerman: Cultural Identity Beyond Geography* with Tirza True Latimer, Carole Hager, and Deborah Barton; and both the collection *Spectacle* and the forthcoming *How to Make the Body: Difference, Identity, and Embodiment*, with Jennifer L. Creech. He also has been published widely, including in *New German Critique*, *Cabinet*, *Rutgers Art Review*, *German Studies Review*, and the anthologies *Legacies of Modernism and Memorialization in Germany Since 1945*.

Haakenson has received awards and fellowships from the United States Fulbright Program, the Social Science Research Council, the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, and the Berlin Program for Advanced German and

European Studies, among others. He has served as Chair and Vice Chair of the U.S. Fulbright Association's Chapter Advisory Board. He is a current Summer Workshop Committee member and former member of the Advisory Board for the Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies at the Freie Universität in Berlin, Germany. He is also the Treasurer of the German Studies Association, the largest organization of scholars, professionals, and students who focus on the study of German-speaking Europe from all periods of history and all relevant disciplines.

The lecture will be followed by a commentary by Veronika Fuechtner, Associate Professor of German Studies at Dartmouth College and Berlin Program Alumna. The event will be moderated by BP Committee Chair Paul Nolte who teaches at Freie Universität's Friedrich-Meinecke-Institute. Welcome greetings will be extended by both GSA President Janet Ward and the FU's Director of International Affairs, Herbert Grieshop.

- DATE: October 20, 2021
- TIME: 6:00 PM Central European Summer Time/Berlin
12:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time/NY
- FORMAT: Hybrid event via Webex (for everyone) and on campus (by invitation only due to seating restrictions in accordance with COVID-19 regulations)
- REGISTRATION: For online access, please register by October 15 via email bprogram@zedat.fu-berlin.de
- LANGUAGE: The lecture will be held in English; the discussion in English and German
- CONSENT: By attending, you consent the possibility of appearing in publicity materials and recordings distributed through the GSA and FUB outlets.

The Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies promotes scholars in the humanities and the social sciences working on dissertation or postdoctoral research projects on Germany and/or Europe. In close cooperation with our North American partner, the [German Studies Association](https://www.thegsa.org/), our annual GSA Distinguished Lecture, Summer Workshop, Berlin Program Alumni Panel and other events offer opportunities to engage with timely topics and strengthen ties between the program and scholars working in these fields.

Image Credits

Digital design: Sophie Franke

Photo by Mary Grace Hudson on Unsplash