

Working Group Exploring Humanities/Arbeitskreis Experiment Geisteswissenschaft (AEG)

What do the humanities do, and what should they do? What are the conditions for good academic practice in our sense? How do we really want to work beyond the all too often quoted *Sachzwang* (practical constraints, political determining factors or inherent necessities)? How can we create spaces that nurture the joy, passion and curiosity which we deem necessary for good academic work. How do we encourage ourselves and each other to truly experiment in our research

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AEG works in the spaces between research, teaching, and administration and transverses status groups. Undergraduate and graduate students, assistant, associate and full professors, visiting scholars, post docs, artists, coaches and others outside the university collaborate in our working group.

How does it work? This is very simple yet difficult to put into words. We work situationally; micro-situations challenge us to invent new practices or re-appropriate old ones.

An example: Writing is such a practice for exploration – and one of the central methods in non-empirical research. In our Writing Lab which is also offered as a course for bachelor and master students in Scandinavian Studies, researchers and students meet for four hours of classroom time. We write for 1.5 hours on our individual projects. After a break we exchange our experiences and thoughts and move organically to the central methodological questions of our fields.

AEG is particularly interested in bodily, affective and creative aspects of academic practices. Our “creative methodology” intersects with artistic research or rather, what Erin Manning calls „research creation“.

AEG is located at the Department for Northern European Studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, has members at several Scandinavian universities and is currently extending its network. The working group was initiated in 2015 while applying for a KOSMOS Summer University. The project did not receive funding but continues to move. The idea of a summer university was realized in July 2017 in Latvia where the Nordic Summer University invited AEG to arrange Circle Y – a collective exploration of academic practices in an Open Space conference.

As a next step, we want to explore, if our academic processes and practices can expand into a para-institutional, international network: Moving Humanities.

Membership in AEG is informal and continually changing. Amongst the founders and current members are: Stefanie v. Schnurbein, Janke Klok, Otto Fischer, Lill-Ann Körber, Clemens Räthel, Bodil Marie Stavning-Thomsen, Frauke Ebert, Dörte Linke.