

The background features abstract geometric shapes in shades of blue and white. A dark blue triangle points downwards from the top left corner. A light blue triangle points upwards from the bottom left corner. The remaining space is white.

GHI News



2024 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize

The 2024 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize, which is awarded annually by the Friends of the German Historical Institute for the best dissertation in German history completed at a North American university, was awarded to Steven Samols for his dissertation "Capturing Difference, Making History: The Photobook as a Jewish Artefact," completed at the University of Southern California in 2023 under the supervision of Paul Lerner. The Stern Prize was presented to Dr. Samols at the 32nd Annual Symposium of the Friends of the German Historical Institute, which took place in Washington on May 10, 2024.

The Stern Prize committee comprised Eli Rubin (Western Michigan University, chair), Alice Goff (University of Chicago), and Carina Johnson (Pitzer College). The committee's prize citation (*laudatio*) read as follows:

"Steven Samols' dissertation, 'Capturing Difference, Making History,' is a brilliantly conceived and elegantly executed history of a mostly forgotten cultural artefact, the photobook. 'Capturing Difference' is a narrative of Jewish and German life in the twentieth century, constructed through five photobooks, all from Jewish authors and centering Jewish life, some of which became well-known in their time, and some of which Dr. Samols has rescued from the condescension of posterity. Through his recognition of the multivalent capacities and genres of the photobook, Samols traces the shifting project of shaping memory and history of the twentieth-century central European Jewish experience. For example, Samols tells us about a photobook from 1911 showing the eclectic and carnivalesque Prater amusement park in Leopoldstadt, Vienna; he shows us then a photobook documenting life in the Vilnius ghetto before the Holocaust; next, he explores a photobook created in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust in Poland by Jewish authors; and then he documents for us the photobook that told the story of the *Exodus* ship which tried to ferry Jewish Holocaust survivors to British mandate Palestine; and finally, he tells us about a photobook

that documented Freud's private residence and office – yes, the one with the couch – coming back full circle to Vienna.

“This is a project that could have been done in a mundane and prosaic way, but Samols carries it out brilliantly. One of the keys to his brilliance is the way in which he not only tells us about these fascinating historical artefacts, but also uses them as a jumping off point for the wider histories of the subjects and the places documented in each book. So, the photobook of the Prater Park becomes a chance to explore the history of the park, the history of Vienna in the lead up to and during the First World War, and after; and the role of Jews in the park, in Vienna, and in the Empire. The chapter on the photobook which documented the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust is not just about the book, but also its impact – which, Samols shows us, was enormous, as it became the framework and the foundation of all future visual reference points of what the Holocaust looked like, influencing Hollywood, popular literature, and beyond. And the photobook of the *Exodus* had world-historical import, salient at this very moment, as it proved enormously influential in swaying popular support in the West for the creation of the state of Israel, and Samols' discussion of it is in reality a discussion of that process. In this way, 'Capturing Difference' works on two levels.

“But it actually works on more than two levels – it works on four. Samols sagely illuminates for us the meaning of these books in and of themselves: they are records of history, and in a time before much visual mass media, they became visual archives of now forgotten places and people. For a Jewish culture that was often centered in Germany and Austria but also scattered, the immediacy of the visual was something lacking, and so these photobooks were of particular valence to German-Jewish history in the twentieth century. As Samols notes, photography itself was considered an outsiders' art form, and so it provided an entrée for Jews to find a path for artistic and cultural expression denied them in other areas. In this dissertation, Samols establishes photobooks as an important and essential source for writing the history of minority or diasporic communities in the twentieth century.

“But the books are more than records of history – unlike museums, which are more proscribed and not immediately accessible, photobooks allow their readers to flip through visual histories in any way they want, wandering through history on their own terms, keeping history for themselves, tucked away in their bookshelves or breakfronts; in other words, they make history much more intimate. They are a form of memory and material culture, a form of material memory, that deserve much more exploration.

“Furthermore, the books that Samols investigates, and the histories surrounding them, seem at first to be disparate, and in a way, they are. But Samols elegantly finds the wispy narrative strands connecting them – we start in Vienna, a Vienna bustling with Jews and teeming with contradictions, and we end back in Vienna, but in the ghostly remnants of the most famous Viennese Jew, Freud. We see the Vilnius ghetto, right before it is to be wiped out by the Holocaust; and then we see the Holocaust itself; and then we see the exodus sparked by the Holocaust. Rather than imposing a narrative thread upon these books and the histories from which they emerge, Samols allows the loose but powerful threads connecting them to emerge organically, nostalgically, and painfully. His dissertation is, in essence, a photobook of photobooks.

“The committee read several brilliant dissertations, and out of these, ‘Capturing Difference’ rose to the top for us. We are eager to see how this dissertation progresses into a publication which will be of interest to many audiences. On behalf of the committee, and the Friends of the German Historical Institute, congratulations to Dr. Samols!”

New Institute Publications

Publications of the German Historical Institute (Cambridge University Press)

Jan C. Jansen and Kirsten McKenzie, eds. *Mobility and Coercion in an Age of Wars and Revolutions: A Global History, c. 1750–1830*.

Michelle Lynn Kahn. *Foreign in Two Homelands: Racism, Return Migration, and Turkish-German History*.

Studies in German History (Berghahn Books)

Michael Weaver. *Political Friendship: Liberal Notables, Networks, and the Pursuit of the German Nation State, 1848–1866*.

Transatlantische Historische Studien (Steiner Verlag)

Maximilian Klose. *Why They Gave: CARE and American Aid for Germany after 1945*.

Staff Changes

Carolyn Liebisch-Gümüş, Research Fellow at the GHI Washington since 2020, departed the institute in October 2024 to become a Research Associate at the Leibniz Center for Contemporary History Potsdam.

Elisabeth Mait, who worked at the institute in a variety of positions in the GHI library and GHI research projects since 1993, most recently as research associate, retired in July 2024.

Fellowships and Internships

Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships

The GHI awards short-term fellowships to European and North American doctoral students as well as postdoctoral scholars to pursue research projects that draw upon primary sources located in the United States. We are particularly interested in research projects that fit in the fields of: German and European history; the history of German-American relations; the role of Germany and the United States in international relations; or (for European doctoral and postdoctoral students only) North American or Pan American history, including the history of Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. Proposed research projects should make use of historical methods and engage with the relevant historiography. We especially invite applications from doctoral students and postdoctoral scholars who currently have no funding from their home institutions. The fellowships are usually granted for periods of one to four months.

The GHI also awards long-term fellowships for periods ranging between six and twelve months to strengthen key research interests at the institute in four thematic areas which are intended to be broad in scope: the history of knowledge; the history of migration, kinship, and belonging; the history of race and ethnicity; and the history of the Americas. In addition to these opportunities, the GHI also offers a Binational Tandem Research Fellowship for the History of Migration, based at the GHI Pacific Office at the University of California, Berkeley; the Fritz Thyssen Pre-Dissertation Fellowship in German history, for students at universities in western North America; and the Gerda Henkel Fellowship for Digital History, offered in collaboration with the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University. For further information about these programs and current application deadlines, please check our website at www.ghi-dc.org/fellowships.

Internships

The GHI Internship Program gives German and American students of history, political science, and library studies an opportunity to gain experience at a scholarly research institute. Interns assist individual research projects, work for the library, take part in the preparation and hosting of conferences, and help with our publications. Internship opportunities are also available for students of public relations, public administration, and public management. Interns receive a small stipend. The program is very flexible in the sense that the GHI tries to accommodate interns' interests, abilities, and goals. A two-month minimum stay is required; a three-month stay is preferred. There is a rolling review of applications. For further information, please check our website at www.ghi-dc.org/research-internships.

Fellowship Recipients, 2024–25

Long-Term Visiting Fellowships

Nora Binder (University of Konstanz)

“Social Competence”: A History of Human Relations during the 20th Century

Sarah Frenking (University of Erfurt)

Moving through the Underworld: “Mädchenhandel,” Prostitution, and Deviant Mobilities, 1920–1960

Steven McClellan (University of Toronto)

Knowing Other Worlds: Humans, Birds, and the Environment in Modern Germany

Jonathan Schlunck (University of Uppsala)

Schools for the Deaf as Places of Knowledge Production

Gerda Henkel Fellow for Digital History

Lauren Rever (Heidelberg University)

History Making in Heritage Tourism: The 8th Grade Trip to Washington, DC

Short-Term Doctoral Research Fellowships

Jasmin Goll (University of Bern)

(Dis)Connected by Wire: Music Broadcasting by Telephone as an “Audible Infrastructure” between 1870 and 1930

Hana Green (Clark University)

“Whatever happens, never reveal to anyone that you’re Jewish”: Identity Passing as a Jewish Response to Persecution during the Nazi Period, 1933–1945

Tatjana Klein (University of Munich)

“Good Candidates” for Democrats and Republicans? The Representation of Women in the U.S. Presidential Primaries

Franziska Lamp (University of Vienna)

“To Recruit One Hundred Single Girls of Spotless Moral Character”: Gender Hierarchies in the Resettlement Programs for Displaced Women (1945–1960)

Claas Oberstadt (Humboldt University of Berlin)

Between the Lines: Accounting, Insurance, and Resistance in the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Short-Term Postdoctoral Research Fellowships

Norman Aselmeyer (University of Bremen)

Whispers of Unrest: Colonial Cities and the End of Empire, c. 1920s–1960s

Lars Müller (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin/Preußischer Kulturbesitz)

Praktiken der Kollaboration: Museumszusammenarbeit im Nord-Süd Kontext im Zeitalter der Dekolonisierung

Research Seminars and Colloquia, Spring 2024

- January 23** **DCHDC Meetup**
Ricky Punzalan (University of Michigan), Fallon Carey (Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition), Yolanda Hester, and Liz Flowers
Reparative Digital Cultural Heritage Work
- February 28** **Research Seminar**
Philipp Gassert (University of Mannheim)
Contesting Political Spaces: Thoughts on a World History of Street Protest
- March 7** **Colloquium**
Tamar Aizenberg (Brandeis University)
The Third Generations: Grandchildren of Survivors, Grandchildren of Perpetrators, and Holocaust Memory
- Annika Bärwald (University of Bremen)**
Hamburg Entanglements with Enslavement and the Presence of Non-European People in Hamburg, 1750–1840
- April 24** **Research Seminar**
Kristina Spohr (Woodrow Wilson Center)
A Place on the Map [chapter 1 of *A Global History of the Arctic*]
- May 6** **Washington Area German History Seminar**
Christopher Ewing (Purdue University)
From Gay Crimes to Hate Crimes: Transatlantic Activism in Germany's Violent '90s

- May 15** **Research Seminar**
Benjamin Waltner Goossen (George Mason University)
Project Planet: Earth Science and the Remaking of Global Order, 1945–1972
- May 22** **Washington Area German History Seminar**
Richard Wetzell (GHI Washington)
A Lecture on “Racial Crossing” in Nazi Berlin: The Anthropologist Eugen Fischer and the Nazi Regime
- June 5** **Research Seminar**
Viola Alianov-Rautenberg (GHI Washington Pacific Office)
Migrant Melodies: Jewish Refugee Songs as a Transnational Archive of Emotions
- June 20** **Horner Fellows Colloquium**
Jane Chang (University of Tennessee)
Intermingling of the Old and New: The Formation of a New German-American Medical Culture in Colonial Pennsylvania (1730–1810)
- Kirsten Becker (University of Münster)**
Symbolic Communication of Colonial and State Legislatures, c. 1760–1820
- Gabriel Wolfson (University of Tübingen)**
German Field Rabbis in World War I

Calendar of Events, 2024–2025

July 3–6

**4th Annual International Seminar
in Historical Refugee Studies:**

**Historicizing the Refugee
Experience, 17th–21st Centuries**

Seminar at the University of
Tübingen

Organized by the University of
Tübingen with the American
Historical Association and the GHI
Washington, in cooperation with
the Centre for Global Cooperation
Research (KHK/GCR21)

July 14–18

**Making a World of Many Worlds:
Identities, Activisms, and
Comparisons**

Summer School at GHI Washington
Pacific Office

Organized by the GHI Washington
Pacific Office, the Maria Sibylla
Merian Center for Advanced Latin
American Studies in the Human-
ities and Social Sciences (CALAS),
and the Collaborative Research
Center “Practices of Comparing”
(SFB 1288), Bielefeld University

September 5–6

**Science and Democracy in
Political Crises, 1900–2024**

Conference at GHI Washington

Conveners: Alexander Bogner
(Austrian Academy of Sciences,
Vienna), Axel Jansen (GHI Wash-
ington), Carsten Reinhardt (Ger-
man National Academy of Sciences
Leopoldina), Heidi Tworek (Univer-
sity of British Columbia)

- October 21–22** **8th Young Scholars Forum: Histories of Migration – Transatlantic and Global Perspectives**
 Conference at GHI Washington Pacific Office
 Conveners: Benno Gammerl (European University Institute Florence) and Isabel Richter (GHI Washington Pacific Office)
- October 31–November 2** **Wings of Globalization? New Approaches to the History of Commercial Aviation, 1920s–2020s**
 Conference at GHI Washington
 Conveners: Andreas Greiner (GHI Washington) and Stefan Rinke (Free University of Berlin)
- 2025**
- February 13–14** **Refugees in Global Transit: Encounters, Knowledge, and Coping Strategies in a Disrupted World, 1930s–50s**
 Conference in Mumbai, India
 Conveners: Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), Sebastian Schwecke (Max Weber Forum for South Asian Studies, Delhi), and Swen Steinberg (Queen’s University, Kingston), in collaboration with Maria Framke (Erfurt University), Jens Hanssen (Orient-Institut Beirut), and Christoph K. Neumann (Orient-Institut Istanbul)

March 7–8

Seventh West Coast Germanists' Workshop: Migration, Mobility, and Exchange

Workshop at University of Nevada, Reno

Conveners: Viola Alianov-Rautenberg (GHI Washington Pacific Office) and James McSpadden (University of Nevada, Reno)

March 19–21

7th Conference on Digital Humanities and Digital History: Real-Time History – Engaging with Living Archives and Temporal Multiplicities

Conference at GHI Washington
Organized by the GHI Washington in collaboration with the Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C2DH), the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (RRCHNM), Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe, the Chair for Digital History at Humboldt University of Berlin, and NFDI4 Memory

May 18–20

Eighth Junior Scholars Conference in Jewish History: The Place of the Holocaust in German-Jewish History and Memory

Organized by the GHI Washington in collaboration with the Moses Mendelssohn Centre for European-Jewish Studies, Potsdam, the Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft des Leo Baeck Instituts, and the Indiana University Europe Gateway in Berlin

June 4–6

30th Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar in German History: Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century German History

Seminar at GHI Washington and Georgetown University
Organized by the GHI Washington and the BMW Center for German and European Studies, Georgetown University

Conveners: Anna von der Goltz (Georgetown University) and Richard F. Wetzell (GHI Washington)

June 25–27

Germans in the Asia-Pacific Region: (Post) Colonial Entanglements, Conflicts and Perceptions in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

Conference at Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia

Conveners: Matthew Fitzpatrick (Flinders University), Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), Isabel Richter (GHI Washington Pacific Office)

July 7–10

Fifth Annual International Seminar in Historical Refugee Studies: Historicizing the Refugee Experience, 17th–21st Centuries

Conference at GHI Washington Pacific Office

Organized by the GHI Washington, the University of Tübingen, and the American Historical Association

- September 10–12** **Universities and the Public Good: Research, Education, and Democracy since 1945**
Workshop and Young Scholars Forum at Herrenhausen Palace, Hanover, Germany
Conveners: Charles Dorn (Bowdoin College), Axel Jansen (GHI Washington), Charlotte Lerg (Amerika-Institut, LMU München), Till van Rahden (Centre canadien d'études allemandes et européennes, Université de Montréal), and Richard F. Wetzell (GHI Washington)
- September 29–30** **Food, Migration, and Belonging in 20th Century European History**
Conference at GHI Washington Pacific Office
Conveners: Maren Möhring (University of Leipzig), Isabel Richter (GHI Washington Pacific Office)
- October 9–10** **The Campus and Beyond: Higher Education and Social Inequalities in Europe and North America, 1850s-2000s**
Conference at the GHI Washington
Conveners: Stefanie Coché (Gießen University), Raphael Rössel (GHI Washington), Elizabeth Tandy Shermer (Loyola University Chicago)

GHI Library

The GHI Washington library concentrates on German history and transatlantic relations, with emphasis on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In addition to providing essential literature for scholarly research, the library fulfills an important cultural mission: no other library in the United States offers a similarly condensed inventory of modern German history.

The library houses about 43,000 books, DVDs, CD-ROMs, microfiches, and 220 print journals. In addition, we offer access to almost 20,000 e-books and 1,000 current and historic online journals.

The collection includes books on American history written by German authors as well as historical literature of the institute's past research foci: global history, religious studies, exile and migration studies, environmental history, and economic history. However, the library does not include archival material. While we carefully select print resources to fit with the current work of the institute, our electronic collection is developed in cooperation with our ten sister institutes of the Max Weber Foundation and therefore also contains titles not specifically in our own collection focus.

The library offers free access to scholars as well as the general public. Our reading room is open by appointment. The library does not lend materials, but visitors may consult material from the entire collection in our beautiful reading room, which also offers access to a variety of databases for journal articles, historical newspapers, genealogical research, and bibliographical research.

For the library catalog and a list of our databases and electronic journals, please visit <https://www.ghi-dc.org/library>. Or send an email to library@ghi-dc.org for any further questions.

The **library hours** are Monday to Thursday from 9 am to 5 pm, Fridays from 9 am to 4 pm, and by appointment.