

in cooperation with

Copenhagen Doctoral School in Cultural Studies



International Research Training Group

**Interart**  
Studies

## Call for Papers

### Interdisciplinary Symposium Subjectivity and Play between Ethics and Aesthetics Berlin, 13-15 November 2008

Play constitutes a space “in-between” – it is part of and apart from the social world. On the one hand, it apparently demands a differentiation between play and non-play, on the other hand, it needs to abandon and transgress these boundaries, at least for a moment, to make playing possible at all. For many, it is this ‘ontological ambivalence’ that turns the concept of play into an ideal mediator: between art and life (Simmel), between subjective and objective reality in psychoanalysis (Winnicott), between the aesthetic and the ethical (Kant); it is used to describe liminality (ethnology) and plays a fundamental role in the anthropological definition of the self (Schiller).

Reflections about the relation between subjectivity, art and everyday practise were repeatedly developed through references to play. The interdisciplinary symposium “Subjectivity and Play between Ethics and Aesthetics” will explore if and how play in its multiple forms can inspire new debates on subjectivity within the humanities – also and especially after its discussion in postmodern philosophy. Does the term ‘play’ still offer new perspectives on the ‘self’ after it dissolved into a play with masks and disguises (or into an infinite play with difference)? Is it an appropriate term to describe hybrid, ephemeral, open or interactive processes of self-reference? Does play theory provide a terminology to adequately describe (art) forms which seem to blur or transgress the boundaries between art and life – for example, when the creative subject puts itself ‘into play’ in a particular way? Far more than providing just a metaphor to name certain ways of dealing with oneself, doesn’t the concept of play not only allow to define the specific constitution of subjectivity that becomes apparent within the creative process but also to conceive the productive mediality of this very process?

Yet, which results, terms and concepts from play theory can be built upon? And vice versa which impulses can the exploration of ludic self relations give to the theory of play?

Paper topics may range from literature, art history, theatre, film and media studies, musicology, cultural studies and philosophy to sociology.

Duration of the presentation: 25 minutes. The lectures can be held in German and English. A selection of the contributions to the symposium will subsequently be published.

Proposals up to 300 words, including a short biography as well as contact details, should be sent to Regine Strätling and Somogy Varga by **13 July 2008**

either by email:

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or via postal service to:

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