

Call for papers:

Past Futures.

Historical Approaches to the Analysis of Uncertainties and Ruptures

Conference organized by the SIEF-Working-Group „Historical Approaches in Cultural Analysis“ and the Department of History and European Ethnology of the University of Innsbruck

29-30th of September 2022, Innsbruck, Austria

Crises have not only been omnipresent since the global Covid pandemic, rather they have also shaped the everyday "life of the many" in the past. The conference on "past futures" will take a historical perspective on cultural processes and strategies of adaptation to ruptures and crises in past eras. Starting from the very uncertainty of our present days experienced by all of us during the last years, the conference asks how crisis experiences were processed in the past and how possible futures were designed against this background. During the last years, there has been an increasing preoccupation with questions of future references in cultural studies and European Ethnology. These (mostly constructivist) approaches ask about the discursive and practical production of the future, about the function of future concepts in the present and the past or about the way in which the future is to be made plannable or expectable. Building on these ongoing debates, we ask for the manifold strategies of imagining the future in lifeworlds and everyday life to deal with, adopt and conceptualize uncertainties. Such "past futures" can show up in diverse sources and in broad empirical material, for example in narrative contexts, correspondences and letters, protocols, scientific texts but also in first-person documents. The conference is thus interested in the manifold possibilities of "common people" reacting to ruptures, threats, dangers and challenges in their everyday lives by imagining futures, writing them down, or even making them concrete in their lives by realising them in various practices.

To what extent can references to the future be understood as coping with crises? What temporal ideas of order for dealing with ruptures can be found in the past? Which everyday source genres provide information about lifeworld strategies for coping with crises? In what way do references to the past enable future viability?

The conference chooses a broad temporal focus (from the 17th century to contemporary history/present) and a geographically wide range. Any scholars with a background in (but not limited to) European Ethnology/Cultural Anthropology, Cultural Studies, History and its sub-disciplines or Literature Sciences are invited to question their material within the perspective outlined here.

The conference is planned in a hybrid (face-to-face and digital) format in Innsbruck.

All presentations will be in English and contain of 20 min. speaking time plus 10 min. discussion. A publication based on the papers is planned. The conference organizers are pooling resources to assist in covering the travel and accommodation costs of the attendees.

Please send your application with an abstract (approx. 2,000 characters including spaces) and some sentences on your CV and/or research-context by 15 April 2022 to konrad.kuhn@uibk.ac.at.

We will inform you about the acceptance of your contribution by 30 April 2022.

Supported by:

SIEF – International Society for Ethnology and Folklore

Faculty of Philosophy and History of the University of Innsbruck

Research Area "Cultural Encounters – Cultural Conflicts" of the University of Innsbruck