

Aims of the Workshop

Religion was a heavily contested issue in the socialist states of the 20th century. Politics oscillated between cooperation and sanction of religious communities and behaviour. To display religion publicly soon turned into a successful strategy for its delegitimation in the private and public sphere. Atheistic propaganda mushroomed with a new type of “scientific” atheism fostering classical anti-religious stances.

Visualizations of the New Soviet Man took various forms which painted the bright future of socialism against religious darkness and backwardness. However, the atheist imagination relied to a great extent on orthodox Christianity as its negative counter model. Therefore, the centre of our interest is the question if atheism was parasitically dependent on religion or if it developed autonomous aesthetic configurations. Gathering from different disciplinary contexts, the workshop wants to discuss questions such as the following:

- Where and in which way developed the new aesthetics of atheism?
- Which attributes, concepts and imagery outlined secular values against the backdrop of an established religious culture?
- How does this binary code work in particular? Are there overlapping issues, mutual dependencies, or semantic changes?
- What role played museums in the educational work?
- To which depth transformed secularism and atheism into the society?

Convenors: Prof. Dr. Horst Junginger & Dr. Katharina Neef
Organisational support: Alla Lysenko & Andreas Hölke

Participation is free of charge. The workshop will be held in English via Zoom.
Links will be distributed after registration on atheist.aesthetics@uni-leipzig.de.

For further information visit our [homepage](#).

Joint conference of the Institute for the Study of Religion, Leipzig, funded by the German Research Foundation in connection with the Centre for Advanced Studies „Multiple Secularities - Beyond the West, beyond Modernities“.



4–5 March 2021

Online workshop

Aesthetics of Atheism



Thursday, 4 March

Atheist mindscapes: visualizations of religion and atheism in the museum

13:00

Introduction: *Horst Junginger/Katharina Neef*

13:30–15:00

Edith Franke

Construction and deconstruction of religion in museums

Susanne Rodemeier

Limits and potentials of musealization

Pardis Eskandaripour

The changing attitude towards Christianity in the GRASSI Museum für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig

15:00–15:30 Coffee break

15:30–16:30

Ekaterina Teryukova

The issue of atheism in the exhibitions of the Museum of the History of Religion

Peter Bräunlein

The devil in the museum. On critical communication about religion and its limits

16.30–17:00 Coffee break

17:00–18:00

Stefan Arvidsson

A secular Yggdrasil

Horst Junginger

Visualizing inexistent gods: atheistic versus Christian aestheticism

Friday, 5 March

Atheist conceptualizations: the interplay between religious and antireligious premises

09:30–11:00

Johannes Gleixner

Central european perceptions of the soviet godless-movement and the orientalization of atheism

Marianna Shakhnovich

Scientific atheism of the era of “developed socialism” in the visual arts

Anja Kirsch

“Socialism will triumph!” – Aesthetics of atheism in the GDR?

11:00–11:30 Coffee break

11:30–13:00

Alla Sokolova

Visual propaganda against Judaism

Katharina Neef

Visualizing prejudice: stereotypes against religions

Svetlana Barsukova / Boris Krumnow

Atheistic pictures: Soviet era and modern Russia

13:00–14:00 Lunch break

14:00–15:00

Final discussion