We are all democrats now. Yet concerns over the future viability of democracy pervade scholarly and public controversies. Today, the social sciences dominate the domain of democratic theory. In contrast, the humanities have contributed little to our understanding of democracy’s fragile and contingent nature in the past and in the present. Against this background, the workshop aims to strengthen the role of the humanities in scholarly exchanges over the meaning, the fragility and the contingency of democracy as a way of life.

The focus is not on the content of content, i.e. democratic ideas in democratic polities, but on the content of form. The workshop therefore invites conversations about the democratic content of aesthetic forms, styles, and manners. It aims to revise Walter Benjamin’s argument that an aestheticization of politics gives rise to fascism as well as to rethink our understanding of aesthetics and the political generally. The workshop focuses on the question if there are forms of political aesthetics, as opposed to aestheticized politics, that are democratic rather than authoritarian.
WEDNESDAY, JULY 2ND  
OPENING NIGHT  
18.30 DIETRICH BOSCHUNG (ARCHEOLOGY) COLOGNE  
Welcome Address  
18.45 JOHANNES VON MOLTKE (FILM STUDIES) ANN ARBOR  
Introductory Comments “Movie-Made Democracy”  
19.15 FILM SCREENING  
“The Searchers” Directed by John Ford / USA 1956  

THURSDAY, JULY 3RD  
MATERIALS AND MEDIA  
10.00 Introductory Remarks  
LEORA AUSLANDER (MATERIAL STUDIES AND HISTORY) CHICAGO  
NATALIE SCHOLZ (MATERIAL STUDIES AND HISTORY) AMSTERDAM  
Comments  
SUSANNE SCHREDEL (HISTORY) COLOGNE  
JAKOB TANNER (HISTORY) ZURICH  
13.00 Lunch break  

VOICES AND VISTAS  
15.00 Introductory Remarks  
JENNIFER EVANS (HISTORY AND VISUAL CULTURE) OTTAWA  
PATRICIA HAYES (VISUAL HISTORY) CAPE TOWN  
Comments  
GRACE HALE (HISTORY AND MUSICOLOGY) CHARLOTTESVILLE  
RALPH JESSEN (HISTORY) COLOGNE  

FRIDAY, JULY 4TH  
RITUALS AND RHYTHMS  
10.00 Introductory Remarks  
PETRA RETHMANN (ANTHROPOLOGY) HAMILTON, ON  
NIELS WEBER (GERMAN STUDIES) SIEGEN  
Comments  
BARBARA THÉRIault (SOCIOLoGY) MONTREAL  
ULRIKE LINDNER (HISTORY) COLOGNE  
13.00 Lunch break  

HIGH AND LOW  
15.00 Introductory Remarks  
KARIN BAUER (GERMAN STUDIES) MONTREAL  
PETER NIESEN (POLITICAL THEORY) HAMBURG  
Comments  
CHRISTIAN GEULEN (MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY HISTORY)  
KOBLENZ  
KERSTIN SCHMIDT (AMERICAN STUDIES) EICHSTATT  

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION  
17.30 Introductory Remarks:  
PATRICIA HAYES (VISUAL HISTORY) CAPE TOWN  
JAKOB TANNER (MODERN HISTORY) ZURICH  
GRACE HALE (HISTORY AND MUSICOLOGY) CHARLOTTESVILLE  

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Concept  
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