

RACE AND RACISM: PUTTING SWITZERLAND ON THE MAP



2nd & 3rd OF JUNE 2022

University of Fribourg

About the Event

This international conference historicizes and contextualizes Switzerland's participation in European racist ideas and practices, at home and abroad. By spotlighting a country with a long-held proud idea of neutrality and humanitarianism, Switzerland affords us an opportunity to look at a particular mode of racism: one that James Baldwin characterized as "innocent" in his 1953 essay, "Stranger in the Village." Baldwin contrasted his experiences of "innocent racism" in a white alpine village in Switzerland with the violent history of racism in his beloved United States of America. As a Black gay man, Baldwin experienced this "innocent racism" in Switzerland, and Europe more broadly, as one masked by benevolence and a seeming gentleness harboring a deep nostalgic naivety about the history of European racism. Hence, putting Switzerland on the map of race and racism studies affords us an opportunity to make racial innocence visible so we can examine how it feeds violence—to humans and the Earth—in the name of progress. Racism, in its antisemitic and varied forms, toward Jewish, Indigenous, African, Black, Latinx, Asian, Mixed, Muslim, Migrant, Roma, Sinti, and Yenish communities is a daily experience for many in Switzerland and beyond. Intersecting in many forms with class, ability, age, gender, sexuality, religion or nationality, this racism is rooted in Western European ideas and practices forcefully projected on to the human world, and the planet, since the 1400s.

In the French and German anthology *Un/Doing Race* that spawned this international conference, the editors and contributors situate Switzerland within the paradoxes of cherished racial innocence and whiteness in this small landlocked country. This Swiss-specific conversation is broadened through this conference, that is also an invitation to those born human, but acculturated into whiteness, to participate in dismantling whiteness and racism. Putting Switzerland on the racist map through this conference affords those born human, but marked as an Other, to put forward their vision of what it means to live fully human lives not circumscribed by the ubiquitous quotidian racism that remains embedded in the global structures and systems of our contemporary world.

This event was organized in collaboration with the Department of Contemporary History of the University of Fribourg, and the Graduate School Gender Studies of the University of Bern.

Program

Thursday, 2nd of June 2022

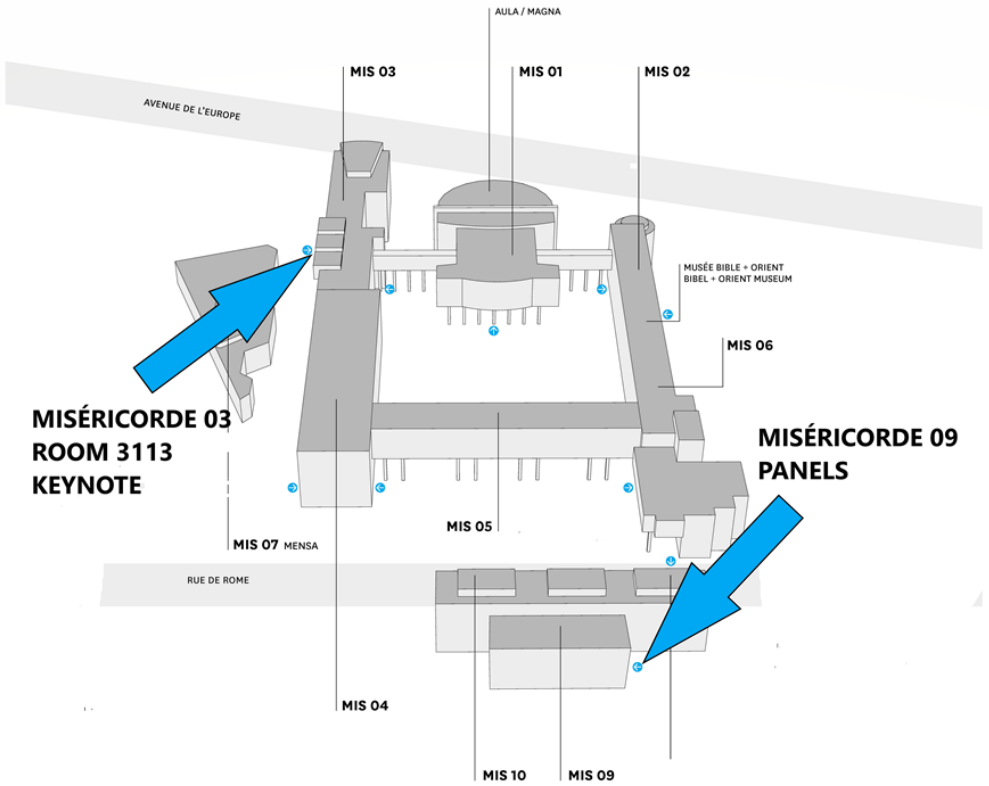
- 13:30 - 14:00 **Welcome and Introduction Remarks**
Christina Späti (University of Fribourg)
- 14:00 - 15:30 **Un/doing Race in Switzerland: A Conversation**
Graziella Moraes Dias da Silva (Graduate Institute Geneva),
Anne Lavanchy (University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western
Switzerland), Nayansaku Mufwankolo (HEAD – Genève)
Moderator – Serena O. Dankwa (University of Bern)
Miséricorde 09, Rue de Rome 2
- 15:30 - 16:00 **Coffee Break**
- 16:00 - 17:30 **Expert Conversations from Home and Abroad: Tracing Swiss
Race Knowledge**
Conversation #1: The Racial Complex (on Carl G. Jung)
Fanny Brewster (Pacifica Graduate Institute, Santa Barbara, via
Zoom), Ruramisai Charumbira (University of Bern), Angela Graf-
Nold (Jung Scholar & Psychotherapist)
Moderator – Patricia Purtschert (University of Bern)
Miséricorde 09, Rue de Rome 2
- 17:30 - 18:00 **Break**
- 18:00 - 19:30 **Keynote: Deregulating Racism: A Critique**
David Theo Goldberg (University of California, Irvine)
Moderator – Christina Späti (University of Fribourg)
Miséricorde 03, Room 3113, Avenue de l'Europe 20

Program

Friday, 3rd of June 2022

- 10:00 - 11:30 **Racialised Subjectivities**
Isis Giraldo (University of Lausanne), Meral Kaya (University of Bern), Paola De Martin (Zurich University of the Arts)
Moderator – Ruramisai Charumbira (University of Bern)
Miséricorde 09, Rue de Rome 2
- 11:30 - 13:00 **Lunch**
- 13:00 - 14:30 **Expert Conversations from Home and Abroad: Tracing Swiss Race Knowledge**
Conversation #2: Measuring the Racist Mind (on Louis Agassiz)
Joseph L. Graves (North Carolina A&T State University, via Zoom), Hans Fässler (independent historian and activist), Simone Rees (University of Fribourg)
Moderator – Barbara Lüthi (University of Leipzig)
Miséricorde 09, Rue de Rome 2
- 14:30 - 15:00 **Coffee Break**
- 15:00 - 16:30 **Roundtable: Race and Responsibilities: Conversations across Academia and Activism**
Mohamed Wa Baile (Alliance against Racial Profiling), Monique Eckmann (University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland), Rohit Jain (University of Zurich), Izabel Barros (cfd-die feministische Friedensorganisation / Berner Rassismus Stammtisch)
Moderator – Carlos Hanimann (Republik, Zurich)
Miséricorde 09, Rue de Rome 2
- 16:30 - 17:00 **Closing Remarks**
Miséricorde 09, Rue de Rome 2

Site Plan



Registration

racismconference@unifr.ch

Register 10 days before the event, by **May 22, 2022** to participate in person or via Zoom. **Physical space is limited.**



Organizing Committee

Ruramisai Charumbira (University of Bern)

Anne Lavanchy (University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland)

Barbara Lüthi (University of Leipzig)

Patricia Purtschert (University of Bern)

Bernhard Schär (University of Lausanne)

Damir Skenderovic (University of Fribourg)

Christina Späti (University of Fribourg)