



FRIAS Express - December 2023

Dear FRIAS Community,

two months into the Academic Year 2023/24, the new fellow cohort already seems to have settled in quite well. It's a pleasure to experience the rich FRIAS culture that is created by everyone involved asking each other unexpected and inspiring questions that stretch across disciplines during our various events. We wish you all a wonderful winter time!

Staudinger Lecture with Neuroscientist Edvard Moser



The perception of space and time is essential for higher brain functions. In the 30th edition of the Hermann Staudinger Lecture on December 12, 2023, at 2 p.m., Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine 2014, Edvard I. Moser, will explain the mechanisms underlying these processes.

[More information](#)

FRIAS Lunch Lectures on Metaphors in Science

Cells, Turns, and Footprints – Metaphors in Science

FRIAS Lunch Lectures 2023/24



Metaphors are usually associated with literature and poetry. But they also play a decisive role in our understanding of scientific concepts. Our Lunch Lectures intend to explore this further. Check Veronika Lipphardt's [Director's Corner](#) at the end of this newsletter for some insights into the discussions and join our next session with Arantzazu Saratzaga Arregi on December 14.

[More information](#)

On Industrial Agriculture and the History of Inflation



On November 28, Bartholomäus Grill discussed his new book "Bauernsterben," which talks about the fatal consequences of industrial agriculture, with Freiburg citizens as part of the "FRIAS Freiburg Horizons". At the next event, historian Harold James (Princeton University) will outline "A World History of Inflation and Globalization from 1850 to the Present". The lecture will be held in German.

[More information](#)

Open Call: FRIAS Conference for Early Career Researchers



Are you a PhD candidate, PostDoc, non-tenured researcher or Junior Professor at the University of Freiburg? Do you and your colleagues have a relevant academic topic and innovative ideas how to plan and host an attractive conference around it? We offer funding for one or two conferences with up to 35 participants. It will take place at FRIAS between October 2024 and May 2025.

[More information](#)

Focus on our Fellows



News, Publications & Awards

Eva von Contzen, current FRIAS Fellow, has been awarded a [Consolidator grant](#) of 2 million euros by the European Research Council (ERC). This funding supports von Contzen's research projects on retellings in English literature.

Former Fellow and current member of the FRIAS Steering Committee, Johanna Pink, is the editor of the recently published book [Qur'an Translation in Indonesia](#) which includes a chapter from our current Fellow [Ervan Nurtawab](#).

The FRIAS Junior Researcher Conference [Transformations of the Political. Radical Democratic Theory for the 2020s](#) has resulted in an [edited volume published at transcript](#) (in German). Among the organizers was former FRIAS Fellow Karsten Schubert.

Jörn Leonard, former Director of the FRIAS School of History and Professor of Modern and Contemporary History of Western Europe at the University of Freiburg, will receive the [Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize 2024](#). It is the most important research award in Germany and it is endowed with a maximum of 2.5 million euros.

US-American linguist Joan Bresnan, who conducted research at FRIAS at multiple times between 2009 and 2012, has been inducted into the [National Academy of Sciences](#). Membership of the academy, which has existed since 1863, is one of the highest honors a scientist can be awarded in the United States.

We welcome Encarnación Gutiérrez-Rodríguez as a new member of our [Scientific Advisory Board](#). Gutiérrez-Rodríguez is Professor of Sociology with a focus on Culture and Migration at Goethe University Frankfurt

Do you have news, publications, awards or anything else that could be interesting for the FRIAS Express? Please let us know: presse@frias.uni-freiburg.de.

Departures and Arrivals at FRIAS

The following fellows are new at FRIAS or have left us/will leave us soon.

Arrivals

Peter Arkadiev (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Linguistics)

Anika Walke (Washington University in St. Louis, History)

Jenny Benham (Cardiff University, History)

Ipsita Mandal (Shiv Nadar Institute of Eminence, Theoretical Condensed Matter Physics)

Suzanne Mohny (Pennsylvania State University, Materials Science and Engineering)

Departures

Lauren Rickards (La Trobe University, Human Geography)

Brian Laird (University of Kansas, Theoretical Chemistry)

Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist (Stockholm University, Historical Geography)

Giancarlo Urzúa (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Mathematics)

Eva von Contzen (University of Freiburg, English Literature)

Hans Joas (Humboldt University Berlin, Sociology)

Institutes for Advanced Study Strive for Visibility



FRIAS has participated in numerous national and international initiatives within the networks of Institutes for Advanced Study (IAS). During a meeting at the Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg in Delmenhorst, 15 representatives from German IAS collaborated to craft a [position paper](#) underscoring the unique potential of IAS. The objective is to enhance the visibility of these institutes in the public, political, and academic sphere ([see also interview with Giovanni Gallizià](#)). At the annual [NetIAS](#)-meeting at the Zukunftskolleg Konstanz, in October 2023 (see photo), the participants discussed new and ongoing Netias projects like the [CAT](#)-programme, which is also offered by FRIAS. FRIAS will be active in a new NetIAS working group on early career researchers together with Iméra in Aix and Marseille. In November 2023, under FRIAS participation, the bi-annual [UBIAS](#)-meeting was held in Nagoya.

News from the YAS



Is sustainability near or far, colorful or black and white? [Katrin von Lehmann](#) has been exploring these questions as artist in residence at YAS over the past two years. She will present her creations at an exhibition at T66 Kulturwerk Freiburg, commencing on January, 26. More information will follow.

YAS members Cristina Espinosa, Rike Sinder, and Zabrina Welter hosted a workshop at FRIAS, delving into specific aspects of environmental justice, an issue gaining increasing prominence in legal processes. Read more in the [conference report](#).

Hussam Hussein and Benjamin Schütze will contribute to this year's UN Climate Change Conference (COP28), discussing the role of young scientists in addressing climate change through science-informed innovation, technology and policy (December 10, 5-6:30 p.m.).

YAS members Chad Zanocco and Rita Sousa-Silva have published an article on "Extreme heat experience influences public support for local climate adaptation policies in Germany" in [Urban Climate](#). The publication has resulted from a joint YAS project. Hussam Hussein has published a brief statement on the violation of international water laws in Gaza in [Nature](#).

Director's Corner

For me, it's the unexpected moments of exchange between Fellows from very different fields that make FRIAS one of the most enriching places in Freiburg. I simply love it when the optogeneticists compares the cell first to a house and then to a castle from "Harry Potter", or when the sociologist wants to borrow a biochemical pathway to map it as a metaphor onto society.

This semester, the FRIAS Lunch Lectures are devoted to Metaphors in the Sciences. The first two thematic sessions were utterly thought-provoking and already stirred a lively debate. [Maria Sulimma](#) discussed the use of metaphors in Cultural Studies, where they are regularly viewed as objects of research. The use of *waves* as a metaphor was shown to be problematic as it suggests a regular pattern which might not be a given in reality (her example being the so-called waves of feminist thinking), whereas the metaphor of the *wake* proves to be less deterministic and rather a means to probe into new and multi-layered understandings. From Sulimma and the Cultural Studies, other disciplines can learn to adopt a sensitive approach towards metaphors in research – one that includes reflecting on the context the metaphor arises from, as well as on its cultural, social and historical connotations.

[Daniel Duzdevich](#), the second speaker, looked less at the use of metaphors in his field – molecular biology – but rather discussed his hypothesis that experiments in the lab work like metaphors. The example he chose was RNA polymerization, notably without enzymes, as it is being done in the study of the origins of life. He argued that because nobody can see RNA polymerizing (as it is just too tiny to be observed), the experiment renders this reaction visible by transferring it into a complex experimental system designed to make it visible; molecular biologist then metaphorically say they "run a gel", "perform" an experiment, and "read" the results from the gel. Duzdevich encouraged the audience to reflect on the relation between "abstraction" and "concreteness" in these two cases (experiments and metaphors), as they are by no means self-evident.

And vice versa, "why not speak of metaphors as experiments?", asked Ralf von den Hoff during the discussions, opening up a new strand of thinking for the Humanities. I thought about how Duzdevich's metaphor of "performing" an experiment does not mean that humans do the performance: rather, they are the stage directors who, within the experimental setting, prepare the stage for the actors – molecules – to manifest themselves.

With this in mind, we are all looking forward to the next sessions, each time hosted by a different discipline and with many possibly new interconnections. A big Thank You to all our speakers who have accepted our invitation and on behalf of the FRIAS Board of Directors, I wish you a wonderful winter season!

With warm regards,
Veronika Lipphardt,

FRIAS Director Social Sciences



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