

Full Abstract

The time of festivals, according to Jan Assmann, is different from the time of everyday life: it is not contingent, but 'staged' ('inszeniert'), i.e., it is not subject to accident, it is structured and non-arbitrary; it is characterized by abundance and by the transcendence of the narrow perspective of everyday life and its routine as well as the 'effervescence' of emotions – all hallmarks of beauty and completeness, which humans need, but which cannot be realized within the constraints of everyday life.

In this workshop, we want to take these observations further and examine more closely, what it is that makes festive time so special. Does time pass more slowly or more quickly during festivals, is it particularly intense, or is it 'thicker' than normal time, imbued with the memories and traditions not only of one lifetime, but also of countless past generations? Is there just one 'festive time', or do different kinds of festivals have different temporalities? How does the rhythmic recurrence of a festival as well as its synchronous or asynchronous occurrence with other events contribute to its distinctive temporality? What are the social, institutional and gendered dimensions of festive temporality? Which role does the passage of time play as festivals acquire new meanings over time within one or even between different cultures?

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← [Back to the event page](#)