

Séminaire ERIBIA 2014-2015
Mémoire, transmission et création

9 avril 14-18 heures : Séminaire double
MRSH, salle des Thèses

16h15 : Franck MEHRING (Université de Nijmegen, P-B) :
***Visualizing the United States of Europe: Memory, Transmission and Reference Cultures in Marshall Plan Photography* ***

Modératrice : Penny Starfield

The Marshall Plan resembles a modern myth that is evoked regularly but hardly understood in its application. International state leaders refer to the economic success story of European Recovery Program as a paradigmatic model to solving geopolitical and economic problems. Surprisingly, today's economic historians agree that the economic boom which Western European countries enjoyed in the late 1940s was related to the Marshall Plan only to a limited degree. However, the "propaganda for democracy," the efforts to modernize, re-educate, and help to construct both national and supranational institutions successfully installed the United States as a reference culture for a "new Europe." My talk will focus on the visual dimension of the Marshall Plan and its strategies to anticipate a "United States of Europe" asking: how is the Marshall Plan remembered today and what can we learn by uncovering its cultural dimensions?

Frank Mehring, professor of American Studies at Radboud University, Nijmegen. He teaches 20th and 21st century visual culture, theories of popular culture, transnational modernism, and processes of cultural translation in Euro-American contexts. In 2012, he received the biennial EAAS Rob Kroes Award for his monograph "The Democratic Gap" as the best book manuscript in Europe in American Studies (Winter: 2014). Professor Mehring is the author of *Sphere Melodies* (Metzler: 2003), which traces the cultural flows between American transcendentalism and the work of the avant-garde composers Charles Ives and John Cage. In 2004, he published a biography on the German-American freedom fighter Charles Follen (Ferber: 2004) and edited his writings under the title *Between Natives and Foreigners* (Lang: 2007). With Stefan L. Brandt and Winfried Fluck, he edited *Transcultural Spaces: Challenges of Urbanity, Ecology, and the Environment in the New Millennium* (Narr: 2010). Frank Mehring has been a member of the German National Merit Foundation, he was awarded a DAAD stipend at the music department of Harvard University (1997-8) and a Fulbright American Studies Fellowship to the Department of English and American Literature and Language at Harvard University (2004-5). After 2006, Mehring worked as an assistant and guest professor at the John F. Kennedy-Institute for North American Studies/Free University of Berlin. In 2008 and 2009, he was a fellow at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. He offered courses on popular culture in Euro-American contexts to American undergraduate students in the Berlin European Studies Program (FU-BEST), the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy, and as an Erasmus Exchange Professor at the Karl-Franzens-University Graz. He co-curated exhibitions on Winold Reiss, the Marshall Plan, and Liberation Songs in New York, Nijmegen and The Hague.

* Conférence en anglais

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