

MONSTROUS MATTERS – DFG-NETWORK

PROGRAMM

SYMPOSIUM – 30.10.2026-1.11.2026

THEATER HEILBRONN

Vom 30.10.2026 bis 01.11.2026 veranstaltet das DFG-Netzwerk MONSTROUS MATTERS in Kooperation mit dem Theater Heilbronn ein dreitägiges Symposium mit Beiträgen zwischen Theorie und Praxis. Neben künstlerischen Gastspielen von Ocean Stefan (MONSTER SHOW), Xavier Le Roy (Monster of Circumstances) und Monster Mansion gibt es wissenschaftliche Beiträge von Meriam Bousselmi, Michael Chemers (Leiter des Center for Monster Studies an der UCSC), Jalondra Davis, Eva Döhne, Jose Nateras, Féline Rathke, Martina Ruhsam, Analola Santana, Marie Simons, Gerald Siegmund, Birgit Stammberger, Ekaterina Trachsel, Catherine Vrtis und Andreas Wolfsteiner. Zu Gast sind außerdem Mike Halekakis (Podcast THE SHOW WHERE THEY TALK ABOUT MONSTERS) und Norbert Finzsch (Autor von „Abjekte Körper“).

VOLL:MILCH eröffnet eine partizipative, mobile Monster-Archiv-Station in nota und an Halloween gibt es ein Nachmittags-Programm für Kinder, wir rufen bei einem Vernetzungs-Apéro feierlich das EUROPEAN CENTER FOR MONSTER STUDIES aus und feiern gemeinsam eine große Halloweenparty.

Hier finden Sie die Veranstaltungen im Spielplan des Theaters. Das wissenschaftliche Programm ist kostenlos, wobei häufig Zählkarten nötig sind. Die künstlerischen Programmpunkte können über das Ticketsystem des Theater Heilbronn erworben werden: https://www.theater-heilbronn.de/programm/monster-symposium/uebersicht_monster-symposium.php

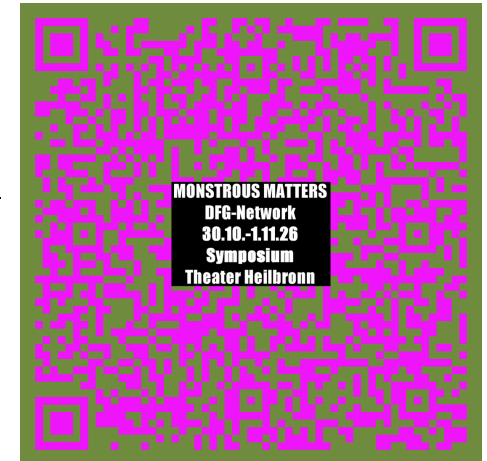
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From 30 October 2026 to 1 November 2026, the DFG-network MONSTROUS MATTERS, in cooperation with Theater Heilbronn, will host a three-day symposium featuring contributions that move between theory and practice. Alongside artistic guest performances by Ocean Stefan (MONSTER SHOW), Xavier Le Roy (Monster of Circumstances), and Monster Mansion, the program will include scholarly contributions by Meriam Bousselmi, Michael Chemers (director of the Center for Monster Studies at UCSC), Jalondra Davis, Eva Döhne, Jose Nateras, Féline Rathke, Martina Ruhsam, Analola Santana, Marie Simons, Gerald Siegmund, Birgit Stammberger, Ekaterina Trachsel, Catherine Vrtis, and Andreas Wolfsteiner. Also joining the event are Mike Halekakis (podcast THE SHOW WHERE THEY TALK ABOUT MONSTERS) and Norbert Finzsch (author of Abjekte Körper).

VOLL:MILCH will open a participatory, mobile monster archive station in nota, and on Halloween there will be an afternoon program for children. At a networking aperitif, we will ceremonially announce the EUROPEAN CENTER FOR MONSTER STUDIES and celebrate together with a big Halloweenparty.

Here you will find the events listed in the theater's program. The academic program is free of charge, though admission tickets are often required. Tickets for the artistic events can be purchased through the Theater Heilbronn ticketing system: https://www.theater-heilbronn.de/programm/monster-symposium/uebersicht_monster-symposium.php

Hinweis zu Sprache und Vermittlung: Studierende aus der Angewandten Theaterwissenschaft an der JLU Gießen und der Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt am Main werden (dramaturgische) Rahmungen einiger der Veranstaltungen während der drei Tage in Heilbronn gestalten: Geplant sind Einführungen, Nachgespräche, Übersetzungs- und Zugangsmöglichkeiten und Begleit-Möglichkeiten (Monster Mentees), um dem Monströsen an diesem Wochenende in Heilbronn eine dramaturgische Rahmung zu geben, die möglichst zugänglich ist für möglichst viele Menschen. // **Note on language and mediation:** Students from Applied Theatre Studies at JLU Giessen and Goethe University Frankfurt am Main will design the (dramaturgical) framing of some of the events over the three days in Heilbronn. Planned elements include introductions, post-show discussions, translation and access options, and accompanying support formats (Monster Mentees) in order to provide the monstrous with a dramaturgical framework in Heilbronn that is as accessible as possible to as many people as possible.



30.10.2026

Ab 10h Foyer KAMMERSPIELE

not^amonster: Monster Archiv Station

Eine digitale Archivstation zum Mitmachen: archiviert eure Monster bei uns! Birk Schindler von VOLL:MILCH lädt alle Interessierten ein, mit dem von Künstler:innen programmierten Online-Programm *nota* (www.nota.space) in das Monster Archiv des Netzwerks MONSTROUS MATTERS einzutauchen und auch selbst zu archivieren. // A hands-on digital archiving station: archive your monsters with us! Birk Schindler from VOLL:MILCH invites anyone interested to use the online program *nota* (www.nota.space) – developed by artists – to explore the Monster Archive of the MONSTROUS MATTERS network and to archive their own creations.

Interaktive Station zum Mitmachen im Foyer

Sprache: Deutsch oder Englisch möglich

10-12h KAMMERSPIELE

Panel I: THIS LECTURE IS A MONSTER – a plurilogue

What if an academic lecture itself was monstrous? This panel presents a reconstructed assemblage of reanimated parts of academic discourse and the act of giving a lecture, led by the Spider-woman who weaves together our many practices, accompanied by a host of spooky scholars.

Wissenschaftliche Beiträge von: Michael Chemers, Meriam Bousselmi, Jose Nateras, Féline Rathke

Sprache: Englisch und Deutsch gemischt

13-14h KAMMERSPIELE

MONSTER OF CIRCUMSTANCES – a Lecture Performance by Xavier Le Roy

Xavier Le Roy is one of the world's most influential conceptual choreographers. A trained molecular biologist, he has been creating works for stages and exhibition spaces since 1991 and has been professor at the Institute for Applied Theater Studies in Giessen since 2018. In *Monster of Circumstances* Le Roy explores how monsters come into being, how they escape from fantasy worlds and invade our daily lives to be among us and within us – and how they might help us overcome our fears. The versatile and disarmingly direct performer Le Roy succeeds, using simple means, in transforming the space together with the audience. As in many of his works that have become classics of performance art, he opens up a space of experience together with the audience, in which the principles of performance itself become visible and theory is conveyed sensually through the means of live performance.

Sprache: Englisch

15-17h Brunnen vor dem Theater und Foyer großes Haus // Fountain in front of the theater and the main theater lobby

PANEL II: The Venus Speaks – Monstrosity of the Gaze

In this interactive lecture performance Jalondra Davis, Marie Simons and Ekaterina Trachsel focus on the female* body displayed as monstrous. By looking at three different (historic) figures we are looking at specific aesthetic practices and strategies of staging the gaze – both then and now. Inside and outside of the theatre. We invite the audience to meet us at the fountain in front of Theater Heilbronn and explore different perspectives on the Mermaid, the Strongwoman and the Anatomical Venus.

Wissenschaftliche Beiträge von: Jalondra Davis, Marie Simons, Ekaterina Trachsel

Sprache: vorwiegend Englisch

18-19h KAMMERSPIELE

30 Years of Monster Studies – The Network MONSTROUS MATTERS Celebrates!

The network-members of MONSTROUS MATTERS celebrate 30 years of Monster Studies by sharing their research, perspectives and approaches to the monstrous. By tracing key questions, figures and methodologies, they offer insights into Monster Studies as a field that explores bodies, boundaries and imaginaries across disciplines and historical contexts. Reflecting on their collaboration with Theater Heilbronn, the network discusses how artistic and academic practices intersect and how this exchange has shaped the current program. We invite the audience to join us in getting to know the researchers, their work and the ideas that will unfold over the coming days – through performances, discussions and encounters with the monstrous in its many forms.

Das DFG-Netzwerk MONSTROUS MATTERS stellt sich vor: Meriam Bousselmi, Michael Chemers, Jalondra Davis, Eva Döhne, Jose Nateras, Féline Rathke, Martina Ruhsam, Analola Santana, Marie Simons, Gerald Siegmund, Birgit Stammberger, Ekaterina Trachsel, Catherine Vrtis, Andreas Wolfsteiner

Sprache: vorwiegend Englisch

20-21:15h KLEINES HAUS

MONSTER SHOW – a performance by Ocean Stefan

Gastspiel (UK)

As the iconic 1931 film 'Frankenstein' plays silently in the background, a lone creature stands on stage to perform the live score. From deep inside a frankly ridiculous costume, they attempt the impossible task of delivering the entire soundtrack using just one voice. Dialogue, sound effects, music, everything. MONSTER SHOW is an uncompromising attempt to re-dub every moment of audio from this black and white horror classic. It's a trans act of purging outdated narratives, championing radical bodies and being many things at once.

And it is alive.

Sprache: Englisch

21:30-00:00h KLEINES HAUS-Foyer

Monstrous Drinks und Hangout (informell)

31.10.2026

Ab 10h Foyer KAMMERSPIELE

not^amonster: Monster Archiv Station

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Interaktive Station zum Mitmachen im Foyer

Sprache: Deutsch oder Englisch möglich

10-12h SALON

Panel III: Epistemological traces of the monstrous in history

As Michel Foucault argues in „The Abnormal“, monsters do not just break the law but they suspend it, because the law is not applicable to their doings. The four contributions to this panel argue, therefore, that monsters appear at the faultlines not only of value but also of knowledge systems. Looking forward to what is to come, while not being able to let go of what was, they raise their incongruous heads in times of transition and change in which truths are suspended. The performative lectures in this panel will discuss various of these faultlines by addressing questions of teratology, gender, and the actor's body.

Wissenschaftliche Beiträge von: Eva Döhne, Andreas Wolfsteiner, Analola Santana, Gerald Siegmund

Sprache: vorwiegend Englisch

Ab 11h im ganzen Haus

Monster Mansion – performative Interventionen und partizipative Formate im ganzen Haus

Katharina Hantke, Dominik Keggenhoff, Nikolaus Kockel, Dennis Dita Kopp, Nora Schön, Marie Simons bevölkern als Monster das Theater Heilbronn.

Sprache: Deutsch oder Englisch möglich

13-14h KLEINES HAUS

Playing Dress Up: What We Get from Occupying Monstrosity

For as much as humans hate and fear monsters, we love them just as much. One way that love is expressed is through masking traditions including Halloween, Purim, cosplay, and more. This kind of pretend lets us benefit from playing the monster without fear of being trapped in the role. Come and listen to find out more about why we do it!

Wissenschaftliche Beiträge von: Michael Chemers, Catherine Vrtis, Andreas Wolfsteiner

Sprache: voraussichtlich Englisch mit deutschen Untertiteln & Deutsch mit englischen Untertiteln

15-18h KAMMERSPIELE

ZWEI MONSTER – Ein flauschiger Theaterstreit von Gertrud Pigor frei Nach dem Bilderbuch Du Hast Angefangen! Nein, Du! von David McKee

Aufführung, Theater Heilbronn (Junges Theater)

Danach Kinder-Halloweenparty auf der Probebühne

15:30-17h SALON

Gründungsvernissage EUROPEAN CENTER FOR MONSTER STUDIES (ECMS) – Netzwerktreffen und Apéro für alle Interessierten

Sprache: Englisch und Deutsch gemischt

18-21h GROSSES HAUS

THE ADDAMS FAMILY – Ein Grusical von Marshall Brickman und Rick Elice mit Musik von Andrew Lippa

Aufführung, Theater Heilbronn

Ab 21h GROSSES HAUS

HALLOWEENPARTY

21:30-22h SALON

THE SHOW WHERE THEY TALK ABOUT MONSTERS – Live-Podcast-Session

<https://open.spotify.com/show/2lpWMfkY8UfZOWELrwOeB8?si=ffc20a521d6b4b77>

MONSTERS! They haunt our days and chill our dreaming nights, to paraphrase Emily Dickinson. There's not a population on earth that does not have its own unique monster stories to tell to frighten, but also to instruct on the nature of good and evil, right and wrong. But what happens when monsters get out of control, when the monstrous imagination starts to bleed over into the real world? What are the effects of monsters on real people's real lives? This podcast examines the histories and mysteries of some of our favorite monsters to unlock their secrets and expose their influence on our lives. Join podcast host Mike Halekakis (Boom! Knowledge) and monster expert Dr. Michael Chemers (The Monster in Theatre History: This Thing of Darkness) for a lively and hilarious discussion about the things that scare us the most.

Mike Halekakis, Ekaterina Trachsel, Michael Chemers

Sprache: Englisch

1.11.2026

11-12:30h SALON

Hangover-Breakfast with the Monsters – Talk with Ocean Stefan & Norbert Finzsch

Ocean Stefan (they/them) makes work which runs across performance, installation, text and film. Their practice is one of inbetweenness and overlap, which celebrates liveness and slippage. They are interested in the grey areas in life, and their work is committed to undoing things which claim to be fixed.

Ocean is currently undertaking a PhD in posthuman performance, in the Centre For Research And Education In The Arts And Media (CREAM), at University of Westminster.

Norbert Finzsch (Prof. Dr. phil.), born in 1951, taught North American history at the University of Cologne until 2016. Since 2020, he has been a professor at Sigmund Freud Private University Berlin. In 2017, he received the Meyer-Struckmann Prize for his research on the history of the body. He is the author of „Abjekte Körper: Zur Kulturgeschichte der Monstrositäten – Die historischen Wurzeln der Transphobie: Ein Überblick über die Ablehnung von abjekten Körpern im globalen Westen seit 1500“.

Moderation Ekaterina Trachsel und Michael Chemers

Sprache: Englisch

13-15h KAMMERSPIELE

Panel IV: Monstrous Embodiments: An Encyclopedia of Disjunctions

Given the range of monstrous embodiments, and the impossibility of ever fully defining the scope of monstrosity, we are embracing insight via juxtaposition by presenting on a range of individual case studies. Loosely modeled on Fortuna Liceti's De Monstrum.

Wissenschaftliche Beiträge von: Martina Ruhsam, Birgit Stammberger, Catherine Vrtis

Sprache: Englisch