



**3RD YOUNG MARSILIUS FELLOWS' EVENT**

# **FROM END TO BEGINNING**

**AN INTERDISCIPLINARY ADVENTURE**

**18.7.2024**

**12:00 – 18:00**

**Marsilius-Kolleg**

3RD YOUNG MARSILIUS FELLOWS' EVENT

**FROM END  
TO BEGINNING**

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY ADVENTURE



## GREETINGS

Dear participants,  
Dear Young Marsilius Fellows 2023-24,

4 The Young Marsilius Fellowships are relatively new, but after only three years, they have already had a clearly positive impact on the Marsilius Kolleg and its perception within the university and beyond. We are delighted that each group is discovering and making the most of the opportunities the Kolleg has to offer. This also applies to you, the Young Marsilius Fellows 2023/24 – we hope that you have experienced the Marsilius Kolleg as an open, inspiring and encouraging community into which you have been welcomed.

Today's final event is an impressive proof that you, the Young Marsilius Fellows 2023-24 have made intensive use of the past year and have absorbed the interdisciplinary spirit of the Marsilius Kolleg. You have approached the motto of the year, "Beginning & End", in a critical, committed and creative way. The result is an event entitled "From End to Beginning". You have reversed the order of the two key terms and thus deliberately focused on transitions. The subtitle "An Interdisciplinary Adventure" and the division into six "chapters" – like in an adventure novel – stand for your creative and courageous approach and the linking of interdisciplinary research aspects with science communication. We

are also delighted that you were able to persuade the Chairman of the German Science and Humanities Council, our Heidelberg colleague Wolfgang Wick, to take part in a panel discussion. We congratulate you on the impressive program you have put together and wish all those involved every success, stimulating discussions and new intellectual insights. Moreover, we hope that you, dear Young Marsilius Fellows, will emerge from your year with interdisciplinary strength and encouragement, and that you will remain connected to the Marsilius Kolleg in the future.

On this day, you, dear participants, will experience the diversity and wealth of ideas of the Young Marsilius Fellows at first hand. We hope that you will have a lot of fun and that you will receive new impulses and intellectual stimulation.

All the best

Michael Boutros and Friederike Nüssel  
Directors of the Marsilius Kolleg

# PROGRAM

## FROM END TO BEGINNING – AN INTERDISCIPLINARY ADVENTURE

*18.7.2024 at the Marsilius-Kolleg*

**12.00**

### **Prologue**

Opening remarks by

Prof. Dr. Friederike Nüssel,

*Director of the Marsilius Kolleg*

**12.20**

### **Chapter 1: Unexpected connections**

A verbal journey from Beginning to End of the research process, seen through the lens of the different YMF research projects

**12.45**

### **Chapter 2: Food for thoughts**

*Lunch*

**14.00**

### **Chapter 3: The cycle of passing on: Reflecting on heritage**

A roundtable on transgenerational heritage: perspectives from psychology, anthropology, linguistics, and mathematics

**15.00**

### **Chapter 4: A break through objects, data, and other dangerous things**

'Data is Art' Exhibition, interactive video games, world map, experiment, simulation

**16.30**

### **Chapter 5: Mind the gap – Science in progress**

Opening impulse by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Wick, Chairman of the German Science and Humanities Council, Flash talks by Young Marsilius fellows on failure, surprises, and setbacks during the scientific process (and how to recover from them)

*Discussion*

**17.30**

### **Chapter 6: On to new beginnings**

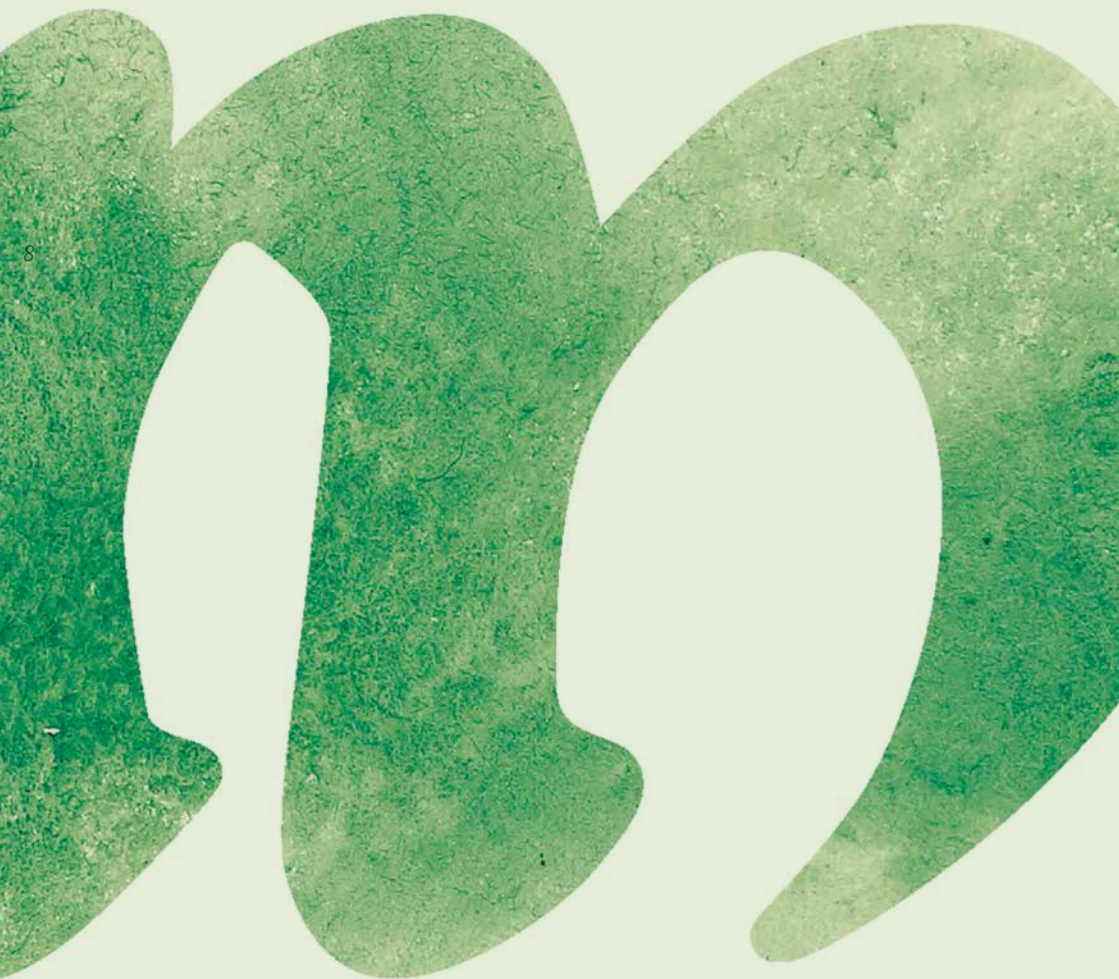
Closing remarks, YMF reflections, Data is Art prize ceremony, presentation of the world map experiment

**18.00**

### **Epilogue**

*Reception*





## SPECIAL GUEST: WOLFGANG WICK

Wolfgang Wick is the current chair of the German Science and Humanities Council, professor of neurology, and medical director of the Department of Neurology at the Heidelberg University Hospital. He completed his Ph.D. at Bonn University and his medical training at the Neurological Clinic of the University Hospital Tübingen. Since 2014 he has been the Chair of Neurology at the University of Heidelberg and Medical Director of the Neurological Clinic as well as spokesperson of the Kopfklinik (Head Clinic) in Heidelberg. Wick's work and research focus is the treatment of brain tumors, especially glioblastoma. His work includes over 700 academic publications and has been awarded with a number of awards, including the Attempo-Preis for Neurobiology (2001) and the German Cancer Prize (2015).





*From left to right: André Pfob, Katja Isabell Seitz, Héctor Álvarez Mella, Anja Greinacher, Chris Byrohl, Jan Rombouts, Paula Arana Barbier, Raphael Schäfer, Madeline Werthschulte, Saskia Haupt, Mischa von Krause, Wikke Jansen*



# YOUNG MARSILIUS FELLOWS (YMF) 2023-24



## DR. HÉCTOR ÁLVAREZ MELLA

*Romance studies / sociolinguistics*

I study multilingualism in (post-)migrant societies. Human mobility challenges the concept of borders and obliges us to re-think where language communities begin and end. As a YMF, I am looking forward to developing new interdisciplinary research questions with my colleagues.

## DR. ANJA GREINACHER

*Psychology / palliative medicine*

As a psychologist in palliative care, I am researching biography work: patients record audiobooks for their minor children – aligning with this year's YMF motto „Beginning & End“. My initial foray into science communication in this project has sparked a keen interest in learning and exchanging ideas with fellow scientists.



## DR. PAULA ARANA BARBIER

12 *Political science*

I work on “disappeared” Muslim sites in Spain built during the Spanish Civil War. I focus on cemeteries and how someone's “end” and forgotten past might change the future and give us a new beginning. The YMF is perfect for learning to share my research with a broader academic community.



## DR. SASKIA HAUPT

*Mathematics*

The questions of the beginning and the progression of cancer as a disease are the main drivers for me as a mathematician working in cancer research. I develop models of cancer to support patient care. YMF allows me to discuss socially relevant topics in an interdisciplinary team.



13



## DR. CHRIS BYROHL

*Astrophysics*

I am a computational astrophysicist investigating the Universe's evolution from the beginning to the end of its most vigorous galaxy formation era. As a YMF, I am excited about exchanging innovative ideas, technologies and outreach formats used across disciplines in academia.

## DR. WIKKE JANSEN

*Anthropology*

I am an anthropologist of gender and sexuality, religion, and social change in Southeast Asia and Europe. For me, the YMF is a way to explore our social responsibility as scholars to end exploitative dealings with people and the environment as well as to spark new beginnings for ethical research and teaching.



# YOUNG MARSILIUS FELLOWS (YMF) 2023-24



## DR. MISCHA VON KRAUSE

### *Psychology*

Being a psychologist focusing on the development of individual differences in cognition, the human lifespan's "Beginning & End" are for me especially interesting periods of change. As a YMF, I hope to see a new beginning in trans-disciplinary enrichment and understanding.

## DR. RAPHAEL SCHÄFER

### *Law*

I analyze international humanitarian law from a historical perspective. I am especially interested in how the beginning and possible end of a conflict shape the interpretation of legal obligations during warfare. As a YMF, I am looking forward to rediscover and interpret international law from a multi-disciplinary perspective.



## DR. ANDRÉ PFOB

### *Medical Informatics*

I am a physician scientist focusing on Artificial Intelligence in cancer research. "Beginning & End" symbolizes my exploration of AI from early detection to better outcomes. The interdisciplinary dialogue within the YMF will help me identifying innovative cancer care solutions.



## DR. KATJA ISABELL SEITZ

### *Psychotherapy*

As a psychotherapist working in the field of childhood trauma, I study how maltreatment in the beginning of life exerts enduring effects on mental and physical health until the end of life. As a YMF, I am keen on sharing interdisciplinary experiences to broaden my perspective.



## DR. JAN ROMBOUTS

### *Biology / Mathematics*

I use mathematics to study the patterns that guide the development of organisms at the beginning of their lives. Being a researcher is about learning, from nature and from each other. As a YMF, I am eager to learn from the other fellows and develop my communication skills.

## DR. MADELINE WERTHSCHULTE

### *Environmental Economics*

I am an economist studying individual decision-making in the context of mitigating climate change impacts. Reducing climate risks calls for a larger societal transformation, which requires cooperation across disciplines. As YMF, I wish to engage in such interdisciplinary exchange and to broaden my research perspective.

*Having accepted a position at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Madeline Werthschulte had to leave YMF in February 2024.*





# A PLEA FOR MORE SCIENCE COMMUNICATION TRAINING

*by the 2023 – 2024 Young Marsilius Fellows*

In a world where information is everywhere, clear and correct communication is critical. Both online and offline, people discuss a large variety of subjects – from food, family, and religion, to health, economy, or politics. We, as scientists, are specialists in some of these topics and know them to their core. We can – and should – contribute to these conversations: we owe it to society to share our expertise.

Moreover, academic institutions increasingly expect scholars to engage in outreach, to talk about our work, and to publicize it beyond the university. We do our best to put our message out there through various forms of media to make it exciting and relevant for others. For us Young Marsilius Fellows (2023/24 cohort), this has resulted in some genuinely inspiring interactions. For example, one of us reached out to high school students, showcasing the diverse range of things that can be done with a degree in mathematics. Another fellow developed a toolbox to illustrate the process of treating breast cancer, aimed at professionals in the field.

Yet, not all experiences of science communication have been positive. For one of the Young Marsilius Fellows, excitement about his latest paper – published in a good journal, but not something he thought the wider public would be interested in – quickly turned sour after he was approached by media outlets to comment on the findings. Like in many other cases, newspaper reporting largely misrepresented the main message of the paper and took some of the results out of context. Another challenge in communicating our results emerges when we work on controversial personal or political topics. Here, communicating means taking a risk: your message may be used for goals you never intended, or you may be on the receiving end of hate mail or even threats from people who do not agree with your public statements.

Another struggle we experience has to do with the nature of science itself. Scientific results are rarely black and white and require nuanced interpretation. How to communicate complicated statistical results in a few hundred words, as is often demanded by magazines or newspapers? How to succinctly summarize the results of a years-long relationship with participants of an anthropological study? Through our exchanges, we learned that while science communication can yield great results, it has its challenges. What these challenges look like often depends on the discipline.

As Young Marsilius Fellows, we are lucky to be part of an interdisciplinary group. We had the chance to participate in workshops and to share our experiences and our worries regarding science communication. From these discussions, we found that most of us have had some form of relevant training in how to write for, speak to, and engage with a general audience. However, we feel that to deal with some of the challenges outlined above, a more specific, targeted type of training is needed. We have identified a few aspects that need to be addressed. First, comprehensive training should cover not only theoretical principles of science communication, but also include more practical exercises. One example might be holding mock interviews with journalists, in order to prepare for situations in which an academic paper gets picked up by mainstream media.

Whereas certainly not all researchers have to become top communicators, we feel that a ‘survival course’ in science communication would be a wonderful addition to the basic training of all starting scientists. Such a course could even become a part of the standard Ph.D. curriculum program alongside, for example, research safety and ethics classes. Just like everyone should be aware of the safety regulations, it would benefit researchers as well as their institutions if everyone had the basics of communication under their belt.

Moreover, while many discussions on science communication have focused on the natural sciences and STEM subjects, public engagement from within the humanities and social sciences comes with a different set of challenges. These should be properly addressed in training, too.

Such training, furthermore, should be local, accessible, and targeted. It is not sufficient to have a yearly course on offer for a maximum of 20 Ph.D. students: all staff members should have regular access to training. Moreover, it would be a good idea to have specific ‘science communication consultants’ on staff, who can help you prepare for particular situations or offer advice in emergencies.

Finally, while we appreciate that universities value science communication and outreach, we would like to shift the focus from visibility and quantity to high-quality, educational output. We want to inspire people and show them the wonders of science, rather than counting clicks and likes.

Developing a more comprehensive approach to science communication is more easily said than done, and implementing change takes time. With this letter, we aim to reach out and offer our ideas on making science communication better, more effective, and more enjoyable for researchers as well as their audience.

# IMPRINT

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