

## Abstract

Religious traditions are highly symbolic and effective communication systems. Over time they have developed a sophisticated 'language' to communicate their ideas, values, and norms. Central to the system of rules and meanings of many religious traditions is the body, i.e. the status of the body, what should be done with or to the body, or the role of bodily pleasures. To communicate their visions, religions idealize, normatize, gender, denounce, or make bodies fit into their imaginations. What is often overlooked, however, is that 'this' idealized, denounced, or imagined body develops its own dynamic in which the body becomes a medium in its own right. As medium, the body bears witness to the religious traditions trying to inscribe their belief systems onto and into the body.

The conference *Commun(icating) Bodies*, thus, understands the body as medium in the communication system 'religion' and explores how 'both bodies' - the abstract and idealized body and the concrete body existing and living in time and space - tell stories and express religious narratives and structures. Studying the relevance of the body-medium, the conference aims to contribute to a better understanding of how religious communication works and how the body as medium transforms the religious traditions that try to mark the body and inscribe their visions into the body-flesh.

Alexander D. Ornella, University of Hull

Gerhard Larcher,  
Isabelle Jonveaux  
and Christian Feichtinger,  
University of Graz

## Conference Program

### Wednesday, 15 February 2012

- 10.00 Registration and Conference Office open  
13.30-14.00 Conference Opening  
and Welcome Addresses  
14.00-16.30 Parallel Sessions I  
*Body Theologies*  
*Body Images*  
*Transcendental Bodies*  
16.30-17.00 Coffee Break  
17.00-18.15 First Keynote Address:

#### **Dimensions of Belief and Bodily Experiences**

*Prof. Dr. Anne-Sophie Lamine*  
Université de Strasbourg

- 18.15 Reception on behalf of the Office of Research  
Management and Service, University of Graz

### Thursday, 16 February 2012

- 08.45 - 10.00 Second Keynote Address:

#### **Ascetic Bodies.**

#### **The Body of the Hero in Contemporary Hollywood Cinema**

*Ao. Prof. Dr. Dr. Theresia Heimerl*  
University of Graz

- 10.00 - 10.30 Coffee Break  
10.30 - 12.30 Parallel Sessions II  
*Religious Body Experiences*  
*Sacrificial Bodies*  
*Charismatic Bodies*  
*Panel: Political Bodies*  
12.30 - 14.15 Lunch Break  
14.15 - 16.15 Parallel Sessions III  
*Religion and the Shaping of Bodies*  
*Changing Bodies in Modernity*  
*Body Rituals*

- 16.15 - 16.45 Coffee Break  
16.45 - 18.00 Third Keynote Address:

#### **Natural Language: The Meaning of the Body**

*Prof. Dr. Gerard Loughlin*  
Durham University

- 20.00 Conference Dinner at the Restaurant  
"Landhauskeller"

### Friday, 17 February 2012

- 09.00 - 10.15 Fourth Keynote Address:

#### **The Technological Body and Its Communicative Capabilities**

*Prof. Dr. Leopoldina Fortunati*  
Università degli studi di Udine

- 10.15 - 10.45 Coffee Break  
10.45 - 13.15 Parallel Sessions IV  
*Orientalization of Bodies*  
*Incorruptible Bodies*  
*Bodies and/in Pictorial Art*  
*The Suffering Body*  
*Body and Disabilities*

- 13.30 Farewell

Background and front illustration:

#### **Nach Lazarus**

Painting by Michael Hedwig, Vienna  
<http://www.hedwig.at/>

We are grateful for the kind permission of the artist.

## Conference Venue

UZT - Universitätszentrum Theologie  
(University Center Theology)  
University of Graz  
Heinrichstraße 78  
A-8010 Graz / Austria

The UZT can easily be reached by bus. Take bus 58 (towards "Mariatrost") and get off at "Rosenhaingasse" which is right in front of the UZT.

## Conference Dinner

The conference dinner takes place at the Restaurant "Landhauskeller", Schmiedgasse 9. From the UZT take bus 58 (towards "Hauptbahnhof"/train station) and get off at "Keplerbrücke". Change to tram 5 (towards "Puntigam") and get off at the city center ("Hauptplatz"). From there, the "Landhauskeller" is just a 2 minutes walk - just pass the city hall on the right side.

## Housing

If you require housing, a list of hotels can be found on our website

<http://communicating-bodies.net>

## Registration & Registration Fees

Registration for regular participants EUR 70.

Registration for students EUR 40 (valid student ID required).

Please register through our website  
<http://communicating-bodies.net>

## Conference Directors

Dr. Alexander D. Ornella, University of Hull

Dr. Isabelle Jonveaux, University of Graz

Dr. Christian Feichtinger, University of Graz

## Contact

If you have any questions regarding the conference, please contact us at

[bodies@uni-graz.at](mailto:bodies@uni-graz.at)

## Conference Secretariat:

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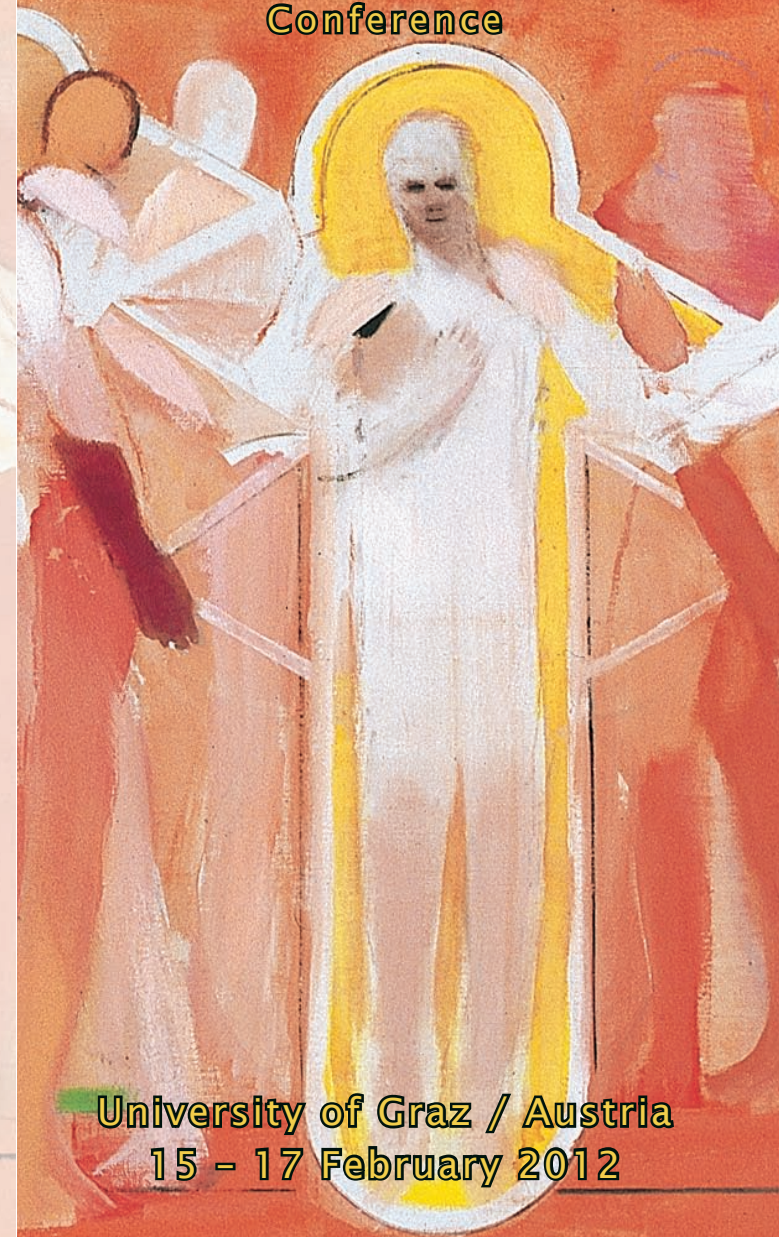
The Faculty of Catholic Theology, the Office of Research Management and Service, and the Office of International Relations, University of Graz; the City of Graz; the Government of the Province Styria - Dept. of Science and Research

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**FWF** Der Wissenschaftsfonds.



# Commun(icat)ing Bodies The Body & Religion Conference



University of Graz / Austria  
15 - 17 February 2012

[communicating-bodies.net](http://communicating-bodies.net)