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Between Privileges and Ideologies: Baltic Jewish Photographers in South Africa's Racial Landscape

08 December 2025 | 12:00 – 14:00

Karina Simonson (Vilnius University)



Lunchtalk

Between Privileges and Ideologies: Baltic Jewish Photographers in South Africa's Racial Landscape

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Departement Geschichte | Hirschgässlein 21 | Room 501

Katarina Simonson's talk will explore the little-examined history of Baltic Jewish photographers in South Africa, tracing the intertwined narratives of migration, identity and visual culture. Arriving in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and classified as white, these migrants occupied a position of relative privilege while also carrying their own histories of marginalization and displacement. They became central figures in shaping South African photographic practices—from studio portraiture to documentary and press photography. Their work reflects both the privileges and constraints of white minority status, revealing how photography became a medium for negotiating belonging, memory and moral responsibility. It is an opportunity for critical discussion on diaspora, race and representation in an informal setting during lunchtime.

A sandwich lunch will be provided. Please register [here](#) until December 1.



Karina Simonson is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Asian and Transcultural Studies at Vilnius University. She is an interdisciplinary art historian and a researcher of Jewish and African diasporas. Her work focuses on questions of academic positionality and cultural appropriation, race and racism, and the cultural encounters between Africa and Eastern Europe. She has held research fellowships at Harvard and Princeton and has taught internationally at universities in Europe, Brazil, and Mauritius. She will be a Fulbright Scholar at New York University in spring 2026.



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