

The **KWI – Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities** in Essen at **University Duisburg-Essen** (UDE) is looking for a

## Postdoctoral Researcher in History of Culture and Technology (f/m/d) (salary group 13 TV-L, 100%, ~5 years)

**Start of employment:** as soon as possible  
**Duration of employment:** until 31st of August 2030  
**Working time:** 39 hours 50 min. (100 %) (part time is possible)  
**Application deadline:** 17th of November 2025

The Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) in Essen is an interdisciplinary research institute for the humanities and social sciences in the tradition of institutes for advanced study. Located in the Ruhr Area, KWI offers a space for independent and innovative research and various opportunities to engage and include the public.

### Our project

The ERC Synergy project **The Cultures of the Cryosphere. Infrastructures, Politics and Futures of Artificial Cooling** (CultCryo) investigates the historical preconditions and consequences of the use of artificial cold. With a globally networked system of cold storage facilities, nitrogen tanks, cold chains, and air-conditioned spaces, the global use of cooling and freezing technologies enables modern life on both biological and social levels – for example, in the areas of food supply, medicine, air conditioning, and data processing. Despite its far-reaching socio-ecological impacts, the history of this enormously energy-intensive planetary "cryosphere" has not yet been systematically researched. The interdisciplinary research project consists of several international research groups working in close cooperation. For more information, please visit: [www.cryocultures.org](http://www.cryocultures.org)

We are seeking a **Postdoctoral Researcher (f/m/d) with expertise in modern and/or contemporary history of technology** to study the historical dynamics and spatial features of the planetary cryosphere and its connected values and practices.

The ideal candidate has a strong interdisciplinary profile with qualifications in comparative analysis and archival research as well as a proven record of engaging with concepts and theories of technology and space.

The research will primarily concentrate on the spatial dynamics of artificial cooling since the Cold War, including mappings of cold chains for food and biomedicine as well as air conditioning and IT infrastructures.

It is not necessary to have prior knowledge of the field of artificial cooling, even if this is preferable. The chosen candidate is expected to develop and pursue individual research within the context of the project as well as collaborating with researchers in other disciplines such as geography, ethnography or computer science to develop a first mapping of the spatial extension of the cryosphere and its historical development: a planetary atlas of artificial cold. Tasks also include to integrate findings and analysis into the public project archive and to engage in scientific dissemination and publication.

### Your main tasks

- Individual and collaborative research and publication work within the ERC project with a focus on the historical, cultural and spatial dynamics of artificial cooling;
- Co-developing and co-editing a digital atlas of cooling technologies and practices in close collaboration with other members of the international research team;
- Undertaking (international) research trips for archive and research visits;
- Academic event organization and communication;
- Contributing to project administration, archiving and management of research data;

### Your profile

- a completed PhD degree in history, media studies, STS or other relevant disciplines and/or in relevant fields of the humanities and environmental sciences. The candidate's Ph.D. thesis must have been submitted by the application deadline;
- Experience conducting interdisciplinary research on how technology shapes and is shaped by cultural practices on a global scale
- Demonstrable interest in digital cartography and methods of critical or collaborative mapping is desired;
- Very good English skills (C1 or higher) are required. Knowledge of German and Spanish, or a willingness to learn these languages, is desirable;
- The workplace is the KWI – Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities in Essen (Germany), with regular participation in local and international project meetings, expeditions, and workshops (including travel to the Americas, Asia, and Australia). While partial remote work is possible, the chosen researcher must be regularly present in Essen.
- Willingness to closely cooperate with international research teams and project partners in the fields of philosophy, social science, urban studies, history, geography, and computer science is expected.

The position presents an opportunity for further academic qualification.

### We offer you

The ERC Synergy Project offers the opportunity to participate in a high ranked international research endeavor dedicated to studying a pressing global phenomenon.

The position offers:

- a varied, multifaceted area of responsibility in a lively research-intensive environment that includes versatile international exchange,
- a pleasant and inspiring working atmosphere at KWI Essen,
- independent and collaborative research with a dynamic, international, professional team, with various opportunities to engage and include the public,
- flexible arrangements for working hours and the possibility of partially working remotely from home,
- family friendly work environment with childcare facilities for your children,
- advice in case of family care responsibilities,
- a wide range of training and development opportunities, individual onboarding and induction,
- excellent public transport connections,
- attractive sports and health facilities (university sports),
- opportunity for habilitation and intensive support on the path to developing your own research focus.

Your application should include a **cover letter** (2-3 pages), **CV**, a **writing sample** from previous research work (ca. 15 pages), as well as relevant **certificates** (all academic degrees).

The application should be sent no later than **the 17th of November 2025** via E-Mail in a single PDF file to **[applications@cryocultures.org](mailto:applications@cryocultures.org)** and include the **reference number 522-25**.

For questions, please contact Dr. Stefan Höhne via [stefan.hoehne@kwi-nrw.de](mailto:stefan.hoehne@kwi-nrw.de).

The University of Duisburg-Essen aims to promote the diversity of its members. ([www.uni-due.de/diversity](http://www.uni-due.de/diversity)).

It strives to increase the quota of women among its academic staff and therefore strongly encourages relevantly qualified women to apply. In accordance with the NRW State Equal Opportunities Act, women with equal qualifications will be given preferential consideration.

Applications from suitable severely disabled persons and persons of equal status within the meaning of Section 2 (3) SGB IX are welcome.