



INVITATION

Essen, 28.10.2025

„Lenny Bruce’s Tattoo: The Body in Stand-Up Comedy“

Keynote by Oliver Double

Thursday, 13 November 2025, 18:00 (CET)

Online (Zoom) & Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities Essen (KWI)

Gartensaal, Goethestraße 31, 45128 Essen

Stand-up comedy has often been regarded as a primarily verbal form, but in fact, the body plays a central role in it. The emphasis on verbal aspects – and material over performance – means that the physical elements of stand-up performance have been underexamined.

Stand-up comedian Oliver Double explores the two key roles that the body plays in stand-up. Firstly, he examines how comedians use their bodies as a defining feature of their onstage identity and a tool for establishing a relationship with the audience. Comedians play on their own inherent physical properties, allowing them to address physical difference, disability, illness and stereotyping. Secondly, the keynote identifies the different physical performance strategies that comedians use, including presenting the body as a funny object, slapstick, and act-outs. It concludes by showing how Lenny Bruce’s routine about his tattoo exemplifies the political meanings of the body in stand-up comedy.

This keynote is part of the conference Materiality Matters: Figurations of Comic Bodies and Things, which explores the mediating function of materialities with regard to comic effects. The conference is organized by the research network Comic Literacies – Kulturtechniken des Komischen.

SPEAKER

Oliver Double, University of Kent

MODERATION

David Roesner, LMU München

PARTICIPATION ON SITE

This is a public event, participation is free of charge. Registration is not necessary.

PARTICIPATION VIA ZOOM

For online participation (Zoom), please use the following [link](#) at the given time.

PRESS CONTACT

Helena Rose | Miriam Wienhold

presse@kwi-nrw.de

www.kulturwissenschaften.de

PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFERENCE

If you would like to participate in person, please notify us via email at roxanne.phillips@kwi-nrw.de by November 5, 2025. For online participation (Zoom), please use the following [link](#) at the given time.

ORGANIZATION

Gregor Lilienfein, University of Bonn

Karin Peters, University of Bonn

Roxanne Phillips, KWI Essen

Hendrik Quast, Stockholm University of the Arts/ZHdK Zurich

Marilisa Reisert, LMU Munich

Sarah Tober, KWI Essen

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Event on the KWI website](#)

[Conference on the KWI website](#)

We would appreciate the circulation of this press release.

About the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI):

The Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) Essen, Germany, is an interdisciplinary research centre following the tradition of international Institutes for Advanced Study. In its role as an inter-university institution connecting the Ruhr-University Bochum, the Technological University Dortmund and the University of Duisburg-Essen, the institute works together with researchers and scientists from its neighbouring universities as well as other partners from the federal state NRW and places in- and outside of Germany. Within the Ruhr area, the KWI is a place to share and discuss the questions and results of ambitious research with interested parties from the city and the greater region. Currently, work at the KWI focusses on the following areas: "cultural studies of science and science policy making", "sociology of literature and culture", "science communication", "visual literacy" and a "teaching lab". Projects in the established research field "culture of communication", as well as individual projects, will be continued.

www.kulturwissenschaften.de

Please note: If you do not wish to receive any further press releases from the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI), please send a short message to presse@kwi-nrw.de. Many thanks.

Stay up to date: The KWI Newsletter provides news about the institute twice a semester. Click [here](#) to register.

PRESS CONTACT

Helena Rose | Miriam Wienhold

presse@kwi-nrw.de

www.kulturwissenschaften.de