

Remembering Second World War Technologies: Museums, Exhibitions, Technological Objects, and Visitors

Peenemünde, 22. – 23. März 2018

Veranstalter:

Forscherguppe "Meta-Peenemünde: Das Bild der rüstungstechnischen Versuchsanstalten im kulturellen Gedächtnis" (Volkswagen-Stiftung), Institut für Geschichtswissenschaft, Technische Universität Braunschweig

More than 70 years after the end of the Second World War, its innovations in military technology are still remembered with fascination and unease. Particular focal points of ambivalence have been the so-called 'Wonder Weapons' and other resource-intensive developments of Nazi Germany such as the jet fighter Messerschmitt 262, the 'Tiger' Panzer, or the A4 rocket ('V-2'). While the A4 was mass-produced at the concentration camp of Mittelbau-Dora and fired at Antwerp and London, it has also been considered a technological forerunner of both the nuclear missiles and space rockets of the Cold War era. Unease and ambivalence have often turned into discontent when these weapons were displayed in exhibitions and museums in Germany and abroad, arousing questions about how to contextualize these objects between feats of engineering and remembrance of their victims.

This conference, organized by the Research Group 'Meta-Peenemünde' (Technische Universität Braunschweig) at the Historisch-Technisches Museum Peenemünde (Germany) on 22 and 23 March 2018, brings together scholars and representatives of museums and memorials that display Second World War technologies, particularly German weapons, in the US and Europe. Its goal is to enable discussions about local and international differences in the remembrance of wartime technologies, diverging cultures of memory, and visitor expectations, as well as the challenges and opportunities encountered when restoring, displaying, and contextualizing technological objects. Participants are invited to share their experiences and didactic approaches: Has popular fascination with technology been a chance or challenge? Has a 'gender technology gap' influenced visitor expectations? How can we deal with or utilize claims of 'authenticity'? How influential is 'technological nationalism' today? The workshop aims at fostering and intensifying international cooperation between museums and institutions.

If you wish to attend this conference, please register via email by Friday, 16 March 2018: meta-peenemuende@tu-braunschweig.de. For further information visit <https://www.ifg-braunschweig.de/metapeenemuende> and <https://www.ifg-braunschweig.de/index.php?id=1739>.

Conference Program

Thursday, 22 March 2018

10:00 Registration

11:00 Welcome and Introduction
Philipp Aumann and Christian Kehrt

11:30 Panel I: Exhibiting Peenemünde
Chair: Philipp Aumann (Peenemünde)
Daniel Bandau (Braunschweig): Technological heritage and remembrance in rural East Germany
Constanze Seifert-Hartz (Braunschweig): What connects us? Visitor expectations in Peenemünde

12:30 Lunch Break

13:30 Museum Tour

15:00 Coffee Break

15:30 Panel II: Technology in War Museums – The War in Museums of Technology
Chair: Christian Kehrt (Braunschweig)
Jens Wehner (Dresden): Military Technology and Cultural History: Experiences at the Bundeswehr Military History Museum in Dresden
Michael J. Neufeld (Washington, DC): Exhibiting the V-2: Struggles with History in the U.S. and Germany since 1984
Heiko Triesch (Berlin): Present and Future: Air and Space Artifacts of World War II on Display at the Deutsches Technikmuseum in Berlin

17:00 End

Friday, 23 March 2018

10:00 Panel III: Remembrance and Education at Historical Sites
Chair: Constanze Seifert-Hartz (Braunschweig)
Stefan Hördler (Nordhausen): Research and Education on Nazi Forced Labor and Crimes in the Mittelbau-Dora Concentration Camp
Laurent Thiery (La Coupole, Pas-de-Calais): Documentation Centre at La Coupole: Researching about 9 000 deportees of France in the Mittelbau-Dora Concentration Camp
Wiesław Jeleń (Blizna): Blizna: From missile testing ground to historical park

11:30 Coffee Break

12:00 Panel IV: Fascination with Technology as Chance and Challenge
Chair: Daniel Brandau (Braunschweig)

Ralf Raths (Munster): "Clenching the Fists of Dissent": The Transformation of the German Tank Museum

Marcus Meyer (Bremen): Technology Attraction, Dark Place or Memorial: The Bunker "Valentin" in Bremen-Farge

13:00 Lunch Break

13:30 Feature Presentation

Chair: Christian Kehrt (Braunschweig)

Hannah Fitsch (Berlin): Why technology fascination is not neutral: On gendered practices in museums of technology

14:00 Panel Discussion

Hannah Fitsch (Berlin) / Michael J. Neufeld (Washington, DC) / Christian Kehrt (Braunschweig)

15:00 End

Kontakt:

Constanze Seifert-Hartz and Daniel Brandau

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