



# PROMETHEUS 2010

INTERDISZIPLINÄRE SOMMERAKADEMIE

Wo kommen unsere Energien her?

## Applicant information

Prof. Dr. Ursula Renner Henke (Universität Duisburg-Essen)

Prof. Dr. Claus Leggewie (Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut Essen)

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## Date

August 30 – September 8, 2010

## Frame

The ancient myth of *Prometheus* deals with the decline of energy resources. Energy is a gift of the Gods. Since *Prometheus*, the titan, cheated the father of the Gods at the sacrifice meal, Zeus takes away the fire from humanity: raw food can no longer be turned into cooked food, the embers of the blacksmiths go out. It is the end of technology before it had even begun. There is no more fire in the oven which provides a pleasant microclimate in which family sociability can develop as well as scientific ideas or the dreams of poets. Only an outrageous deed can bring back the fire to man: *Prometheus* lights a long fennel stick at the sun chariot of Helios and with its preserved embers, gives back the fire to humanity. Zeus' punishment is terrifying: through Pandora's Box he sends fever and sudden death, desperation and misery into the world. *Prometheus* himself gets chained to the Caucasus deprived of food where the eagle Ethon eats his liver, which grows back every day to the immortal. Only Herakles' power can save him from his predicament.

The age-old question as to where our energy comes from is as topical today as ever. In fact it is the question of all questions for the future: fossil fuels are running out, or can only be obtained at high risks and enormous costs. The world's population explodes, and so does our energy consumption. Their waste products damage the climate just as much as other ecological systems. Their permanent waste storage causes many problems. Nowadays humans are even taking fuel from Helios' chariot. Renewable energy such as the sun, wind or waterpower is intended to replace fossil fuels. The solution to all energy problems, as promised by the energy industry and futurology, could be solved by nuclear fusion or even space power stations.

But the questions of where our energy comes from cannot merely be solved technically. It is also a question of how humans saw themselves as energy generating and using beings in the past and see themselves in the future. Not only scientists but also artists, psychoanalysts, information theorists, cultural studies experts, researchers on creativity and last but not least esotericists speak of "energies". Energy is without doubt one of the most important concepts of modernity. The days where only one myth told us where our energy comes from, which rivalries it produces and which social relevance it has are long gone. Science itself takes the place of the myth, whose achievement it has always been, to put into words the whole complexity of being and its origin. But simple answers are not to be expected anymore, and certainly not from technological innovation alone. Right at the side of the technician *Prometheus* stands his brother who keeps acting as his shadow. In contrast to his brother who always is the foresighted one he is always too late. Epimetheus, who received Pandora's Box from Zeus although his brother had warned him not to do it, has to reconsider in hindsight the effect that gift had had. The question where our energy comes from can only expect a satisfactory answer within a cross-generational society of people practicing fore- and hindsight.

## Format

The summer academy will be a combined event of public evening lectures that are meant for a broader audience and a closed "master seminar" open only to selected scholarship holders and some invited guests in which excellent scholars of various disciplines work and discuss with junior researchers. The senior fellows are renowned scholars working on the subjects mentioned above. Junior researchers are recruited by way of a call for papers and a separate request to the promotion committees of academic foundations or to international graduate schools. The participants will be 10 senior fellows, 30 junior researchers and approximately 15 students with high potential. The summer academy will last 10 days, classes will be taught separately and together. Classes will be complemented by daily evening lectures which are open to the public as well, a supplementary program with special guests with practical experience in literature, music and theatre, a film program on the "Prometheus" theme and "Energietour Ruhr".

Conference languages are German and English. The event will be prepared and revised with regard to content, organised and coordinated by an assistant designated for that purpose.

**Location**

Zeche Zollverein / Essen (NRW)

**Adress**

Postdocs, postgraduates, people with special interest

**Classes**

Master class 1: Working-energies (Bernard Stiegler, Paris / Erich Hörl, Bochum)

Master class 2: Poetic energies (Albrecht Koschorke, Konstanz / Karl-Siegbert Rehberg, Dresden)

Master class 3: Electric cities (Ingrid Breckner, Hamburg / Rolf Lindner, Berlin)

Master class 4: Mental energies (André Michels, Luxemburg / Martin Stingelin, Dortmund)

Master class 5 (film class): Glued power (Vinzenz Hediger, Bochum / N.N.)

Overlapping lecture: The Myth of Prometheus

Overlapping class (music): Energetic voices (Rupert Huber, members of *Chorwerk Ruhr*).

Workshop: Energy technology, energy economics, energy politics

**Scholarship**

All selected applicants will be awarded a scholarship of € 600 or € 800, respectively, to cover the expenses

**Results**

The results will be published in two books.

**Application documents**

- 1) Curriculum vitae
- 2) List of scientific publications
- 3) Cover letter answering the question, "Where does our energy come from?" (approx. 4000 characters)
- 4.) Proposal for a topic for a short speech in the class (approx. 2000 characters)

**Deadline of Application:**

The deadline for receiving applications will be March 22, 2010. Please submit your application documents to [peter.risthaus@rub.de](mailto:peter.risthaus@rub.de)

**For further information, please refer to:** [www.prometheus2010.de](http://www.prometheus2010.de)