

Call for Participation

**Social media rituals. Shapes of digital resonance between event and cohesion**

14. – 15.01.2027, Hochschulübergreifendes Zentrum Tanz, Berlin

Organization: Steffen Krämer (FGZ Konstanz), Sandra Noeth (HZT Berlin)

We invite scholars and artists to a 1.5-day interdisciplinary workshop exploring the social, political, and medial significance of rituals that incorporate social media content and infrastructures into their performance.

Rituals have long been regarded as integral to social life, inspiring extensive scholarly and artistic inquiry. Researchers have examined their role in social cohesion — uniting diverse societies through intensively shared experiences — while others have critically questioned the assumption of a societal center enacted by rituals and its neglect of difference within ritual practice. Beyond their social significance, the mediated nature of rituals has attracted growing interest: from televised national events discussed as "media rituals" in the 1990s and 2000s, to online mourning practices, and to interactions on social media that have increasingly been attributed a ritual character.

The workshop focuses on the latter and on three aspects of social media rituals in particular:

**Social integration and contestation:** It remains unclear what potential social media ritual events possess for social integration, transformation or disruption. Traditional ritual theory suggests that rituals stabilize order — leveling social differences, affirming shared values, and reintegrating participants into the social fabric. Yet traditional rites of passage also opened liminal spaces where alternative orders became visible, leading some to claim a "revolutionary" potential for ritual events. What remains of this ambivalence in social media rituals? Do communities merely confirm their cohesion in intense yet predictable ways, or does social media's participatory promise enable the formation of new, perhaps resistant, ritual communities?

**Performativity and participation:** It is equally questionable to what extent the performative script of ritual events and the audience-participant relationship can be considered fixed in the case of social media rituals. Traditional rituals resemble dramatic performances with a relatively stable script and distribution of roles between performers and audience. To what extent do these features change in social media rituals, where playful adaptability is the norm? Which aesthetic strategies have emerged that use or interrogate the fluidity of the ritual's script and participatory structure?

**Archive and event:** Finally, the status of the ritual event must be reconsidered in light of social media's supposedly ubiquitous archive of symbolic material. Platform infrastructures open up a space of potential remediation inscribed with an ideology of universal availability — yet platform-economic structures, algorithmic opacity, and network effects expose this as a false promise. Social media rituals thus carry an event-instituting role: lending visibility to selected material, establishing it as part of a collectively relevant archive, or retroactively assigning event status to little-known happenings. What critical potential and manipulative danger lie in this production of ritualized archival events?

We particularly encourage proposals from scholars in Media and Communication Studies, Performance, Dance and Theatre Studies, Sociology, and related fields. Please submit your abstract and a short bio to [steffen.kraemer@fgz-risc.de](mailto:steffen.kraemer@fgz-risc.de) by **June 30, 2026**. The event is a collaboration between the Konstanz section of the Research Institute Social Cohesion (FGZ) and the Inter-University Centre for Dance Berlin (HZT).

A more detailed version of this CfP including citations can be found [here](#).