

Call for Conference Papers:



Universität  
Konstanz



## Cultures of Automobility

University of Konstanz (Germany)

**October 10-12, 2024**

Keynote speaker: **Lutz Koepnick** (Vanderbilt University)

with additional speaker to be announced

For over a century, automobility has been at the center of complex and far-reaching technological, scientific, social, and cultural transformations. Cultural production has consistently been engaged with and shaped by automobility, from the Italian Futurists' veneration of oil, machines, and war, to the various traditions of the modern road novel. Automobility also plays an important role in current scholarship in the environmental and energy humanities, infrastructure and mobility studies, gender studies, postcolonial studies, and studies of race and ethnicity. And while automobility has often been considered in relation to national and regional frameworks, it is at the same time a global—though unevenly distributed—phenomenon.

We invite proposals that engage with the local, national, and global cultures of automobility, from literature and film to visual art, video games, and social movements. We hope to bring together perspectives on the cultures of automobility from a variety of disciplines, including literature, history, geography, sociology, and cultural studies. This conference is organized by the European Research Council-funded project “Off the Road: The Environmental Aesthetics of Early Automobility,” which focuses on cultural production from 1890-1929. As with this project, the Cultures of Automobility conference seeks to provide a forum for considering different modes of perception, representation, and knowledge engendered by the long and ongoing histories of automobility. For this conference, we want to encourage contributions that consider all periods of automobility, and are especially interested in research that addresses early automobility. We also welcome creative formats beyond the traditional conference paper such as seminars, exhibitions, posters, reading groups, and workshops. Please feel free to write to us with your suggestions and questions.

Proposals might consider—but are not limited to—the following aspects of automobility:

- its relationship to various genres of music, literature, film, games, advertising, etc.
- its relationship to cultural institutions, artistic movements, and aesthetic politics
- its periodization and geography
- shifting subjectivities of driving, including perception, affect, desire, and anxiety
- its relationship to identity, access, and discrimination in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, and nation
- its political cultures including environmentalism, energy awareness, liberalism, and the far right
- its ideas and myths, such as progress, comfort, agency, risk, waste, and catastrophe

**Submissions:** for individual papers, please submit an abstract of around 250 words and a short bio. For panels, please submit the above details for each paper on the panel, as well as a panel title and a short bio of the organizer. Again, don't hesitate to contact us about alternative formats. This will be an in-person conference, and unfortunately we can't accommodate online presentations. Please send submissions to [team@offtheroad.org](mailto:team@offtheroad.org) by **April 30, 2024**.

Organized by the Off the Road research group: Jannis Buschky, Joel Duncan, Melanie Frey, Gilberto Mazzoli, Timo Müller, and Otilia Teodorescu-Stadler. More info at: [offtheroad.org](http://offtheroad.org)