

2020 — ISSUE 1

MAGAZINE

of Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf

Not missing a beat

Heart transplantations
need perfect coordination

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portraits reveal

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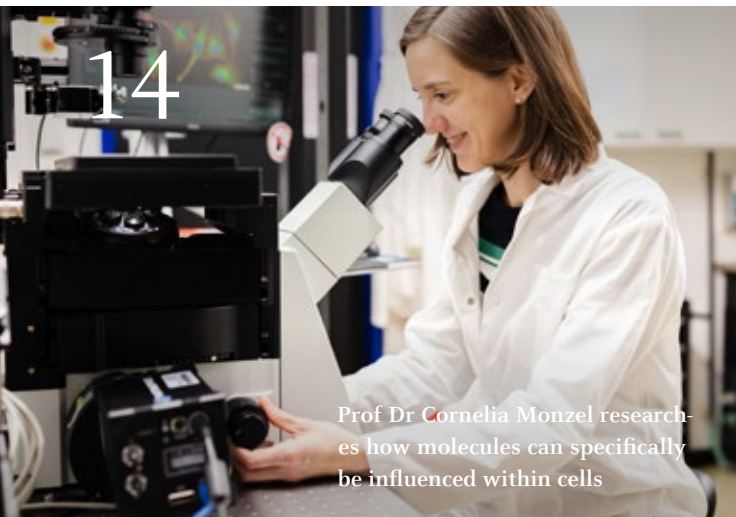
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PHOTO CHRISTOPH KAWAN



Self-portraits unveil how artists saw themselves

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Editorial



Dear readers,

In these turbulent times, we are experiencing daily just how important research and scientific findings are for all of us as individuals and for our society as a whole. The COVID-19 virus has shaken our world to its core. Many things that were certain once no longer are, and at this point we cannot really foresee what the medium-term and long-term consequences will be for our societies and for the way we live together. In times of crisis like the one we are experiencing now, scientists are called to find solutions and to give orientation: for the citizens who want to know what kind of risks they are facing and how to reduce them. But also for the decision-makers in politics who must provide well-founded reasons and justifications for sometimes dire measures. Those who drastically limit the freedom and fundamental rights of their citizens should be able to rely on good advisors – and these are not only stakeholders and interest groups but also and foremost experts from all walks of science.

Even though the articles in this issue of our Magazine do not refer to the coronavirus crisis, because they were written before the pandemic occurred, they demonstrate very well just what science is able to achieve. And how colourful and multi-faceted science can be – also, and in particular, at HHU.

The coronavirus pandemic has drastically changed science communication and the status of science in our society. And in the future we will probably see a greater demand for contributions of research to our societies. Not only in times of crisis, but in everyday life we need researchers who descend from their ivory towers.

And, we need people who are interested in science and who keep themselves informed about research activities – for example by reading this issue of the HHU Magazine. In this spirit: find out more about the latest research at HHU – and stay safe.

Best wishes,

Professor Dr Stefan Marschall
Vice President for International Relations and Science Communication



IMAGES WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Johannes Gump, *self-portrait*, 1646,
oil on canvas, 88.5 x 89 cm, Florence,
Galleria degli Uffizi

Johannes Gump paints himself in his extraordinary self-portrait no less than three times and for this purpose, he uses mirror imagery, with which he thematises the transition from a mirror image to a painting. His painted face looks over the painter's shoulders out of the picture and focusses on the viewer as if it wanted to say: "I'm here."

What self-portraits reveal

A research project
conducted by Düsseldorf art historians
examines the *autoritratti*
of Florentine Uffizi

BY VICTORIA MEINSCHÄFER

Self-portraits show us artists in the way they saw themselves, give information about artistic self-portrayal, and in the case of the old masters, they're often the only way to even see the artist. The Florentine Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici (1617 – 1675) already started a collection of self-portraits in 1650, his nephew Cosimo III de' Medici (1642 – 1723) enlarged the collection and set new key areas of focus. Despite its uniqueness, the collection has only been researched to a minimal extent so far. This may be due to institutional reasons because some of the self-portraits were moved to the so-called Vasari Corridor in 1970, but the majority were stored in the repository. That's why

the collection was then only accessible to a very limited degree and thus largely remained unprocessed scientifically. Little is therefore known about the structure, order and practices of the portraits' visualisation.

First special collection

In a research project sponsored by the German Research Foundation (DFG), Prof Dr Valeska von Rosen and her colleagues Anna Maria Procajlo and Dr des Isabell Franconi are now investigating the “conditions of production, modes of reception and models of order of artists' self-portraits in a modern collection.”

“Leopoldo de' Medici made huge efforts to assemble his collection of self-portraits,” says Anna Maria Procajlo. It is the first modern special collection that exclusively concentrates on one single genre of painting, thus breaking away from the early modern universal collections typical until then. The cardinal had around sixty agents, mostly dealers and art lovers, who were not only looking for the right works of art in Rome, Bologna and Venice, but were also in contact with the best artists of the time in Flanders, Switzerland and England. A large volume of letters, which Procajlo is now analysing, bears witness to this effort. There are still altogether around four million letters concerning the collection in the Uffizi, 150 of which the art his-



Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *self-portrait*, approx. 1610, oil on canvas, 62 x 46 cm, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi

The collection of self-portraits primarily focusses on the medium of painting. Even the sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini painted a self-portrait that the Roman “agent” described as one-of-a-kind, using the words “bellissimo, bellissimo.”



Andrea del Sarto, *self-portrait*, 1528 – 1530, fresco on tile, 51.5 x 37.5 cm, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi

This painting originally did not hang in the collection of self-portraits, possibly due to the unusual pictorial medium, but instead in the so-called “Tribuna”, which visitors could freely access.



Adriaen van der Werff, *self-portrait*, 1697, oil on canvas, 89 x 73 cm, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi

As can be seen from the Medici’s large-scale archive – which contains well over four million letters – Cosimo III pre-defined both the picture dimensions as well as a specific composition for the artists. The prince wanted the artists to depict themselves at work, if possible with a picture within a picture that underscores their specialisation.

torian has read, partially transcribed and catalogued. A challenge with each single letter. But this is how Procajlo was able to get to know Leopoldo’s collection principles: “The artists who were asked to contribute to the collection during this time were, in principle, completely free to choose their form of presentation,” Procajlo goes

Portraying yourself during the act of painting

on to say. “They were only asked to portray themselves during the act of painting.” But please only of themselves: a portrait of Paolo De Matteis (1662 – 1728) was rejected because it depicted the artist together with his daughter and two grandchildren. “In addition, Leopoldo went to great lengths to not only obtain works of art by contemporary, but also by deceased artists.” The

“Leopoldo de’ Medici made immense efforts to put his collection together.”

— Anna Maria Procajlo
Art Historian

collection’s oldest self-portrait is therefore that of Raphael, who mostly lived in Rome around 100 years before Leopoldo de’ Medici. In this way, he put together approx. 80 works of art. The artists showed tremendous interest to be represented in this collection right from the start: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, for example, who was actually a sculptor and architect, created a painted self-portrait especially for the collection.

When Cosimo III de’ Medici took over the collection, he changed the focus. First of all, he gave an order that brings utter dismay to the eyes of all people interested in art today: “The paintings were cut or enlarged to make them uniform,” says von Rosen. In addition, he expanded the collection by over one hundred works to 214 portraits. Isabell Franconi is focussing on the period after Cosimo’s death and the donation of the collection to Tuscany by Anna Maria Luisa de’ Medici (childless widow of Duke Jan Wellem) in 1737. “From 1737 to 1861, Florence was ruled – with a brief



IMAGE ÖSTERREICHISCHE NATIONALBIBLIOTHEK

Stefano Gaetano Neri, *La sala dei pittori nella Galleria di Firenze* (here: *Scuola romana e fiorentina*), Florence, 2nd half of the 18th century, Vienna, Austrian National Library, Cod. Min. 51

Engravings in which the collection was reproduced are a rich source to reconstruct the inventory and arrangement of the paintings in their original context.



Carlo Maratta, *self-portrait*, 1682, oil on canvas, 72.5 x 58.5 cm, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi

To thank the painter for creating his self-portrait, Cosimo III gave him a silver bowl, filled with 100 scudi and fruits, a small box with medicinal oils and an exquisite gold medal.



Angelica Kaufmann, *self-portrait*, 1787, oil on canvas, 128 x 94 cm, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi

A small-format self-portrait of the Swiss painter dressed in traditional Bregenz costume was placed in the collection as early as 1763. But since the artist no longer considered it appropriate, she painted it more than twenty years later and gave it to the Uffizi. As a thank you, she received a gold medal with the image of Grand Duke Peter Leopold.



Elisabeth Vigée LeBrun, *self-portrait*, 1790, oil on canvas, 100 x 81 cm, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi

This self-portrait enjoyed great popularity in the 19th century and was copied many times, as attested by sources.

“We aim to examine both the build-up of the collection as well as the transformation into a state picture gallery.”

— Prof Dr Valeska von Rosen
Art Historian

Napoleonic intermezzo – by the Habsburgs, before it was incorporated into the Kingdom of Italy from 1861.”

The new owners of the collection implemented new regulations, less for collecting works of art than for exhibiting them to the public. This resulted in regular museum operations with museum directors, who, in collaboration with the Habsburg-Lorraine grand dukes, aimed to introduce the collection to the public. “Until 1840, it was only possible to view the collection by taking a guided tour, from 1840 to 1970, all rooms of the self-portrait collection were open to the public,” she says. Around 2000 visitors came every year, and the collection became famous around the globe with various types of publications.

“With our research project, we want to examine both the build-up of the collection by Leopoldo and Cosimo III as well as the transformation into a state picture gallery,” explains Valeska von Rosen. In fact, the Uffizi is the first European museum that obtained this status regarding accessi-

bility: Under the Habsburgs, the collection was basically open to all citizens. The project funded by DFG with EUR 500,000, which is conducted in collaboration with

Removed from the repository

the Uffizi and its director Dr Eike Schmidt, and the Central Institute for Art History in Munich (Prof Dr Ulrich Pfisterer), already organised a study day in the Florentine Uffizi Gallery from 10 – 11 September 2018 for a distinguished circle of international art historians. Selected copies were taken out of the repository and provided for close-up viewing specifically for the lectures given by participants from Germany, Italy, England and the USA. In response to Valeska von Rosen’s speech, Eike Schmidt announced he would have the self-portrait of the artist Leandro Bassano restored.

Heart transplantations
need perfect coordination

Not missing a beat

BY VICTORIA MEINSCHÄFER



Last year, University Hospital Düsseldorf's (UKD) Department of Cardiac Surgery transplanted 34 hearts. This means that in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, the field of cardiac transplantation in Düsseldorf is second only to that of Bad Oeyenhausen.

On behalf of the German Ministry of Health heart transplants are monitored by the IQTIG (Institute for Quality and Transparency in Public Health Services) "maintaining the quality standards is very closely monitored," says senior physician Prof Dr Udo Boeken, Head of the Transplantation Programme. But this also means that the successes we have achieved, and which are represented in the high survival rates, get around. "Our waiting list is constantly getting longer because the registered doctors transfer a lot of patients to us."

In the case of heart and lung transplants, the transplantation team always travels to the respective clinic to remove the organ in question themselves. "One of the reasons heart transplantations are so difficult is that you cannot determine the condition a heart is in once it has been removed from the body," says Boeken. No more than four hours must pass from the time the organ is removed from the donor's body to the completed heart transplantation, which is why this type of surgery is organised extremely tightly. Only donor organs from lo-

cations that are not too far away can be considered, but UKD was able to successfully transplant the heart of a young accident victim from Maribor in Slovenia. Always as a team, three doctors from Düsseldorf travel to a clinic to remove an organ, the coordination between

Most patients have an artificial heart

the donor hospital and UKD is almost down to the minute. As soon as the plane with the operating team has landed in the donor hospital's location, the patient in Düsseldorf is moved to the operating theatre. If the surgeons at the donor hospital determine that the heart can be considered for transplantation (and due to the extensive preliminary examinations this is usually the case, last year there were only two cases in which the team declined an organ) the surgery in Düsseldorf begins. "70% of the patients have an artificial heart; very often the ribcage tissue is extremely adhesive as a result of previous surgery. It takes about two hours to prepare the patient in a way that a transplantation can take place." During the time it takes to prepare the patient, the removal of the donor organ starts, "about 15 seconds after I've clamped the aorta the heart stops beat-

Before the organ donation

Before an organ is removed or donated, it must be established beyond any doubt that the patient is dead. In Germany, death is defined as the irreversible loss of the brain's functions. Two independent and specially certified doctors must confirm this. "A person is only dead when her or his brain has ceased to function and if that state is irreversible," clarifies Boeken. "All other bodily functions are maintained with the help of machines, but the person is no longer alive. This is no longer a patient but a body whose blood circulation is artificially preserved by artificial respiration. For a certain period of time the heart continues to beat."

“If the patient survives the first year, he or she has a very good chance to grow old with the new organ.”

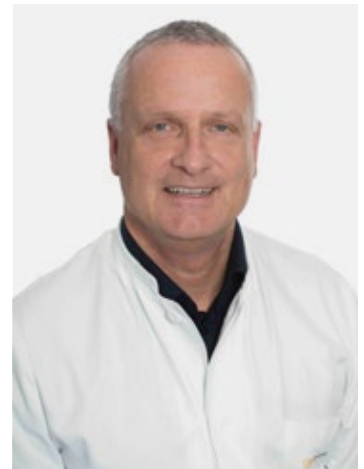
— Prof Dr Udo Boeken
Heart Surgeon

ing,” explains Boeken. After that, the heart is rinsed with a preserving solution. Then the heart can be removed from the body – a surprisingly fast procedure that only takes about 5 – 20 minutes. The donor organ then travels with the operating team to UKD in Düsseldorf and is transplanted into the prepared patient.

Just as important: psychological support

The prognosis for heart transplant patients is usually very good, about 80% of them survive the first five years. “If a patient survives the first year, he or she has

a very good chance to grow old with the new organ,” explains Boeken. 80% of his patients are men. Why they obviously suffer from heart insufficiency more often than women is not entirely clear yet. Transplantations can take place between the sexes – provided the organ has the correct size – and there is also no age limit for heart transplantations. Last year, two 70-year-olds received new hearts. Contrary to other types of transplantation, there is no alternative to a heart transplant: “If a kidney transplant goes wrong, the patient can live on with the help of dialysis; if a heart transplant goes wrong, the patient dies or can only be kept alive for a limited period of time with the help of an artificial heart.” Medical and technical expertise are important – but it is just as important that the patients receive psychological support, says Boeken. “Before and after the surgery we give our patients the psychological support they need,” says Boeken. Then, in his experience, they hardly ever experience psychological problems with their new heart.



Prof Dr Udo Boeken

Heart surgeons in Düsseldorf transplanted this organ as early as the 1980s. In the 1990s and again after 2002 these very complex procedures were no longer performed due to lacking capacities. Heart surgeon Udo Boeken, who joined UKD in 1992, was glad when heart transplants were reintroduced at UKD under chief physician Prof Dr Arthur Lichtenberg.



Prof Boeken visits a patient: 80 per cent of the patients survive the first five years after a transplantation.



Poverty risk electricity bill

BY CAROLIN GRAPE

Rising energy prices, a low income and energy-guzzling homes are factors that can lead to a new type of debt and poverty. Many households are facing disconnection from their gas and electricity services.

They wash with cold water, have no electric lights, no telephone or internet access, they cannot refrigerate their food or use the stove to cook it: year after year many households are temporarily disconnected from the electricity or gas supply because they cannot pay the bills – an upward trend. According to the 2018 Energy Monitoring Report published by the *Bundesnetzagentur* (German Federal Network Agency), about 4.8 million customers faced disconnection from the electricity or gas supply in 2017. In 1.1 million of these cases the network providers were ultimately commissioned to disconnect the users. These figures demonstrate that energy poverty is a problem in Germany, too. Energy poverty is a socio-political term and describes the correlation of poverty and energy prices.

“Hardly anyone knows how much energy they consume.”

— Prof Dr Peter Kenning
Director IfV

Contrary to the EU, which established an Energy Poverty Observatory in 2018, there are no clear-cut definitions in Germany from which point on a household officially suffers from energy poverty. This means that the data needed to quantify the phenomenon does not exist. And there is also no defined strategy for reducing the number of people affected by it.

Reason enough to put the subject on the agenda of the *Institut für Verbraucherwissenschaften* (Institute for Consumer Sciences, IfV). Together with the Universities of Siegen, Münster and Cologne as well as the Verbraucherzentrale North Rhine-Westphalia (consumer advice centre), the IfV is dedicated to intensifying the field of consumer research. Vita Zimmermann, Managing Director of IfV: “We want to bring together the different actors and stakeholders to discuss causes, effects and potential measures and in doing so make a contribution to strategically counteract energy poverty.”

Causes of energy poverty

Energy prices have almost doubled since the year 2000, the monthly costs for heating are rising constantly. The energy transition is going to intensify the problem: it is estimated to cost around 520bn euros in the coming years and consumers are expected to bear the brunt of it. Low-income households are especially struggling to pay their electricity and heating bills. Even though they usually live in smaller flats they pay more for energy per square metre than wealthy households because their homes are usually not energy-efficient.

According to the IfV Director, Prof Dr Peter Kenning, not considering consumers’ actual behaviour when taking decisions to regulate the energy markets is part of the problem: “Hardly anyone actually knows how much energy they consume and the back payments in connection with the classic end-of-year payments are no incentive to actually re-think your energy consumption. Especially households that are already in debt are often stuck in expensive basic tariffs their energy supplier offers

them. Those who are unable to pay their bills straight-away often end up in a downward spiral of payment reminders and additional charges that can lead to a temporary disconnection of services. The accumulating costs intensify the debt spiral and there is no in-built mechanism in this process such as mandatory preventive counselling or any other measures that would help protect these customers.”

Options for action

But what kind of countermeasures can we take? In the context of energy transition, politics should focus more on social aspects and the effects on consumers, according to Prof Kenning. “For a long time, we did not have systematic market observations which are needed to reach well-founded, customer-related decisions.” In cooperation with the consumer advice centres, the German Federal Government has developed the *Marktwächter Energie* (energy market guard), an attempt to rectify this shortcoming. It is the tool’s job to analyse different sectors of the energy market: electricity and gas, long-distance heating, heating costs and metering services. First data show: the causes for energy poverty are multifaceted and complex. To avoid that customers get disconnected from services, policy makers and energy suppliers must take action. But more research is needed to better understand the factors that lead to energy poverty.

In this context, information and education play an important role: in connection with their task of advising people on energy matters, the approximately 600 energy consultants of the consumer advice centres would be able to recognise early on if one of their customers was at risk of becoming one of the “energy poor” by no fault of their own. Prof Kenning: “According to section 64 of the Renewable Energy Sources Act (EEG), energy-intensive industries can be exempt from the EEG apportionment if their economic survival is at risk. The same option should also be open to consumers who are struggling financially because of the relatively high energy costs – just like they can be exempt from having to pay the German broadcast licence fee.”

Modifying biological cells with nanoparticles

Medical Physicist Cornelia Monzel analyses cell physics

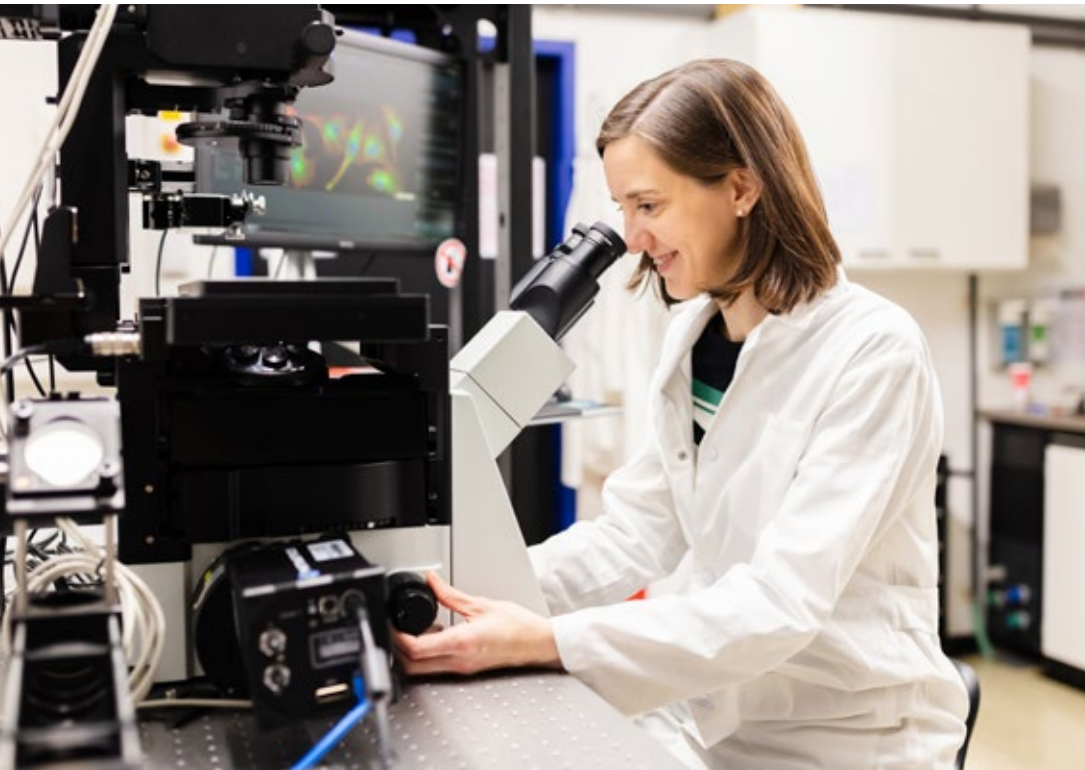


PHOTO CHRISTOPH KAWAN

Prof Dr Cornelia Monzel at the microscope. With "single molecule tracking," she can monitor and quantify the pathway of nanoparticles within a cell.

BY ARNE CLAUSSEN

Dr Cornelia Monzel has been Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf's first dedicated professor of medical physics since 2018. She researches how molecules form characteristic distributions in cells and how they can be specifically influenced in the process.

We aim to understand the ‘physical mechanisms’ of cell communication.” This is how Prof Monzel outlines her overriding research objective. She and her team want to identify physical parameters that cells respond to when such parameters change. “These can be characteristic distributions of particles that we can create in a targeted way to manipulate cells from the outside, even deep inside the body.” So-called nanoparticles are her helpers; these are extremely minuscule. They measure just a few millionths of a millimetre and therefore have a virus’s typical dimensions.

Nanoparticles are either injected directly or inserted into the cell from the outside with the aid of additional molecules. If the particles are magnetic and interlinked with signalling molecules, a cell can be manipulated from outside without any contact: By using an external magnet, you enable the particles – and in turn the signalling molecules – to migrate to one side of the cell. The distribution and local accumulation of the molecules can then modify the cell behaviour, for example, their orientation. “It would be conceivable to also specifically influence nerve growth in this way,” is Monzel’s consideration. “For patients with paraplegia, the transplanted cells’ growth direction can potentially be predefined in this manner so that the gap in the severed nerve tissue can be bridged.”

Pioneer of magnetogenetics

Such particles also enable energy to be inserted into a cell by switching the alignment of the small magnets back and forth 100,000 times per second via an external electromagnetic alternating field. The result is heat that can be used in low quantities to stimulate thermosensitive molecules in nerve cells, for example, to change the signal propagation in the brain. In cancer medicine, this approach is pursued with higher temperatures in order to overheat and thus kill off diseased cells: this is called hyperthermia.

The HHU physicist is a pioneer of a new branch of research, magnetogenetics: “First publications came out around 2012; today, over a dozen task forces around the world are working on this.” It’s a highly interdisciplinary field that transcends the borders of physics, biology and medicine.

Quantifying movement patterns

For example, in addition to the molecules which are responsible for specific cell functions, properties of the magnetic nanoparticles and magnetic fields must be known precisely as well. One of the methods used to quantify them is “single molecule tracking,” where single molecules are tracked with a laser fluorescence microscope and movement patterns are quantified through computer-aided image data analysis.

In doing so, continuous exchange with work groups in the medicine and physics faculties as well as with colleagues from HHU’s collaborative research centre 1208 is essential. This cooperation is a great opportunity for the group members to get to know the language of the relevant departments and their research approaches so they can come up with new ideas for medical-physical research on this basis. Cornelia Monzel’s research work is, among others, funded by the Volkswagen Foundation within the framework of a “Freethinker Fellowship.”

“It would be conceivable to systematically influence nerve growth through this, too.”

— Prof Dr Cornelia Monzel
Medical Physicist

R.I.P.

Heinz Meier

* 16.5.1947

+ 21.8.2020



European Succession Regulation

Death on Majorca

BY VICTORIA MEINSCHÄFER

It's a cliché: A wealthy older couple wishes to spend its twilight years in the sun and moves to – of course – Majorca. Naturally, the two return home for visits from time to time but the bonds they form with the island grow stronger. They become part of the local German community and travel home less frequently. Perhaps friends and family at home have died in the meantime; the couple grows older and less mobile. And because they are so frail, they no longer take frequent trips back home. And because we're still inside a cliché, he is the first one to die. The grieving widow expects to inherit as the couple had agreed before. These plans, however, were made without the European Succession Regulation.

The last habitual residence is the deciding factor

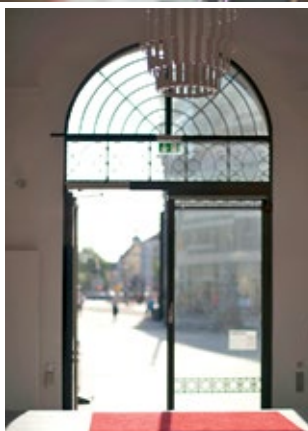
Prof Dr Dirk Looschelders, holder of the Chair of Private Law, Private International Law, Comparative Law and Private Insurance Law, explains what this regulation says, what the couple in our story should have done and everyone else who does not (yet) live in Majorca should do. “Until the introduction of the European Succession Regulation, jurisdiction depended on nationality. Now, however, the deciding factor is the last habitual residence,” explains Looschelders. This means that the courts determine where the deceased had established his or her centre of life for a specific period of time. Thus, the courts at this location have jurisdiction over the matter, with often confusing consequences. “The law of succession in Spain, just like in many other Romance countries, is extremely complicated,” says Looschelders, “in Spain in particular, almost every region has its distinct, special legislation, so-called Foral Rights.” This goes so far that the law of succession in Majorca is different from the one in Menorca, the Catalanian law of succession differs from the one in Galicia. “The Spanish law of succession clearly favours the family as opposed to the surviving spouse who only receives usufruct rights.” The regulations regarding the children's legal portion are very different from the ones in Ger-

many. “The reasons for this lie in the past, the legal system of most Romance countries are still based on the code civile of 1804 and put a greater emphasis on the genealogical aspect than on the rights of the spouse.” A joint will (often called *Berliner Testament*), which is very common in Germany, is also not recognised in most EU countries. “The laws in these countries disapprove of the binding effect of this will,” explains Looschelders.

But all of this is no problem at all if the future testator heeds one very important point when drawing up his or her will: “The best advice you can give people is to make sure the German regulations apply in the will,” explains Looschelders. If this is noted down in connection with the will, then the German regulations and laws apply, no matter where the testator's centre of life had been. Yet, many people are unaware of the problem, the lawyer knows from experience. They might know about the German law of succession but have never heard of the European Succession Regulation which has brought along another change: the European Certificate of Succession – i.e. the certificate of inheritance – which must be requested from the responsible probate court, is now recognised across the EU. “This makes the heirs' lives a lot easier. If the testator had assets in other European countries too, this certificate of succession is nonetheless all you need to settle all claims.”

“The law of succession in Spain and most other Romance countries is highly complicated.”

— Prof Dr Dirk Looschelders
Lawyer



University House

University House was placed at the disposal of Heinrich Heine University by the van Meeteren Foundation. Its purpose is to provide information and advice as well as foster an exchange between science, culture and education. In the framework of a large spectrum of events, the University offers local citizens the possibility to experience cutting-edge research and research findings and shares university life with the city.

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