

UNIVERSITÄT ERFURT
Philosophische Fakultät

MONDAY LECTURES | WISE 2026/27
IN RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES

RESEARCH BUILDING "WELTBEZIEHUNGEN" | C19.00.03 | 16:15 - 17:45

07.12.2026 | LINA ASCHENBRENNER

BIRTH, WOMANHOOD AND RELIGION IN GERMANY; AESTHETIC TRENDS AND MATERIAL DYNAMICS

There is a thriving field of German lived religious practices often overlooked by "outsiders": Practices tied to mothering and womanhood. One of these practices is the so-called mother blessing. Designed for pregnant women on their journey of birthing and becoming a mother, these practices unfold as a potpourri of diverse, yet somewhat stereotypical, aesthetics that are not unique in themselves but rather amalgamations drawn from across the field of female lived religion—lived religion practices by people identifying as women as well as centering on womanhood. Mother blessings not only provide an extraordinary aesthetic experience through performance, but also, in and through performance, negotiate particular social and cultural perceptions of womanhood tied to pregnancy, birth, and mothering.This talk takes ethnographic impressions of mother blessings in Germany as a starting point for reflecting on current trends of lived religion in the context of mothering and its entanglement with images and discourses of femininity and being a woman. I focus on materialities and aesthetics, touch upon tropes such as idealized pasts and others, the goddess image, sisterhood, sacred space, female wisdom, bodily trust, and empowerment, and situate them within broader social and cultural dynamics.



Dr. Lina Aschenbrenner is a postdoctoral researcher and a member of the Institute of Cultural Studies at the University of the Bundeswehr Munich.

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