

## Conference Impressions #YML2024

### February 2024:

Conference preparations in full swing! We have had deliveries from Alpengummi, which I am astounded to learn is not a company promoting safer sex in the mountains, but environmentally friendly chewing gum. Some of which tastes, for approximately 15 seconds, like sauna. We also received porridge, and our T-Shirts and mugs are due to arrive shortly.



### 22<sup>th</sup> of March 2024:



While my office is increasingly beginning to look like a warehouse – the latest addition being organic spreads in a cooling box – we are having a fun time with our student helpers choosing the right size of T-Shirts and explaining everything to do with the conference to them. They fill the conference folders and bags with amazing efficiency and a great deal of enthusiasm, and their good mood bodes well for the days to come!

### 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2024:

Having sorted out the trickiest question of all (i.e., what to wear when), we meet in the main building with all our stuff and sort ourselves out there. It's great when participants start arriving for registration and seem to be looking forward to our conference.

While the tech staff at the main building is not overwhelmingly helpful, we manage to set everyone up and start the opening ceremony. Both vice rector Baccarini and head of senate, Stefan Krammer, who is also a member of YML and a friend, give very interesting and lively opening speeches, and Elif Duygu, one of my MA students, delivers her poem about Vienna with the right combination of charm and cheek.

The Große Festsaal at the main building is such an amazing room and we are proudly showing it off. I explain the fascinating history of the Klimt frescos, which is news to many colleagues at Uni Wien, too.

The keynote by our Canadian colleagues Karen and Sonya is extremely interesting and a great start to an engaging academic programme!



Afterwards we are rewarded for the nerves and the hard work on our first day by a great buffet by Rita, which is delicious and well presented, too. Everyone seems to be having a good time, and I can feel myself relax for the first time that day.

## 26<sup>th</sup> of May:



We start the day early with a lot of running around – the first day at the department needs a lot of organising. The keynote today is with “the boys”, i.e. Georg, Matthias and Florian, and they deliver it very professionally – very proud of our younger YML members!

The day flies by with a number of interesting presentations that I mainly miss because there is a lot to organise, and in the evening we meet at the Leupold for a cosy conference dinner (not too keen on the veggie soup without anything in it, but never mind...).

I don't get to talk to too many people because the food takes so long, but a small fun group including Lisza and me are the last ones to leave just before midnight.

## 27<sup>th</sup> of May:

A great third day that starts with a keynote by our own Suzanna and Julia, and they, too, manage to bring together a really good one on agency and youth. I spend the next session with Ariane and Christina, who have put together two slots on the ethics of working on fan studies, and I get plenty of ideas for my own project on social media and literature.

Later in the evening, we have a blast at the open mic night. My PhD student Marianne delivers an amazing poem in German and English that has an Arabic title, and she goes through a few boxing moves while she performs! Afterwards we can really let go at our YML disco, brought to you by yours sincerely. I dance until I can barely stand and hobble home.



## 28<sup>th</sup> of May:

Final conference day! A few hickups about the lunch, and a lot of worry about our fourth keynote speaker, Philippe Wampfler, showing up or not, but then he has shown up and delivers a really interesting final keynote. Then, famous last words by Ute and myself, flowers and gifts (Easter chocolates mainly) for our amazing team, more flowers for us, and suddenly it's over! We clear up, have cake and tea together in the kitchen to discuss our favourite conference moments, and then we all go our ways.

But wait! As I am leaving campus, I notice that all the signs are still up, so I run around Hof 1, 2, 8 and 9, with the clouds gathering above me for a mighty thunderstorm, to tear off all the signs that Lisza put up only a few days ago. One of the Portiere, who I meet on my way, promises to throw any left-overs away in case I missed one. Finally, I'm on my way home in the car when the storm starts! On my sofa, I read through a few emails with very positive feedback about the conference. Seems it was worth all the hard work!

