

## CALL FOR PAPERS

The 13th Annual Lotman Conference at Tallinn University

# Fear in Culture and Culture of Fear

15–17 JUNE 2023, TALLINN



*Drawing by Juri Lotman, the first half of the 1960s, © Tallinn University.*

Fear plays an important role in human culture on the individual as well as on the collective level serving as one of the constraints that regulates people's choices and behaviour. However, at times the mechanism of fear seems to spiral out of control, and fear spreads like an epidemic infecting meaning-making processes in various areas of culture. According to Juri Lotman (1922–1993), renowned Russian-Estonian semiotician, literary scholar, and cultural historian, in such epidemics, the experience of fear is not caused by any concrete danger; instead, fear is in search for an object and constructs its own threat. Estonian semiotician and literary scholar Mihhail Lotman has developed his father's ideas further and proposed that from the perspective of semiotics it is important to distinguish between fright and fear. According to him, the former signifies an immediate reaction to events that have already taken place, it is a natural response to a specific stimulus, not a result of an interpretation. The latter, however, occurs as anticipation of danger projected into the future and is based on sign processes that generate the experience of fear. In the present times, the anticipated future is inhabited by many fears evoked by constant geopolitical insecurities,

climate change, ideological polarisation, economic uncertainty, the spread of misinformation and viral disease. Therefore, an interdisciplinary dialogue is necessary to create a better understanding of the role fear plays in these various processes in culture. The 13th Annual Lotman Conference at Tallinn University aims to bring together discussions about fear from various disciplines. We invite theoretical explorations, historical inquiries and concrete case studies that would help to illuminate the phenomenon of fear from various perspectives and together provide a multifaceted understanding of the complex workings of fear in culture.

The topics of interest include but are not limited to:

- Semiotic mechanisms of fear
- Fear in the collective memory
- History of fear
- Representations of fear in artistic texts
- Media and dissemination of fear
- Fear and the digital culture
- Fear and the environment
- The politics and economics of fear
- Fear and conspiracy theories
- Fear, hate and violence
- Fear and indeterminacy
- Cultural psychology of fear
- Philosophy of fear
- Fear in folklore
- Fear and religious beliefs

The congress will take place on **15–17 June at Tallinn University, Estonia**. The official languages of the congress are English and Russian. All participants are expected to be present on-site, as the conference will not have the option of distant participation.

### **CONFIRMED KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

**Mihhail Lotman** (Tallinn University, University of Tartu)

**Joanna Bourke** (Birkbeck, University of London)

**Andrei Zorin** (University of Oxford)

**Evgeny Dobrenko** (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

### **PAPER PROPOSALS:**

We invite proposals for individual presentations (20 minutes + 10 minutes for discussion). You can submit your proposal **[HERE](#)** using the Google forms page, or if you prefer, download the **[PAPER PROPOSAL TEMPLATE](#)** and send it via email to the conference secretary Darja Dorving, [darja.dorving@tlu.ee](mailto:darja.dorving@tlu.ee). In case you wish to present your paper as a part of a thematic panel, please indicate the name of this panel and the main organiser of the panel in the form of the proposal. All proposals should be written in English or in Russian.

## DEADLINES:

Submissions open: 28 November 2022  
Deadline for submissions: 15 February 2023  
Presenters will be informed of the decision by 15 March 2023  
Early registration starts: 15 March 2023  
Registration closes: 15 May 2023

## CONFERENCE FEE

Accepted participants will be requested to pay a registration fee. The fee covers participation in the conference programme, coffee-breaks, lunches, admission to receptions and cultural programme. Registration and payment form will be shared with participants at the end of March.

<b>Early fee until 15 April 2023</b> Regular participant 90 eur PhD student 70 eur	<b>Late fee from 15 April 2023 to 15 May 2023</b> Regular participant 120 eur PhD student 100 eur
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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

In case you have any questions, you can write to Merit Rickberg, [merit.rickberg@tlu.ee](mailto:merit.rickberg@tlu.ee) or the conference secretary, Dr. Darja Dorving, [darja.dorving@tlu.ee](mailto:darja.dorving@tlu.ee). For updates, join our [FB event](#) or check out the [TLU homepage](#).

## ORGANISERS

Juri Lotman Semiotics Repository, Tallinn University  
The School of Humanities, Tallinn University

### Organizing committee:

Darja Dorving (Juri Lotman Semiotics Repository, Tallinn University), conference secretary  
Tatjana Kuzovkina (Juri Lotman Semiotics Repository, Tallinn University)  
Lauri Linask (School of Humanities, Tallinn University)  
Daniele Monticelli (School of Humanities, Tallinn University)  
Rein Raud (School of Humanities, Tallinn University)  
Merit Rickberg (Juri Lotman Semiotics Repository, Tallinn University)  
Marek Tamm (School of Humanities, Tallinn University)

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