

### **Contemporary Cologne: Unsettling Feminisms, Alliances and Events**

My research project seeks to intervene in the debate around 'what happened in Cologne on New Year's Eve 2015', by focussing specifically on what feminists think happened in Cologne. More precisely, it asks: *How does the 'Cologne' event produce and organise contemporary feminist alliances in Germany?* In addressing this question, I hope to deconstruct the polarised representation of 'Netzfeministinnen' (#ausnahmslos) versus 'Hetzfeministinnen' (Alice Schwarzer & co), by reconnecting what is constructed as an 'internal' feminist debate to its 'external' discursive and social context. Ultimately, this will allow me to reveal what is hidden and obscured beneath this binary opposition, as well as to reject media and popular narratives that rally around a singular, isolated event, in favour of emphasising its ritualized and repetitive character.

More precisely, my project is an attempt at straddling the precarious balance between setting and unsettling the scene of *Cologne*, which will provide the point of departure for the staging of a series of feminist contestations. The crucial question will be: *How can we think of this 'event' both as a moment of rupture and continuity?* I then go on to complicate our understanding of the kinds of alliances that 'feminists' enter into, displacing the image of 'internal divisions' to make room for broader questions about the socio-political landscape that *Cologne* is constructed to have erupted into with such violent force. It asks: *How can we think of alliances as moments of connection within separation?* On this basis, we can then imagine new ways of conceptualising the relationship between power relations, taking up and responding to the ways in which *Cologne* has exposed the racialized nature of sexism. Here, I will address the issue of how to think of feminism and anti-racism as interdependent social movements, without at the same time collapsing one into the other.