**Dr. Lisa Marchi** (PhD, University of Trento) is conducting research at the ZtG from October to December 2014 for her book project “Liminal Tensions: Women Poets of the Arab Diaspora.”

The proposed project, tentatively titled “Liminal Tensions: Women Poets of the Arab Diaspora,” brings together and compares a selected group of poetry collections written by contemporary Arab women poets or women poets of Arab descent living in the US, Canada, and Europe.

Spanning through many languages (English, French, Italian, Arabic) and countries, the project foregrounds the aesthetic and political significance of the works under exam and illustrates the major distinctive themes of this emergent literature. The research reads poetry in conjunction with ethical philosophy and critical theory, employing an integrated methodological approach that combines theoretical tools drawn from deconstruction, gender/sexuality studies (particularly affect and queer theory), the theories of the everyday, and postcolonialism. A transnational, comparative and multilingual work, the book offers both a valuable contribution to the existing literature on the subject and proposes innovative theoretical orientations to approach and critically interrogate this complex and multi-layered field of study.

The book is built on the concept of *tension* and explores the latent pressures traversing Arab diasporic poetry, highlighting both its points of rupture and transformative potentials. The tension between tradition and innovation, Islamic civilization and Western modernity, aesthetic practice and lived experience surfaces this book as well as the poetic production analyzed in it. Through close readings of selected poems, the project addresses some of the most important issues in current literary and cultural studies, namely, diaspora and the experience of living and writing on the threshold, global violence and questions about personal loss, public mourning, and collective agency, the transnational interethnic and interracial traffic of cultural forms, the everyday as a site of crisis but also as a fertile terrain to learn to think with Others and imagine an alternative, more inclusive and possibly shared, political community.

The book draws a set of networked links across national, historical, racial, cultural and linguistic boundaries; it illuminates asymmetries, breaking points, and solidarities, thus rewriting the poetic production under exam as well as our global present as sites traversed by potentially productive but also destructive tensions, urgently demanding that we take charge of them.