

“Birds of Feather”? — Inter-American Relations in Walt Disney’s *Saludos Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros*”



**Pia
Wiegink**

Pia Wiegink is assistant professor (wiss. Mitarbeiterin) at the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies at the Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz, Germany. In 2017, she has been visiting professor at York University, Toronto.

She received her doctorate from the University of Siegen (2010), Germany, and is author of two monographs, *Theatralität und Öffentlicher Raum [Theatricality and Public Space]*, Tectum 2005, and *Protest EnACTed*, Winter 2011. The special issue of *Atlantic Studies* on German Entanglements in Transatlantic Slavery, which she co-edited with Heike Raphael-Hernandez, was published in September 2017. Together with Birgit Bauridl (University of Regensburg), she heads an international research network on “Cultural Performance in Transnational American Studies” (2015-2018), which is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

In this guest lecture Pia Wiegink will look at two movies by one of the most prominent cultural ambassadors of Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor Policy: Walt Disney. Commissioned by the federal agency, *Saludos Amigos* (1943) and its sequel *The Three Caballeros* (1945) present their audience travelogues from south of the U.S. border. Part travel documentary, part animated cartoon, Disney’s propaganda films seem to defy negative representations of Latin America in Hollywood films: both films stage Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico as beautiful, urban, and appealing tourist destinations. In both films, Donald Duck is presented as the U.S. American tourist and the audience engages in the cultures south of the Rio Grande primarily via Donald’s interactions with Latin American culture, people, and birds. However, despite this seemingly benevolent representation of U.S. America’s southern neighbors, the economic and ideological motivations informing Disney’s image of Latin America need to be examined more closely.

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The event is free, open to the public and organized by the Department of American Studies.

Information

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